ABSOLUTE ADVANTAGE

Annual Magazine of Finance and Investment Cell, Aryabhatta College

First Edition, 2021

"The symbol illustrates,
a heterogeneous mixture of ideas
idolized as the greek
philosopher Aristotle, whose work
encompasses diverse fields, and,
Indices that demonstrate a greater
emphasis on Finance."

- a publication by Finance and Investment Cell, Aryabhatta College, University of Delhi

ARYABHATTA COLLEGE

Aryabhatta College is a constituent College of the University of Delhi named after the ancient Indian mathematician Aryabhatta. It is an institution directly maintained by the University of Delhi. It came into existence from the academic session 2014-15. The college was formerly known as Ram Lal Anand College (Evening) and was established in 1973. The college is located adjacent to the South Campus of the University of Delhi in the picturesque surroundings of the South Delhi section of the Aravali ranges.

Aryabhatta College is a co-educational institution and conducts Humanities, Arts and Commerce courses at the undergraduate level. There are presently around 2200 students on the rolls of the College.

FINANCE AND INVESTMENT CELL

Finance & Investment Cell [FIC] is a student-driven organisation under Aryabhatta College initiated in 2017 with a vision to promote knowledge sharing amongst students on matters of finance, economics, geopolitics etc. and also to raise awareness amongst young minds about finance and investment. Education has always been the agenda of the organisation.

As stated by our tagline, "piquing your interest in finance, so that you never leave it alone," we aim to build a community of like- minded people who constantly strive to nurture their skillsets, knowledge and personality as a whole. We provide a common platform for all finance- enthusiasts to learn through information sharing and provide them with opportunities to undertake research on specific areas of their interest and to keep the enthusiasm of finance-lovers active throughout the year by organising different seminars, competitions and other events related to the subject.

The organisation has a prime online presence with an official website with a reach of more than 10K, Instagram educational page of more than 1.5K followers, YouTube channel for our podcasts and LinkedIN page for our Research work.

FIRST EDITION, 2021

ABSOLUTE ADVANTAGE

Accounting for the ever changing world and observing a large number of diverse opinions, FIC Aryabhatta decided to introduce a magazine for generation Z, which wishes to express themselves whilst understanding the varied set of opinions and judgments around them.

After extensive discussions and deliberations about the nomenclature, we introduced a periodical which stands true to its name by providing you with an absolute advantage in your quest to become a well rounded individual.

The magazine's mission is to serve as a one stop destination to read and publish a heterogeneous mixture of thoughts, opinions and judgements about topics ranging in diverse segments. Hence, it covers a wide variety of interdisciplinary topics including but not limited to Indian and International finance and policy, FinTech, abstract concepts and hypotheses, the future of Finance, Sustainable Finance, Geopolitics, Business, Economics, and year-end reviews.

Furthermore, the magazine serves as a knowledge gaining platform for the youth by featuring key insights from industry experts in the form of articles and published interviews.

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Finance has always played a major role in determining the success of an economy. Basic financial understanding, especially amongst the youth, is a necessity for fulfilling the dream of a better future. Ethics, market integrity and sustainability in Finance, apart from its core values, collectively contribute to the overall development of society. Finance, being deeply ingrained in the grassroots of a nation, binds it together and propels it towards growth and development. Located adjacent to the South Campus of the University of Delhi in the picturesque surroundings of the ridge area in South Delhi, Aryabhatta College has been at the forefront of undergraduate education in Science, Arts, Commerce, and Management since the academic session of 2014-15. We, at Aryabhatta College, stand for inclusive growth and believe in providing ample opportunities to our students to assist them in discovering their potential appropriately. As a value-based institution we are dedicated towards cultivating a desire to evolve into responsible social beings.

Finance and Investment Cell, Aryabhatta College was set up with an aim to mobilise novel opportunities to educate and inspire members to explore real-life business practices, analyse complex challenges in the world of Finance and strive towards becoming leaders who harbour transformative financial acumen. Over time, this platform established itself as one of the leading Finance Cells in the university. The Cell has been outdoing its efforts and contributions each year through professionalism in its economic, geopolitical analysis and financial research. It gives me great pleasure to see the Cell undertake various projects and organize regular research projects, monthly campaigns, group discussions, and speaker sessions related to the subject. The Cell has progressed only with the seamless efforts of a connected set of individuals that are ambitious, motivated, technically updated and diligent.

I'm pleased to congratulate Finance and Investment Cell on the publication of the inaugural issue of its annual finance magazine, 'Absolute Advantage.' I commend the vigour of all the students who have been working tirelessly, especially at such unprecedented times, to come up with such a comprehensive project in the form of a magazine. I extend my gratitude to all the guest contributors for their insightful submissions, and wish them success in their future endeavours. I hope the magazine is a huge success and fulfills its purpose. It's wonderful to watch FIC excel with time, and I wish them all the very best for the future.

PROF. MANOJ SINHA

Principal,
Aryabhatta College

FACULTY'S MESSAGE

The Finance and Investment Cell of Aryabhatta College has shown itself to be a formidable force in just a few years. The society has worked hard and achieved unprecedented heights even during the pandemic. The students have always gone above and beyond their aim of knowledge sharing on matters of Finance, Economics, and Geopolitics. Not only that, they have been proactive in promoting learning through theoretical and practical means. The Cell boasts some of the nation's smartest minds as its guests and collaborators, through its magazine and online series. The newest venture of the society, Absolute Advantage, seeks to bring the reader up to date with all the major happenings and events in the world. I, along with the faculty of Aryabhatta College, congratulate the students of Finance and Investment Cell on their efforts and achievements.

DR. J.K. SINGH

Convener,
Finance & Investment Cell,
Aryabhatta College

FACULTY'S MESSAGE

Finance and Investment Cell, Aryabhatta College was set up with a vision to promote financial knowledge amongst students by providing them with a common platform to share, discuss and debate their ideas.

Established in 2017, it has been growing every day since its inception. The students have, time and again, shown their caliber for fulfilling their goal of growth through exchanging knowledge. The members have been continuously engaged in widening the scope of the society, which now includes competitive events, conclaves, online series, and most importantly-a partnership with the Mexican Embassy in India. With the start of Absolute Advantage, FIC has once again proved that they are more than capable of competing with renowned colleges in the University of Delhi and proving their worth. The first edition of Absolute Advantage covers various topics including Finance, Business, Economics, Geopolitics, FinTech, Sustainability, and Policy. My heartiest congratulations go to the Finance and Investment Cell for its new endeavour, and I wish the members all the best for all future challenges.

Pritika Dua

DR. PRITIKA DUA

Co-ordinator,
Finance & Investment Cell,
Aryabhatta College

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

“Success does not come with power but comes with the vision"

It's been a privilege for me to be entrusted with such an undertaking and to the forefront of the Finance and Investment Cell, Aryabhatta College, by leading the organisation with all the remarkable initiatives taken throughout the year. From organising Finomena in January 2021 to this publication launch in July 2021, FIC has witnessed and covered a long successful journey through its powerful vision, absolute coordination and utmost dedication, and with this FIC, has managed to position itself among one of the best societies in the University.

Foremost, I would thank our principal Prof. Manoj Sinha, convener Dr JK Singh and co-ordinator Dr Pritika Dua for guiding and helping us by suggesting ways to deal with problems in every possible situation. Further, I would like to congratulate all my fellow mates for this successful journey by accomplishing the vision of the organisation by continuous efforts throughout the year.

With each year FIC Aryabhatta is reaching newer heights and I'm delighted to see the hard work put in by the team for the first edition of the annual publication "Absolute Advantage". I once again congratulate team FIC for this newly introduced publication and wish the cell great success in its future endeavours.

Sarthak Malhotra
(President)

VICE - PRESIDENT'S NOTE

It gives me sheer pleasure and inner ecstasy to be a part of The Finance and Investment Cell, Aryabhatta College.

This magazine, the inaugural edition of ‘ABSOLUTE ADVANTAGE’ is the reflection of the year-round efforts put by the team in taking the organisation to an unimaginable level. It is the endeavour of the entire team of FIC Aryabhatta starting from our hon’ble Principal Prof. Manoj Sinha, Convenor Dr. JK Singh and Co-ordinator Ms. Pritika Dua for allowing us to undertake this esteemed project and providing us with all the resources and guidance required.
Our President, Sarthak Malhotra along with our General Secretary Anisha Kalita and Editor-in-chief Khushi Joshi deserves a huge appreciation for the best possible planning and execution of this last and esteemed project of FIC Aryabhatta for the session 2020-21. I would like to congratulate my entire team for showing their dedication towards the work of the magazine and making it a true success.

Being the Vice-President of the organisation, I take immense pride in saying that The Finance and Investment Cell, Aryabhatta College has progressed leaps and bounds in the last one year. Even after the obstacles of everything getting digital, the organisation never lost hope and always strived to do their best in everything.

I have observed parallel success of the organisation along with the members of the organisation and the college.
With this magazine, FIC Aryabhatta ends a magnificent session for the organisation, 2020-21.

Karsh Vashisht
(Vice-President)

EDITORS' NOTE

The coronavirus outbreak has cast a grotesque pall on the financial stability of nations and individuals alike, unveiling the starkly disproportionate distribution of resources between individuals all across the globe. Millions of people continue to endure hardships, destitution and torment induced by this deadly pandemic.

All the while, economists and policymakers seek pragmatic answers to resuscitate economies and bolster healthcare systems.

As if in disregard of the misery, stock markets all across the world seem to touch record numbers. Regardless of the fact that hundreds of thousands of lives were lost, millions of people were laid off, and enterprises were closed, protests erupted across the country—presumably the market's nightmare conundrum—the stock market skyrocketed for weeks. This unpredictable nature of the stock markets proved to be a ray of hope for many during these trying times. We witnessed that those who have a knack for finance were able to stay afloat and even prosper. They took risks and were able to adapt to this new normal comfortably.

We, at FIC Aryabhatta, after analyzing this pattern, understood that the destination of financial security can only be reached through the path of financial literacy. With this vision in mind, we came up with yet another initiative geared towards assisting the readers in developing a keen interest in and understanding of Finance.

EDITORS' NOTE

In the spirit of optimism and faith, we present the inaugural edition of the Annual Magazine of the Finance and Investment Cell, Aryabhatta College - Absolute Advantage.

Absolute Advantage comes with a host of inspiring ideas, thought-provoking questions and creative expressions—all neatly collated into one.

The magazine, a celebration of the vast and ever-changing world, includes articles covering issues from all around the globe. We made the important topics more interesting to read through our issue and provided an absolute advantage in the quest to become a well-rounded individual. We truly believe that literature is a vital instrument for enlightening, inspiring, and impacting people.

Realising the need to contribute our ideas and energy to reform benighted norms, and make a difference in the lives of others through the power of writing, we present to you Absolute Advantage—a transformation that commenced in our minds, toppled the ordinary and is now ready to inspire.

ANISHA KALITA
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KHUSHI JOSHI
(EDITOR IN CHIEF)

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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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Entrepreneur

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Entrepreneur

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Between 2018 and 2019, the U.S. imposed tariffs on more than $550 billion of Chinese products. China retaliated with tariffs on more than $185 billion of U.S. goods.

To minimize the trade deficit, U.S. imposed stringent policies over trade with China.

ECONOMIC COSTS OF THE TRADE WAR

Nearly 300,000 jobs
Cost to the U.S. GDP - 0.7%.
U.S. companies lost at least $1.7 trillion in the price of their stocks

IMPACT

Lower profit margins
High prices, wage cuts and unemployment
USA faced difficulty in procuring raw materials for its IT Hub
Countries benefited: Europe, Mexico, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan

THE LOOMING DEBT CRISIS OF EUROPE

Kartikey Gupta
BMS Undergraduate
Aryabhatta College

European Debt Crisis is a long-standing debt crisis that has been there in the European Union since the end of 2009. Several Eurozone member states (Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Spain, Cyprus) were unable to repay or refinance government debt. Relief of banks with excess debt under state supervision without the help of other eurozone countries, the European Central Bank (ECB) or the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The crisis in the eurozone was caused by a crisis in the balance of payments. The accumulation of debt in some eurozone member states was partly due to macroeconomic differences between eurozone member states before the euro was put to use. The European Central Bank encouraged member investors in the northern eurozone to borrow in the South (since interest rates were very low), while in the South they adopted interest rates. Over time, this has led to the accumulation of deficits in the South, mainly by private economic entities. The lack of coordination of fiscal policy among eurozone member states has contributed to the eurozone's disproportionate flow of capital. The lack of centralized and harmonized financial regulation between eurozone states leads to unreliable promises to provide bailouts to banks and incentives for dangerous financial transactions in banks. The exact cause of the crisis varies from country to country. In some countries, personal debt caused by the real estate bubble has been transferred to the national debt in response to the banking system bailout and the government's response to the post-bubble economic slowdown. European banks hold a significant amount of government bonds, which has negatively heightened concerns about the banking system and the ability to pay government bonds.

CAUSES:
The eurozone crisis was caused by a combination of structural problems in the eurozone and multiple factors. The root of the eurozone crisis lies in a fiscal imbalance, a sudden interruption in a country where foreign capital relies on foreign lending. A country

cannot rely on devaluation. It was agreed because it worsened. Decrease in the value of national currencies to increase export competitiveness in overseas markets. Another crucial factor is the globalization of finance. Easy credit status during the 2002-2008 period encouraged high-risk lending and lending practices. The financial crisis of 2007-08; international trade imbalances; the real estate bubble after bursting; the Great Depression of 2008-2012. Fiscal policy choices regarding government income and spending; and the approach used by the state to bail out problematic banking industries and private creditors assume private debt or social loss.

Differences in macroeconomics between member countries of the eurozone have led to a disproportionate flow of capital between member countries. Before the euro was used, southern eurozone members grew rapidly (with rising wages and prices) while northern eurozone members grew slowly. Despite these diverse macroeconomic conditions, the European Central Bank has only adopted one rate, which means Germany's actual interest rates are high (relative to inflation) and the southern eurozone members' are low. This motivated German investors to lend to the South and the South to rent (because of small interest rates). Over time, this led to the accumulation of deficits in the South, mainly by private economic actors.

> **"Any country with large public debt, and with no access to monetary financing, could be subject to a run on its debt, even if it was solvent in the long run.**

EVOLUTION OF CRISIS:
The European debt crisis, characterized by an environment in which the government's structural deficit, which occurred in the aftermath of the Great Depression at the end of 2009, was excessively high, and debt levels were accelerating. In most European states, some of the most affected banks due to their strong relevance to survival when the relatively vulnerable banking sector suffered significant capital losses due to the anti effects of the Great Recession. It needed relief using a recapitalization loan that supports the financial stability of the economy. As of January 2009, 10 central and Eastern European banking groups have already requested relief. At that time, the European Commission worsened the outlook for banks by announcing a 1.8% increase in EU economic output in 2009. The capitalization of many publicly-funded banks was one of the reasons why some European governments experienced a sharp decline in the debt-to-GDP ratio after the Great Recession.

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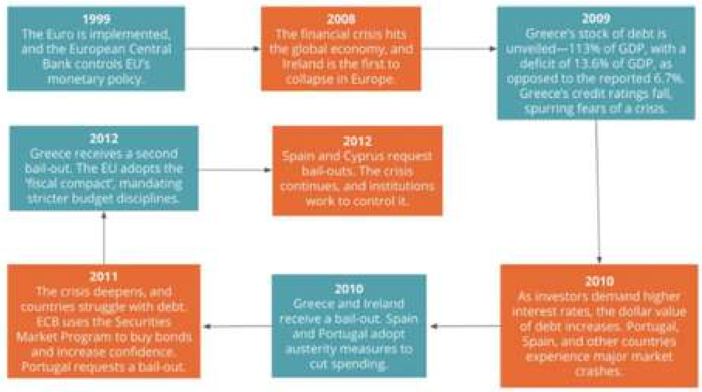
TIMELINE:



THE SOLUTION:
In May 2012, German Chancellor Angela Merkel devised a seven-point plan in response to newly elected French President Francois Hollande's proposal to issue Eurobonds. He also wanted to ease off on the austerity measures and inject more stimulation into the economy.

Merkel's strategy would entail:
1. Launch quick-start initiatives to assist new businesses.
2. Protections against unfair dismissal are relaxed.
3. Introduce "mini-jobs" taxed at a reduced rate.
4. Combine apprenticeships with job training for unemployed young people.
5. Privatise state-owned enterprises.
6. Establish specific funding and tax breaks.
7. Create special economic zones similar to those found in China.
8. Invest in renewable energy sources.

Merkel understood how austerity measures would enhance the eurozone's competitiveness after seeing how well it worked to integrate East Germany. The 7-point plan was based on an intergovernmental treaty signed on December 9, 2011, in which EU leaders agreed to construct a fiscal union in addition to the existing monetary union.

SOUTH CHINA SEA: BREWING OF A STORM

Tanishq Madaan
Economics Undergraduate
Aryabhatta College

The source of the South China Sea dispute can be traced to the 1951 San Francisco Treaty, which did not specify the possession of the Spratly Islands when Japan lost the area after the defeat in the Second World War. The South China Sea is a rich source of oil and natural gas. According to the estimates, the South China Sea contains almost 18 billion tons of crude oil. One of the main reasons for the territorial dispute in the South China Sea is China's construction in the area, particularly in recent years. Several interested states replied with protests over China's activities to repossess the area. Many influential states of Asia like the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, and the people's Republic of China are among its littoral countries.

China has been trying to show its dominance in the South China Sea for a long time. Their tactics to possess disputed waters include the use of naval ships and an army to intimidate other countries. Chinese naval ships try to attack, capture or sink fishing vessels

and an army to intimidate other countries. Chinese naval ships try to attack, capture or sink fishing vessels
and maritime militia of other countries. Recently, the Philippines sent a strong message to China saying it would solicit the USA and invoke their defense agreement with the US if China attacks its naval ships in the South China Sea. The USA and Philippines have had a Mutual Defense Treaty since 1951 that pledges them to support each other in case either of the two gets attacked. Both China and Vietnam have built several small islands in the disputed waters.

The strategic and economic interests of India in the South China Sea are likely to grow in recent years. India's growing bilateral relations with Vietnam and with other South-East Asian countries, in particular Indonesia, and growing strategic cooperation with Japan shows the genuine economic interests of India in the South China Sea Dispute. India needs to understand the importance of a region which supports $5 trillion worth of world trade every year. India needs to ensure its economic interests that are the security of the trade and transportation linkages to various parts of the world. Nearly $200 billion worth of India's trade passes through the South China Sea.

The South China Sea dispute is closely related to China's interest in expanding its territory with a unilateral map. It cannot be separated from strategic, political, and economic interests. Achieving a fair solution in the delimitation of maritime boundaries requires consideration related to strategic, political, and historical factors. The factors above are problems that conflicted countries must resolve to defend their rights in the South China Sea region. China's claim through the map of the Nine dashes 1974 becomes the basis and, at the same time, is a unilateral implication. The claim is related to the sovereign rights over the potential wealth of the sea historically and geographically.

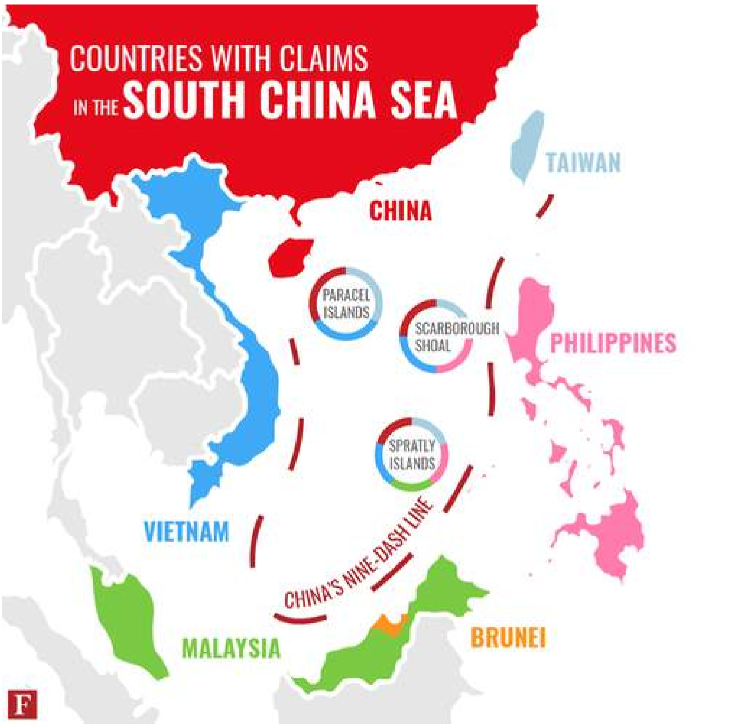
"

The United States seeks to strengthen its military presence in the Asia Pacific region. Claiming countries continue to contribute to a peaceful solution following the 1982 International Law of the Sea to end disputes peacefully."

Historically, the Chinese state narrated that the territory had been controlled effectively and utilized by the previous Chinese, so the present Chinese state controlled a basis as a successor. The South China Sea parties' disputed areas are warm on two main islands, namely the Spratly and Paracels. Many conflicted countries feel entitled and demand ownership of the Spratly islands, such as Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Japan, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The vast area of the South China Sea also consists of islands scattered so far from each other. It has been described above that the island dispute that has attracted much attention is the Spratly and Paracel Islands.

The land area of the island also has the value of international legal conflicts, the requirements for land features to be used as the basis for delimitation of areas are taken into account in international maritime law such as rocks, coral reefs, sand, and several others that are under the sea, even though the island's land standards are not suitable for farming. There is no historical record of these islands being inhabited because they cannot support human life and activities. However, in 1968 there were discovered petroleum reserves dramatically increased the South China Sea value. The Spratly and Paracel Islands' potential oil reserves are estimated to be up to 105 billion barrels and throughout the South China Sea as much as 213 billion barrels.

It is important for the South China Sea region's security that the United States participates in finding a peaceful solution to disputes in the South China Sea region. The United States' diplomatic step is taken to ensure that the country claims it has not violated international law, such as weapons. This step is carried out through diplomacy, but, unfortunately, the United States has also participated in peaceful efforts by using military force. The United States seeks to strengthen its military presence in the Asia Pacific region. Claiming countries continue to contribute to a peaceful solution following the 1982 International Law of the Sea to end disputes peacefully. The state's participation outside of the claim also does not rule out the possibility because it is more objective in formulating a peaceful solution. Another military effort is to locate US mariners in military bases around conflict areas. Conflict in the South Sea China region with the potential sources of nature's power is great and tracks important trade internationally.



Source: Forbes

Region positioned due to track cross- the main northwest world is very crowded, bypassed by ships from various countries. From a military point of view, this region is significant to maintain and enhance national security. Countries with a base on the claim area each retain Sea of China Southern ownership of the factors above. China, with the approach historically, makes things such as basic claims of the Sea of China Southern. Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei also have an approach to the base that is strong with the regime of the Law of Sea International 1982 regarding zoning regime region sea. Differences in approach to the base that is different between China with several countries making conflicts that drag on until now

UNRAVELLING THE DARK STORY OF XINJIANG

Sabhya Chandra
B. Com Undergraduate
Aryabhatta College

BACKGROUND

Xinjiang, a province in China has been at the center of world politics in recent times. Xinjiang is China's largest province, spread over 1.6 million square km, home to many ethnic communities the Han, the Kazakh, the Hui, and predominantly populated by the Uyghurs. It accounts for about 1/5th of the world's cotton production. The region has endured decades of oppression and ethnic conflicts that have several times escalated into violence. The root cause of these conflicts is that Uyghurs identify themselves closer to Central Asia culturally and resist the control of the Han Chinese over them. This rift led to riots in 2009 which further prompted a crackdown and imposition of restrictions. Since then, the Chinese government has been accused of Human rights abuses such as implementing strict policing and pervasive surveillance, forced sterilization, imposing religious restrictions, illegal detention and torture of Uyghurs in internment camps and use of forced labour in cotton production, etc. China has faced backlash internationally in response to reports corroborating human rights infringements and has attracted sanctions from western countries. On the other hand, China has denied all such allegations and asserts that these camps have been set up for vocational training, inculcating law awareness, imparting skills, and alleviating people out of poverty. It says that these camps aim at amending extremist thoughts to fight terrorism and maintain national unity.

STORY

In response to overwhelming evidence of human rights violations in China, the US has placed an import ban on cotton, tomatoes, and solar products originating in Xinjiang. The European Union, the UK, the US, and Canada have imposed sanctions on Chinese officials for alleged human rights abuses.US Investment in firms supposedly linked to China's defense mechanisms and surveillance technology also has stalled.

Better Cotton Initiative suspended its activities and licensing in Xinjiang due to the use of forced labour in cotton production. ideas, Burberry faced backlash from Chinese Consumers.

H&M's products have been removed from e-commerce sites, and stores across the country have been blocked on navigation apps and shut down. Chinese Tech-giant Tencent has halted its partnership with Burberry and has removed Burberry's trademark plaid from one of China's most popular video games, Honor of Kings. Several Chinese celebrities have also amplified the boycott by ending their contracts with western brands. Chinese consumers, driven by nationalistic sentiments are aggressively boycotting western products and supporting local brands.

In response to BCI pulling out, China is also launching its cotton industry monitoring organization, known as Weilai Cotton (Future Cotton). Chinese reaction to these allegations has sent shockwaves throughout the international clothing industry. Western brands have now been trying to balance out the ethical concerns as well as have been trying to retain the Chinese market for its huge potential. Other than the west, Japanese brands like World and Mizuno have communicated their concern towards human right infringements and decided to stop using Xinjiang cotton.

Satellite imagery of a re-education camp in Xinjiang.
Source: DigitalGlobe/ScapeWare3D

The attractive prospects of the Chinese consumer market have always fascinated western brands. China's biggest asset is its consumer market which has continued to swell even though it has shrunk in other countries. According to McKinsey, China became the world's largest fashion market in 2019 overtaking the United States. China comprised 20% of the global luxury market in 2020, a 9% increase in market share compared to 2019 as per Bain & Company's report. China is also on track to become the world's largest luxury market by 2025, accounting for almost half of luxury goods spending as the Chinese are expected to spend much more locally.

China presents mind-boggling opportunities and economic incentives for global clothing brands to carry out business in the country. But the serious allegations and evidence of human rights violations cannot be overlooked. Brands are under constant pressure to take ethical steps. raise voices against human rights breaches, and understand local sentiments. Brands are

China probably wants to reiterate its economic strength in the global arena. It desires to caution Western leaders about the consequences of interfering in its internal matters and policies. China would also like to persuade foreign companies to influence their respective governments into not taking such actions. China expects active affirmation from companies for their support of China.

Foreign companies have to satisfy their progressive global customers. They cannot allow China's control over its decisions and should not stand down on their stance. The rising integration of foreign companies into China can act as leverage against the Chinese Government. Foreign companies foster the economy by bringing with

"Spreading rumours to boycott Xinjiang cotton, while also wanting to make money in China? Wishful Thinking!"
-Communist Youth League

under constant pressure to take ethical steps. Brands have obligations to protect the environment, raise voices against human rights breaches, and understand local sentiments. Brands are being squeezed between China's growing clout and the west's call to support ethical issues inviting political provocations.

As a result, firms are either deleting their previous statements or addressing western and Chinese audiences distinctively. Zara's parent company Inditex pulled down its statement expressing concern about forced labour. Hugo Boss, a German retailer earlier told NBC News that it ensures that its suppliers don't source cotton from Xinjiang. But later on, Hugo Boss told Chinese consumers that they use Xinjiang cotton with no plan to stop. Similarly, Fila's officials in Italy and China have presented two different points of view addressing their respective audiences. H&M defended itself saying it respects Chinese consumers as always. Japanese brands Asics and Muji said they support Xinjiang cotton and use it for garment production respectively. Brands are trying their best to meet both ends while Chinese consumers remain adamant that brands choose aside. However, China has repeatedly rebuked accusations and allegations regarding forced labour in Xinjiang. It says that forced labour is a complete fabrication created by a few US and Western personnel and institutions. China also professes that agriculture in Xinjiang is highly mechanized. But the lack of transparency and intent for investigation have made it hard to believe in China their capital and technology and creating employment opportunities. Thus, China cannot push out companies over Xinjiang cotton. These anti-foreign agitations risk causing anxiety among the international community and, also the economy may not emerge out intact. And this would be very undesirable for China at a time when the global outlook towards the country isn't entirely positive.

Nike holds more than 20% of the Chinese sportswear market. It induces an immense number of sales and jobs. Thus, perhaps that's why Nike wasn't treated as callously as H&M since its products are still available online in China. This exhibits foreign firms; potential trump-card against such campaigns.

Domestic Chinese brands including Li Ning and Anta benefitted from the boycott and have recorded enhanced sales. On the other hand, H&M, Nike, and Adidas have witnessed a slump in their sales.

CONCLUSION

Young Chinese consumers are strongly nationalistic and sensitive towards foreign criticism. This could translate into an increased prevalence of cancel culture against brands. But these boycotts also attract undesirable international attention towards government policies.

The first step towards the settlement of this significant kerfuffle could be China's approval for restriction-free access to fishy areas in Xinjiang in response to the UN's request. International brands can announce that exploitive exercises have to be discontinued for the business to work. Their objective is to protect the minority groups and stop malpractices in Xinjiang. But these brands are constrained by their situations.

Foreign brands can wait for the storm to blow off or hope for a reprieve from Beijing. Usually, consumer boycotts fade away over time, with people flocking over for their favourite products. Brands that support Xinjiang cotton will endure damage to their reputation and stature internationally.

We can conclude that synchronized efforts are required for long-term investment into alternative sourcing hubs where development considers fundamental human and environmental rights.

Western businesses could increasingly get pushed under the rug because of the deteriorating relations between China and the US and its allies. They must remain prepared to face the difficult operations in China.

Xinjiang is a perfect example of a messed-up policy of mending together the single most important export of the region with disputed prisons and camps.

THE SUEZ CRUISE: FREEZING THE WORLD

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One incident which caught everyone's eyes was the Ship "Ever Given" which got stuck in the 120 mile long Suez Canal due to strong winds.

The Suez Canal, also known by the name 'The Highway to India', because it currently exists, as a 193 km artificial waterway connecting the Mediterranean Sea at Port Said to the Red Sea at Port Tewfik. This waterway connects the Atlantic and Indian Oceans in a way that doesn't require a ship heading from Europe to Asia to either go around Africa or wait for the ice to melt in the Arctic. The canal also, unlike the Panama Canal, has no locks at all, making it much easier for the world's largest ships to slip through, and for the canal to be expanded, the Egyptian government should prioritize such a project. This makes this little waterway between Africa and Asia one of the foremost revolutionary projects within the transportation world. The Suez Canal was first opened in 1869.

The Suez Canal had previously been owned by the Suez Canal Company, which was controlled by the British and French. Consequently, the British, French, and Israelis invaded Egypt to take back control of the canal, but as a result, they faced condemnation from both the USA and the USSR. In the end, Britain and France were forced to withdraw and Nasser remained in control of the Suez Canal.

The container ship Ever Given on March 23, 2021, was on its journey between the port of Tanjung Pelepas In Malaysia and Rotterdam within the Netherlands when it absolutely was sailing through the Suez Canal in Egypt. In keeping with the shipping company, the vessel was hit by a strong sand storm with wind speeds up to 74km/h causing it to no longer be steerable. At 7:40 am, the ship rammed into the sidewall of the canal. About half an hour later, the first Egyptian tugboats and free-fighting ships arrived, but freeing the ship will prove to be a difficult undertaking. The first images that began to circulate on the net showed the ship had dug itself into the sidewall. Satellite images makes it one of the largest container ships in the world. Early attempts to free the ship with tug boats alone didn't lead to success and excavators began trying to free the ship.

For the busy trade routes between the Indian Ocean and the North Atlantic the canal cuts travel times for container ships by around 8 to 10 days. The only alternative is to circumnavigate the complete African continent. The canal is a highly important source of revenue for Egypt. The country receives quite 5 billion USD annually through transit fees which successively implies that the average price per transit is over 300,000 dollars. One limitation however is that an outsized part of the route can only be shipped in a very single lane. Therefore traffic should alternate between north traveling and south traveling ships. There are waiting areas such as in the Great Bitter Lake where ships are allowed to hold for traffic and where they

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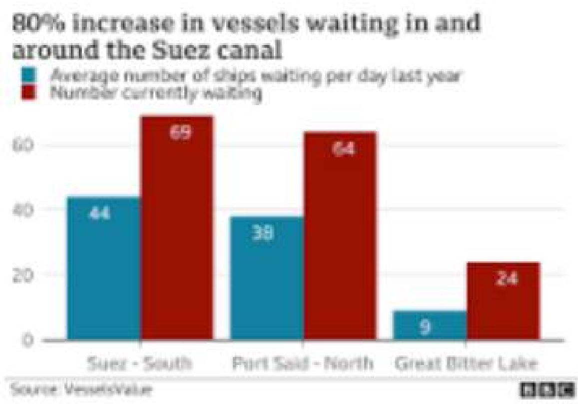
It might seem as if this blockage doesn't affect us because it's happening indirectly.

have the opportunity to turn around if required. Since 2015 due to the construction of the "New Suez Canal" a larger part of the canal has two lands and is therefore navigable in both directions at the same time. However, there's only one lane where the Ever Given is stuck which means all traffic on the canal has come to a standstill. Throughout the blockage, about 370 ships were watching for passage on both sides of the canal. It is estimated that every day this incident held up hoods worth 9.6 billion USD. The uncertainty about how long the blockade will last made it difficult for shipping companies to decide whether it makes more sense to wait until the canal is clear or send their ships on the way to the Cape of Good Hope on the Southern tip of Africa. Some made the expensive decision including the Ever Greet, the sister ship of the Ever Given that blocks the canal. Both ships are operated by the company EVERGREEN.

The blockade came at a very unfortunate time as global supply chains were already operating at their limit due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Recently, in many countries, the ratio of imports and exports has changed. Lockdowns and also the decreased economic activity results in lower production and fewer exports in many places, especially In Europe and North America. In contrast, imports from Asia are still needed, for instance from China where production was able to start up again much sooner. This leads to an imbalance and a shortage of containers because they leave Asia but don't return at the same speed. North America currently faces a 40% imbalance of containers, which implies that for every 100 containers that arrive only 40 are exported back. The delays on the Suez Canal are already stressing a tense logistics system.

On March 29, at about 3 pm local time roughly 150 hours since the ship got stuck authorities were able to free the Ever Given.

They took advantage of high spring tides around the full moon and used 14 tugboats to dislodge the Ever Given. The ship was then towed to the Great Bitter Lake for inspection and traffic along the Suez Canal continued at 7 pm. Even though the blockade has been resolved it's expected that the big wave of container ships arriving at ports in Europe and Asia in quick succession will overwhelm the handling capacity of even the biggest ports. So the delay is anticipated to cause a ripple effect that may add stress to port facilities and even inland infrastructure.



It might seem as if this blockage doesn't affect us because it's happening indirectly. It does and not just to some of us but pretty much to all of us. About 12% of the world trade volume passes through the Suez Canal. A complete blockage, even for just a few days affects an astounding amount of goods and resources and causes severe economic effects both due to direct damages as well as due to the uncertainty that it creates.

Introspecting India

WHAT'S INSIDE

STOCK MARKET BUBBLE

Money Supply and FII rise also led to stock market bubble.

Trailing P/E Ratio is quite high than its historical average (18)

When prices for a stock or an asset rise exponentially over a period of time, well in excess of its intrinsic value.

DEFENSIVE RESILIENCE

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The struggle against COVID-19 has refocused India's attention on self-reliance, particularly in industry. While the viral outbreak is wreaking havoc on the economy, it also gives an opportunity to further India's long-held goal of becoming a world-class defence manufacturing base. The government's ability to support innovation and technology development will shape this path, which begins with steps toward self-sufficiency.

The imperative to reduce arms import bills and 'optimise' defence expenditure is driving the 'Make in India' programme – India's FY2019 defence budget of USD 71.1 billion was the highest in South Asia and the third highest in the world, and it has been the world's second-biggest armament importer for the previous 5 years.

The concept of 'Make in India', on the other hand, is not new. In 1990, India set a goal of reaching 70 percent defence self-sufficiency.

PM Modi proclaimed a 'Make in India' package of 'satellites to submarines' in his inaugural address from the Red Fort (15 August 2014) — the Defence Production Policy of 2018 mandates that by 2025, India must attain self-reliance in major platforms and export weaponry worth USD 5 billion (FY2016 defence exports: Rs. 1,495 crores).
However, there are systemic reasons for the program's lack of traction, some of which have already been detailed in other publications
.
The government recently launched a stimulus plan that includes a defence "Make in India" (MII) component. The following are some of the measures: increasing the FDI percentage in defence manufacturing, a negative list for imported weapons, separate budget for Indian-made military equipment, corporatization of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), reform of defence procurement.

CHALLENGES
While industry stakeholders applauded the new regulations, India's domestic defence industry confronts several hurdles that impede the country's

goal of being self-sufficient in defence manufacture.

There is a lack of strategic planning for the Armed Forces' future needs. The Indian Armed Forces must be operationally ready to respond to border threats in the developing geopolitical context. As a result, the Armed Forces' warfighting skills must be regularly enhanced, and weapon and equipment technology must be updated. To satisfy these needs locally, the Armed Forces must prepare strategically and pragmatically for their needs, as well as invest in the long-term development of high-tech weapons. This, according to some, is now lacking in India's defence policy.

> **People may download the same meme and use it on social media if they want, but they won't own the token associated with it, which means they can't sell it as the owner can.**

Lack of advancement in defence modernization and capabilities

India's defence modernization has been gradual throughout the years, and local development of high-tech weapons has remained a barrier.

This is primarily due to (a) the governing ment's reluctance to award defence contracts to India's private sector; (b) process inefficiencies and delays in domestic production by government-led organisations; and (c) the government's reluctance to grant long-term investments and research and development to India's private sector. As a result, India continues to rely on foreign imports for high-tech weapons, putting the country's domestic sector at a disadvantage.

Budget concerns

India's self-reliance ambitions have been hampered by a paucity of capital expenditure on domestic defence production and research & development. While India's defence budget has grown over time, a large portion of it is spent on personnel costs like wages and pensions, reducing the cash available for defence manufacturing.

For example, salaries and pensions account for 58.6% of the overall defence budget for 2020-2021, while capital expenditures account for only 22.7 per cent. While an increase in human costs is important, a proportionate increase in defence production spending is also on the horizon. Furthermore, India's budget allocation for research and development for 2020-2021 is barely 4% of the total defence budget. This is a fraction of what technologically advanced countries like the United States and China spend on research and development, which accounts for 12 percent and 20 percent of their defence budgets, respectively.

There is a lack of strategic planning for the Armed Forces' future needs. The Indian Armed Forces must be operationally ready to respond to border threats in the developing geopolitical context. As a result, the Armed Forces' warfighting skills must be regularly enhanced, and weapon and equipment technology must be updated. To satisfy these needs locally, the Armed Forces must prepare strategically and pragmatically for their needs, as well as invest in the long-term development of high-tech weapons. This, according to some, is now lacking in India's defence policy.

Delays in production and delivery. Production delays have plagued indigenous defence production. For example, the HAL Tejas, India's first indigenously made Light Combat Aircraft, had a protracted manufacturing delay, with HAL requiring a total of seven years to produce 16 aircrafts, despite a four-year expected schedule. The order for 20 further planes has yet to be fulfilled by HAL. Even the Defence Research and Development Organization has been criticised for project delays, poor performance, and insufficient supervision. According to a 2018 report by the Estimates Committee of the House of Commons.

All 14 mission projects for the Indian Air Force were delayed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation, putting the Air Force's Air Defense plans in jeopardy.

SOLUTIONS

Funds for the Armed Forces: Due to a shortage of funds, some defence projects are on hold. The Indian government should evaluate its defence budget allocation to ensure that appropriate funds are available for the three armies in terms of human costs. Furthermore, long-term and greater capital investments in defence production, as well as research and development, are critical. The government may also propose permitting the Armed Forces to collect revenue on their own by engaging in for-profit public and private sector initiatives such as machinery and aircraft repair for private enterprises, as well as the construction and repair of highways and expressways, among other things.

Supporting the private sector: To develop a defence industrial base in India, the government should consider assisting the private sector and entrusting it with larger and more solid defence contracts. Supporting the private sector's research and development, as well as design and manufacturing capabilities, is critical for India's defence industry to grow.

Decision-making and time delays: The Ministry of Defence should explore reorganising its decision-making process to address the decision-making problems it has in defence procurement. For a more inclusive and efficient decision-making process, representatives from the three forces should be included in defence procurement and national security decision-making. Time delays in defence procurement can also be decreased by altering the decision-making process structurally.

The group will be in charge of the full defence purchase process, including legal, financial, costing, and technological aspects, with experts at each level. Because the organisation will merge the duties of numerous agencies involved in defence procurement, such as technical and trial evaluation, quality assurance, and contract negotiation, among others, time delays in defence procurement will be greatly reduced. Countries including France, the United Kingdom, and Australia have followed a similar concept.

CONCLUSION

At its core, the new approach aspires for a more domestic industrial base and emphasises the importance of self-reliance. Given this trend, foreign OEMs will have to either create production facilities in India or work with large and medium-sized local suppliers. Technology transfer benefits should accrue as a result of global OEM corporation. To serve the South Asian market, India is presenting itself as a manufacturing hub for OEMs, offering cost arbitrage as well as trained personnel and matured infrastructure.

The regulatory changes are a step in the right direction in terms of bolstering the “Make in India” effort in defence manufacturing, and they support the larger goal of making India a defence exporter capable of competing with established global players.

THE ROAD AHEAD FOR EVs IN INDIA

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The last decade has been wondrous for the EV industry adoption and this process of adoption is still in continuation. The launch of electric cars is seen all over the world. India being one of the biggest markets for cars provides a great opportunity for 'Electric vehicle' manufacturers. But when we talk about EVs in India, we tend to question is India ready for Electric vehicles?

To answer this question we all need to first understand what are the challenges that the EV industry is facing and will have to face in its journey towards mass adoption by the people of India?

The major challenges for EV in India are:

CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE:
As of June 2020, India has established around 927 EV charging stations but if we compare it to the 57000 petrol pumps that the country has, we can see that the numbers are quite less and India still needs to work a lot on the establishment of EV charging stations considering the size of the market it has.

Also, according to a report, 85% of charging of Electric vehicles is done at the home of the owner. So those living in a community apartment can struggle with charging their electric vehicles.

It is also estimated that by 2030, the mass adoption of EVs will increase the electricity demand by 100 TWH for which the country is not yet prepared. This lack of infrastructure for charging electric vehicles still casts doubt on the strategy undertaken by India to create mass adoption of electric vehicles.

LACK OF HUMAN RESOURCES:
India is facing a lack of expertise and skills in the EV industry as EV is still at its early stage. This not only bothers innovation in the industry by the country but also possesses difficulty to the foreign investors who find it difficult to gain assistance from human resources provided by the country due to their lack of expertise in the EV industry. India needs to focus on creating human resources for the Electric vehicle industry by focusing on promoting skill-based and

professional courses related to the EV industry. The abundance of these resources will pose a greater incentive to domestic as well as foreign manufacturers as these resources will help the manufacturers in the designing and manufacturing of new and better products in the electric vehicle industry.

CONSUMER MARKET:

The average price of an electric car in India starts from about Rs 13 lacs and that of a fuel-powered car at 4.5 lacs. This difference of 3x between both types can lead to a loss of a big chunk of the consumer market for the EV manufacturers and hence provide uncertainties to the brands looking to attain success in the industry.

Apart from this many consumers still doubt the range capacity of Electric vehicles. As India still does not have enough charging stations for these vehicles, the consumers fear that they will not be able to reach their destination and hence are still not confident in considering an electric vehicle over a vehicle powered by an internal combustion engine.

"The last decade has been a decade of wonders for the EV industry adoption and this process of adoption is still in continuation.

BATTERY:

The battery used in electric vehicles is made up of Lithium. As the country has a lack of lithium it is dependent upon the import of the Lithium batteries used in electric vehicles.

This poses a major difficulty for the investors looking forward to investing in India's Electric vehicle industry. The country needs to be self-sufficient in the production of the raw material required by the EV industry and it also needs more planning to overcome this challenge. Self-sufficiency if attained can help in the reduction of cost for the batteries and hence will also reduce the cost of the entire vehicle.

POLICY – FAME 2

The Indian government introduced FAME 2 (faster adoption and manufacturing of electric vehicles) policy to incentivize the production of electric vehicles but it has been argued that the policy has failed to deliver its objective because of the policy requirements.

After the implementation of the fame 2 (phase 2 of fame) policy, the Two-wheeler segment in the EV market is expected to get affected as almost 95% of these vehicles produced till now will not be able to take advantage of the incentives under the policy due to ineligibility.

In the policy it is mentioned that to avail subsidy the electric two-wheelers must have a minimum range of 80 km but till now most of the electric two-wheelers produced in India have a range of around 60km only, making them ineligible for availing the subsidy mentioned by Fame 2.

Furthermore, the policy has been linked to localization. To avail of the incentives under the policy, a company needs to produce 50% localized vehicles which makes it impossible for any company in India to avail the benefits at present due to the low demand (in terms of volume) of Electric vehicles in the country. Indian suppliers are not yet prepared and ready to manufacture components for electric vehicles.

This shows that the Indian government still needs to improve and change its policy structure for better and faster adoption of Electric vehicles both by manufacturers and consumers.

With these challenges in existence, it is difficult for the electric vehicle industry to grow at a fast pace in the country. But, with proper planning and efforts, India can still overcome these challenges and can fulfill its vision of mass adoption of electric vehicle technology all over the country.

THE OTHER VICTIM OF COVID: EDUCATION

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Unprecedented times like Covid ask for unprecedented measures. After the recent outbreak of the coronavirus, and the closure of schools and colleges, millions of kids were forced to stay indoors.

Internet facilities came out as the most popular and convenient way to impart education. As a solution to this common problem of imparting education during the Covid Pandemic, governments of various countries came up with different solutions.

The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) of Bulgaria developed a National Electronic Library of Teachers (e-content Repository) which publishes materials by pedagogical specialists for working in E-learning environments.

The Dominican Republic reported the creation of free Wi-Fi hotspots for learners and supported the creation of WhatsApp groups to provide additional support.

Finland set up a Library of open educational resources, which can be used for researching, finding, compiling and sharing open educational resources (OER) from all levels of education and FINNA, an open service that provides free access to online collections and materials from Finnish museums, libraries and archives.

To connect students with educational institutions, the Internet seems to be the best option. However, we cannot ignore the fact that not everyone has access to internet facilities. People living in developing countries have lower access rates to internet-based services. In such cases, televisions and radios help in imparting education to students who lack internet facilities.

After recognizing the unavailability of Internet services everywhere, Costa Rica directed the public media to broadcast educational programs for students, parents and teachers for different subjects. Furthermore, the country plans to distribute education through hardcopies for families with no Internet access. Similarly, Argentina airs 14 hours a day of television content and 7 hours a day of radio content. For both radio and TV, each lesson broadcasted will have the presence of a teacher and a conductor (Journalists, artists and scientists).

For students without access to technology or connectivity, this television and radio programming is supplemented with ‘notebooks’ packed with learning resources that have been delivered to the home of these students.

In Guyana, students without connectivity in the hinterland regions will benefit from the distribution of compiled worksheets. Educational relations through Interactive Radio Instructions (IRI) have been put in place for grades 1-3 and are being broadcast to schools catering to grades 3-6.

Reaching out to students via online may sound like the most viable option, and but it comes with its own hurdles.

Globally, Almost 1.6 billion children and youngsters have been affected after the schools were closed. It's hard to tell when everything will get back to normal. The only certainty that one can talk about is “uncertainty”. While schools and colleges remain shut, people in the administration both at schools and colleges are trying their best to reach out to students through Internet, television programs, Radio and hardcopy materials.

Reaching out to students online may sound like the most viable option, and most of the institutions have indeed gone online. Shifting their entire classes on online platforms like zoom and Hangouts. But this too comes with many hurdles. Students have limited resources in terms of devices that they are using. Many lack devices, like laptops, to access their online classes, whereas, for many, affording data is not an easy task.

There have been cases where siblings need devices at the same time to access their college lectures. But there’s only one device. Only one of them could access their lectures.

To deal with data-related problems, governments could come up in partnership with Internet service providers and help people with subsidized data plans. Zero-rated learning websites can also be built by governments.

Government officials can also consider distributing electronic devices like tablets to children in rural areas and the 1st and 2nd quintile of the income distribution in urban areas.

In Peru, the Ministry of Education announced the distribution of over 800,000 tablets to children in rural areas. There are several nations, especially in Africa, that hear educational content on the radio.
In areas where there is no Internet, this may seem perfectly fine. But this too comes with its own restrictions.

If a program is aired in the morning on the radio, and that’s the time when the child has to help her/his mother’s business or even need to go to collect wood sticks so that the family can cook, she/he may miss the lecture. The radio method to reach out to kids in this scenario seems clearly ineffective.

Radio services are good for students who do not have access to the Internet, but it can become even better if this radio program could be made available in multiple time slots so that no kid misses out on the educational programs.

Nobody knows when we will return to normalcy, but things like online classes, reaching out with television programs, radio, certainly serves best in holding children and young people to their education even when their educational institutions remain shut.
With covid affecting education all around the World, India too didn’t go unaffected. After experiencing one of the world’s strictest Lockdowns, education across schools and colleges was severely hit. With schools being closed in the middle of March 2020, many schools had to promote students even without annual examinations.

Given that India has cheaper data plans when compared to other countries, and our population has better access to mobile phones, education through the Internet seems the best option. But before I jump on to recommend anything like availing online classes to students across the country, making libraries accessible online, I would like to outline some numbers before the reader.
Protiva condo, an Educational researcher, writes, “According to the 2017-18 national sample survey report on education, only 24% of Indian households have an Internet facility, while 66% of Indians

the population lives in the village only a little over 15% of rural households have access to the Internet. She further writes, "The digital divide is evident across class, gender, region or place of residence among the poorest 20% households, only two-point 7% have access to a computer and 8.9% to Internet facilities."
The difference is apparent across states too. Computer access varies from 4.6% in Bihar to 23.5% in Kerala and 35% in Delhi.

In an interview by Archana Shukla of CNBC TV 18: Gopal Kambley principle of the upper primary Hindi School in HaziBazaar in Amravati, said "Out of 716 students enrolled in the school 450 of them do not have access to smartphones. We're just not able to send learning material to them."

Only 36% of the Indian population, about 385 million above the age of 12 has access to the Internet according to the India Internet 2019 report of IAMAI and Nielsen. However, the access is not uniform. But just 27% in rural areas and 51% in urban areas. Getting access to the Internet.

Now, Citing the digital divide scenario in India. Is the Internet the best option? Would the Internet solve all the problems? The answer to all these questions is perhaps no. But ignoring the power of the Internet is obviously not the wisest decision. Indian households have more access to television than access to the Internet. Very recently when the Government of India decided to broadcast, RAMAYANA, the famous epic, reports suggested that it surpassed the viewership of popular American drama, Games of Thrones (GOT). Considering this, I would recommend televised educational programs, radio programs along with Internet materials (video lectures, online libraries). Radio, because there are many households in remote villages where students might not even have access to television.

Combining Internet facilities along with radio and televised programs would definitely have the best results.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

India just observed National Technology Day on May 11. However, a look at the data suggests a stark digital divide among Indian students during Pandemic and lockdowns. The digital divide

- Rural households with a computer
4.4%
- Urban households with a computer
23.4%
- Rural households with the Internet-
14.9%
- Urban households with Internet
42%

(Numbers from key indicators of
Household social consumption on Education in India report, based on the 2017-18 National sample survey).

RBI INJECTS LIQUIDITY VACCINE AMIDST 2ND WAVE OF COVID

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In the prevailing pessimistic environment due to the harsh second wave of Coronavirus, RBI came with some optimistic measures to sustain the economy of India which is in recession due to COVID-19. The drastic and horrifying impact which viruses lead to the mental and physical health of the people also came with economic recession and financial pain to them. This is a major concern for everyone considering Central Government, State Government, Local Government, and even at the individual level to every person of the nation. It has led to chronic agitation in the entire nation. While a major portion of India's population is facing difficulties to arrange their bread and butter being jobless and closer to markets due to lockdown. Looking at the situation, RBI governor Shaktikanta Das on 5th May 2021 came with satisfying measures to curb the financial crisis and increase the liquidity which is going to act like a vaccine to the Indian economy. Let's take a closer look at what measures he has taken.

The announcement of on-tap liquidity of Rs 50,000 crore at repo rate, gave a sudden boom in the stock market. Under this move, banks are encouraged to support healthcare stakeholders like vaccine makers, medical equipment makers, hospitals as well Covid infected individuals. This will have a direct impact on the production of more medicines and better health facilities.

Moreover, it will also help to curb the prevailing Black Marketing of medicines and health facilities and will also help to cope up with a shortage of medicines. the poor and lower middle class segment which is deprived of essential and basic health care facilities due to shortage of funds will benefit from this step of RBI. Along with it, Medical Infrastructure will be enhanced for the future which is imperious for a nation like India.

Moreover, such lending will be considered Priority Sector Lending. Health is always a top priority for everyone and keeping the health industry as a priority sector lending will ensure the healthy broadening of the economy. New PSL guidelines will permit better credit stabbing and credit will be provided to upgrade the current health facilities of the nation.

There is another announcement for banks where they can park their excess liquidity equal to their Covid loan books at 40 basis points above the reverse repo rate creating heaven for banks to park their funds. The move by RBI to conduct OMO(Open Market Operation) aggregating Rs 35000 crore in 2 weeks for the purchase of government securities is also one of the steps taken by RBI to magnify the liquidity in the economy. This measure will not only tackle the money supply in the country but will also aim to create demand for goods in the economy.

“ Satisfying measures to curb the financial crisis and increase the liquidity which is going to act like a vaccine to the Indian economy.

The announcement of a targeted Long-Term Repo Operation up to Rs10,000 crore for small finance banks where the upper limit is Rs10 lakh per borrower also created positive momentum among small finance banks and the MSME(The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) as now these enterprises could lend money without being insecure about future repo rates.

The announcement by Das for small finance banks to lend money to smaller MFIs(Micro Financial Institutions) up to an asset size of Rs500 crore would also help the lower and middle-class people to gain financial support indirectly through MFIs. As we know MFIs provide finance below Rs 1 lakh and to the people without having any banking facilities so will help to provide finance to the poor and lower middle-class segments who are facing difficulties even for their bread and butter. Another measure taken by RBI is assuring State Governments.

According to this initiative, states are allowed to remain in overdraft for a maximum of 50 days where the same limit was 36 days earlier. Along with it, the number of consecutive overdraft days will also go upward to three weeks from two weeks earlier.

This facility has relevance to funds under the Ways and Means Advances. Thereby providing greater flexibility to the state government to tide over cash flow mismatches due to the unsteady environment. Intending to provide greater comfort to state governments in undertaking COVID-19 circumscription and mitigation measures, and to enable them to plan their market borrowings, RBI had increased the Ways and Means Advances (WMA) limit of states and UTs which will help them to take justified decisions.

The move by RBI where Individuals and MSMEs borrowers can avail of one-time restructuring till September 30, 2021. The coverage is for those who have exposure up to Rs 25 crore and the assets which were standard as of 31st March 2021. For many individuals who are facing hardships in arranging money to clear their EMI’s, this relaxation can help both banks so that they are not overburdened with NPA’s. Alongside individuals would also be benefitted from finding it as a better way to pay their dues.

Also, RBI gave the power to banks to use the Countercyclical Provisions in the case where bad loan provisioning is being held. Under counter-cyclical provisions, governments usually go against the direction of the economic or business cycle. RBI took this step as the economy is in recession so to create a demand that can drive an economic boom and prosperity to the nation once again.

RBI also took a plan of action for the KYC registrations. Only limited KYC registrations are allowed till December 1, 2021. For some relaxation, video-based KYC will be provided for some categories.

POPPING THE BALLOON OF INFLATION

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Inflation, it seems, gives butterflies in the stomach of almost everyone, be it rich or poor. In a study conducted by the Nobel laureate and world-renowned Yale economist Prof. Robert Shiller, around 77% of the common people said that inflation gives them a sense of uneasiness and makes them worry anticipating the higher costs in the future. I had a somewhat similar observation at my home itself the previous month. I overheard the domestic help at our home having a conversation with my mom. She was irked and fretting, "Just look at the prices of oil! Yesterday, before going home, I visited my local ration shop. I asked bhaiya to give me sesame oil and got only almost half of the oil I used to before with the same money!"

Yes, you guessed it right, this incident happened in May 2021. It was the time when edible oil prices hit a decade high. Now, with the May CPI data out recently and inflation shooting up to 6.3%, almost everyone is bound to have cramps in the stomach. Having noticed the effect of inflation on people myself, the news became all the more important to me. I wondered how inflation could happen at such a time when the economy is in a slump and lakhs of people are unemployed? My textbooks, Econ. classes, and economics columns came to my rescue to help me demystify this rather eerie happening. Several questions sprung up in my mind, which I try to answer here, one by one.

Was such inflation expected?

The Reserve Bank of India has declared a range of inflation, 2-6%, which is tolerable and not very harmful for the Indian economy. Any breach of the prescribed band has negative effects on the Indian economy. The CPI inflation jumped well above the tolerance threshold to 6.3% in May'21, ringing alarm bells. It was even higher than the expected inflation of 5.4% and came as a surprise even to the economists.

What are the reasons behind this inflation?

As I mulled over, I found that this inflation is certainly not because of an increase in the overall spending by the people, and so in technical terms, it's not 'demand pull' inflation. The main reasons for the current inflation are the surging fuel and commodity prices and the supply bottlenecks.

You might be wondering, why would an increase in fuel prices lead to inflation in the overall economy? After all, neither do human beings consume fuel directly nor is fuel input in the manufacturing of most of the consumer goods. The answer to this question is quite simple, petrol/diesel forms an essential component of the costs of production/delivery of almost every imaginable consumer good. It is used for transportation, as a fuel for combustion, and also as a raw material. An increase in the fuel prices, through the aforesaid effects also increases the costs of many inputs. You might apply the same reasoning to even justify the increase in the prices of your milk packet. The dairy company which supplies the milk to your local milk booth will collect milk from farmers who will use vehicles that run on fuel to deliver the milk to the collection centres. It will then be processed and filled in plastic packets, which again involves fuel for their production. At last, the dairy company's vehicles, which run on fuel, will deliver it to your local shop through a sophisticated supply chain. So, an increase in fuel prices has a significant impact on the prices of almost all goods. The fuel prices in India hiked due to an increase in the prices of crude oil globally and an increase in the tax collection on it by the Indian government to finance the budget deficit.

"The monster of inflation is finally out of the cage and is gnawing away your hard-earned money."

The other major reason for a shoot in inflation is the supply bottlenecks throughout the country. The numerous state-wise and local lockdowns disrupted the supply chains. This artificially decreased the supply which also contributed to inflation. The Suez canal blockage in March also led to global supply backlogs and outstanding orders not being delivered completely. All this cumulatively led to a short period of decreased supply and, by the basic law of supply-demand economics, hiked the prices.

Will inflation further increase? How long is inflation here to stay?

Economists all across India and the world are trying to answer this question. As the COVID-19 infections across the country are decreasing and states are unlocking, it seems that the supply bottlenecks will also ease out. Also, the business houses are right now are not transferring the complete burden of increased input prices onto the shoulders of the consumers due to weak demand. This makes for a genuine reason why inflation might be transient and would decrease in the coming months. At the same time, the ever-increasing crude oil and commodity prices globally are adding to the worry of inflation staying. Many economists also fear that with the vaccinations happening and India returning to normalcy, people might spend more and unemployment may decrease, which may cause 'demand pull' inflation. I feel that the aforesaid might be the case but after at least some months -when a majority of the population will be vaccinated, somewhat similar to what is happening in the U.S. right now. It can also be felt that the fear of the third wave hitting us hard is keeping people from hugely increasing their spendings. The coming few months may see inflation easing out or at least not increasing, provided the fuel prices don't rise again.

What can be done?

Now that one has come to understand the major factors driving inflation, one might be compelled to ask the question, 'What can be done?' The answer to it is a lot more complex than what is imaginable and is one of the biggest challenges RBI has to deal with. The obvious solution lies in decreasing the fuel prices which can be achieved in two ways. One, India along with other countries should force the crude oil cartel OPEC to decrease the crude oil prices. Not doing so will weaken the recovery process of many economies globally, which after recovering will demand more crude oil to meet the growing needs. Thus, not decreasing the crude oil prices will ultimately hurt OPEC itself. Second, the government should decrease the tax collected on fuel to prevent its prices from hiking further. Corporates need to make their supply chains more robust and efficient to prepare for the feared third wave of COVID-19 infections.

How do you defend against inflation?

Now that the monster of inflation is finally out of the cage and is gnawing away your hard-earned money, there is a need to find a way to protect your money from vanishing away in thin air. Inflation, by its virtue, reduces the purchasing power of money and practically decreases the wealth of people.

Gold, from early times, is known to be a good hedge against inflation and investing your money in gold in these times will prove to be effective. Investing in energy complexes and industrial commodities can also be fruitful. Surprisingly enough, according to research by Prof. Campbell Harvey of Duke Fuqua, rare and expensive collectibles like Premier Grand Cru wine, art, stamps, collectibles, etc. can help hedge against the biting inflation. Parking your equity profits in GOI's Floating Rate Saving Bonds, Gilt and Debt Mutual Funds, and Sovereign Gold Bonds is also a good strategy.

IS THE STOCK MARKET IN A BUBBLE?

Kunal Shah
MBA
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Future of Finance
Stock-Market has undoubtedly been the talk of the year 2020 and has maintained its status in 2021 as well. The trending headlines and debates have run well into the year 2021.

The two major stock exchanges that are present in India are BSE and NSE. SENSEX is the index that has the top 30 companies from BSE, SENSEX currently stands at 52,328 INR. NIFTY 50 is the index that comprises the top 50 companies listed in the National Stock Exchange (NSE). Both these indices are conceived to be the most accurate indicator of stock market performance in the country. I would not say they are the absolute economic indicators of the country but I feel to some extent they do showcase the economic realities.

A Past: -
As the pandemic hit us, somewhere near March 2020 the SENSEX crashed and came down to 25,900 and since then it has doubled itself in a span of just more than 1 year. A similar has happened with the NIFTY 50 index as well. In March 2020, the index crashed and came down to 7610 and since then, in just more than a year it too has doubled itself.

Why the worry: -
People are worried because this kind of movement has never knocked on the door of the Indian stock market. They are worried that the market is swollen and is a bubble which if bursts, may take the indices crashing with it. Indices have been increasing like anything despite the devastating second wave, which caused a lot of damage both Financially and Human capital wise.

Inflation is rising. GDP data isn't impressive. Unemployment is over the roof.

Empirical Evidence: -
We have seen a couple of bubbles bursting in the past. The housing bubble is the most famous one. In the year 2008, the US housing bubble burst and the housing prices plunged by 16% in that one year. Another bubble, a recent one, was the Crypto bubble. Cryptocurrencies have been gaining a lot of investor attention and have grown exponentially. Bitcoin, the most famous Cryptocurrency, hit its peak price of around 47 lakhs in April 2021 from around 6 lakhs in April 2020. The price increase is, what I would call, INSANE. But recently the crypto bubble burst and almost all the cryptocurrencies came crashing down. Bitcoin alone fell about 40% in a single day and is currently trading at around 26.5 lakhs rupees.

But the question remains, is the stock market a bubble?
According to my, the bubble would not be the right term to use here. Yes, the Stock market has never seen this kind of up movement but the factors have also not been the same. There are a lot of dynamic conditions because of which the stock market is booming. According to NSE, the Indian stock market has seen around 37 billion dollars' worth of inflows from the FPIs (Foreign Portfolio Investors) from the year 2020 till today. DIIs (Domestic Institutional Investors) have added Rs. 72,000 crores to the stock market since January 2020. According to a report, only 4% of Indians invest in the stock market, but in the year 2020, around 1.43 crore new demat accounts were opened, this has left many more Indians wanting to test their luck in the markets.

This boom is seen because of two reasons.

1) Future of India
This is one of the biggest reasons why more and more people are getting attracted to the Indian stock markets. India is a developing country and is on the path of development, with many Private and Government companies performing well, It has left investors awestruck. Due to the huge growth potential, more and more people have been putting their money in the Indian stock market and are thus causing the boom. Legendary investor and India's own Warren Buffet, Rakesh Jhunjhunwala has said 'Invest in India'. This phrase by him shows how much trust he has in the Indian private and Government sector.

2) Financial Literacy
The second reason which can be behind the upward trend of the Indian stock market is that more and more people are becoming financially aware. By financially aware, I mean that more and more people are getting to know that when they put their money in the bank, they are actually losing money since they don't grow in line with the inflation. In India, the
the inflation rate is around 6% and in a bank's savings account money grows at around 3 to 4 %, so you are actually losing 2 %. Thus, people are considering other investment avenues and the stock market is one of the most famous and easily accessible investment avenues. Thus, many new people are starting to invest in the stock market.

These are the two most accurate reasons which may have caused this boom in the stock market.

Conclusion: -
So, in the end, I would conclude by saying that the stock market in its present state is not a bubble and will not crash like it did in March 2020. But, yes, a healthy correction is on the cards for the Indian stock market. And this is not something to worry about because historically if we see any of the indices, whether it is NIFTY 50 or BSE SENSEX, the trend has always been an up move, minor hiccups were seen in the form of health corrections.

"

Thus, Stock Markets are not a bubble but it's a mirror to the economy which is very much booming and has already recovered a lot from the pandemic blues.

(This article is purely based on my knowledge of financial markets and is not encouraging anyone to trade by keeping this article in mind in any way. This article is only for educational purposes and is not intended to provoke any debate.)

REITs & InvITs – INSTRUMENTS FOR AN EMERGING INDIA

Nishant Kumar Satyam
PGP21
IIM Indore

Introduction to Alternative Investing

With their ever-increasing appetite for risk, the Indian investor is on the lookout to try newer options while investing. The conventional stock, bond and cash investment doesn't interest them anymore. Calculated Risk-taking through 'Alternative Investments', has become the hottest trend of the market. The Indian investor has a bouquet of investment options to choose from-- private equity, IP, land, venture capital, and private placement debt, real estate -- they are all up for grabs.

One of the most exciting avenues where alternative investing has set-up-shop in is the domain of real estate; considered as one of the most resilient, secure and trustworthy forms of investment. Quite ironically, real estate investments indeed are one of the most traditional and diversification-friendly investment options out there. And now talking about the most recent innovation in this field we have REITs and InvITs.

In today’s world, investors look for constant high returns as well as capital preservation. Apart from the traditional assets of equity, debt and gold, these benefits are also offered through Real Estate, especially in the form of REITs and InvITs.

The unique structure of this new asset class (which essentially simplifies real estate investments) endows it with benefits that are lacking in other traditional assets. The fact that they offer a steady dividend income, and guarantee long-term capital appreciation, especially in rapidly developing countries such as India where real estate has always been a booming sector, makes them a very lucrative opportunity; especially for investors who are looking to diversify their portfolio while maintaining decent returns, and are looking for assets which have low correlation with the broader equity, debt and global markets, REITs and InvITs seem to be a perfect choice. These instruments have made it.

possible for many small investors to have a share of India's booming real estate sector pie, which was earlier out of bounds for them, given the large ticket sizes involved.

Liquidity has increased manifold since the introduction of REITs and InvITs. Despite its multiple advantages, these instruments have become available for the Indian investor, only in recent times. The first REIT to be registered and traded in India was the Embassy Office Parks REIT. It was launched in 2019 and was backed by the US-based Blackstone group. InvITs, though, had an earlier debut, with IRB's InvIT debuting in 2017.

Introducing REITs and InvITs:
A REIT is a real estate investment trust. In its simplest form, it pools money from investors and buys large commercial properties. Often, these properties are rent-producing in nature (for example - retail office buildings/parks, malls etc.). The total rent received by all the properties under the REIT comprises its rental income. By government mandate, REITs are required to distribute 90% of their rental income to their investors, in the form of dividends. This usually translates into an annual return of 8%+. Apart from the dividend income, the property also appreciates in value over time, since these are mostly premium properties, in the most prime locations. This translates into long-term capital income for the investor, apart from the steady inflow of rental dividends. The critical feature of REIT is the accessibility that it provides to investors, in terms of liquidity, which has always plagued traditional real estate investments. REIT units are priced at a fraction of the actual cost of the property and can be freely traded on the stock exchanges.

InvITs are Infrastructure Investment Trusts, and they are merely a modified version of REITs, as they solely focus on the infrastructure sector. Assets such as roads, gas pipelines, power transmission etc. form the core portfolio of InvITs. They provide similar advantages as REITs, albeit in a different sector. Dividend-income, long-term capital appreciation and diversification are the key benefits offered by them.

REITs and InvITs--Advantages over other asset classes:
A Risk Mitigator:
From a supplier perspective, an essential aspect of REITs & InvITs is that the estates which constitute their underlying assets are exempted from being listed on balance sheets. This allows the REIT provider to focus on infrastructure operations and do away with incorporating tedious calculations and valuations on their company finances. Hence, such an exemption, which is a characteristic of this investment innovation, enhances the company's return on investments and considerably mitigates risk--the benefits of which are then directly passed on to the subscribers of the fund.

A Positive Externality:
Besides being one of the few investment vehicles whose quality improves by their mere existence, REITs offer a medium of funding infra-development projects through equity instead of debt. Now, we all know how the infra-sector is the backbone of the Indian economy or any economy for that matter. Hence, they have a positive externality embedded in them, such that investment in REITs can fast-track long-drawn and stagnant projects, which can benefit other sectors of the economy, thereby creating a domino effect and improving overall market sentiments. Therefore, investments in REITs become a game-of-time, whereby rightly timed investments, in not just REITs but also their dependent sectors, can multiply target portfolios, manifold.

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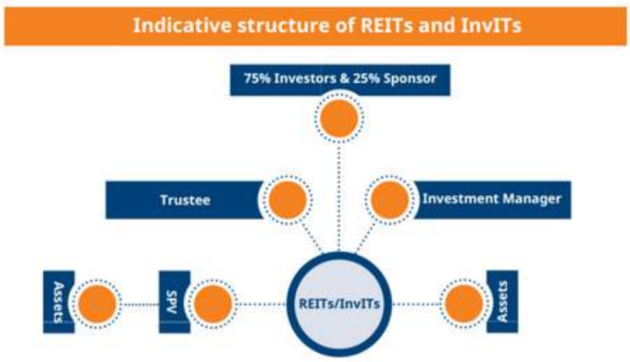
In investing, what is comfortable is rarely profitable.
-- Robert Arnott

Consistent High Returns:
Now coming to the most interesting aspect about REITs and what makes them so lucrative. Up until the beginning of last year, they were deemed a failed investment vehicle owing to the high levels of ambiguity surrounding their operations and governance structure. But recent mandates by the Reserve Bank have gone a long way in dictating the regime under which REITs & InvITs may operate, clearly defining the necessary regulations. The most prominent amongst these is the mandate to necessarily pass at least 90% of their rental income to their investors, making the end-i

investors the party that benefits the most from such an investment.

REITs v. 'Real' Real Estate:

Now the last leg of our comparison focuses on whether REITs are any better than investments in physical real estate. Well, the truth is that REITs & InvITs both offer a reliable and more liquid path for investments in real estate. They give a prime opportunity to their investors to participate in and reap



benefits from the growth of real estate assets without engaging in the hassles of buying the 'real' real estate, i.e., the actual physical asset. In essence, they provide a medium to hold real estate in Demat form. The added liquidity of these assets is another boon for investors willing to diversify into the real-estate sector.

Additionally, the interest gains and rental gains that REITs generate are not taxable, and all gains can be retained by the investor, which is a significant advantage when contrasted against taxable non-capital-gains that physical assets, or even debt or equity funds generate.

InvITs are Infrastructure Investment Trusts, and they are merely a modified version of REITs, as they solely focus on the infrastructure sector.

Concluding, REITs and InvITs offer smaller investors an excellent opportunity to jump in on the booming Indian real estate bandwagon, and reap the benefits of diversification, a steady rental income and long-term capital appreciation. The non-taxability of the returns, as well as the surety vis-a-vis the rental-dividend payout, makes it a safe haven for investors who are looking for decent returns, without compromising on their capital safety. However, real estate is not everyone's cup of tea. Investors must be mindful of their risk appetite, long-term goals, liquidity position and asset class-mix, before deciding whether or not to invest in REITs and InvITs. But from a long-term perspective, these instruments offer a great opportunity of diversifying one's portfolio into uncorrelated assets, apart from the usual mainstays of equity and debt.

Philosophia

the love of wisdom

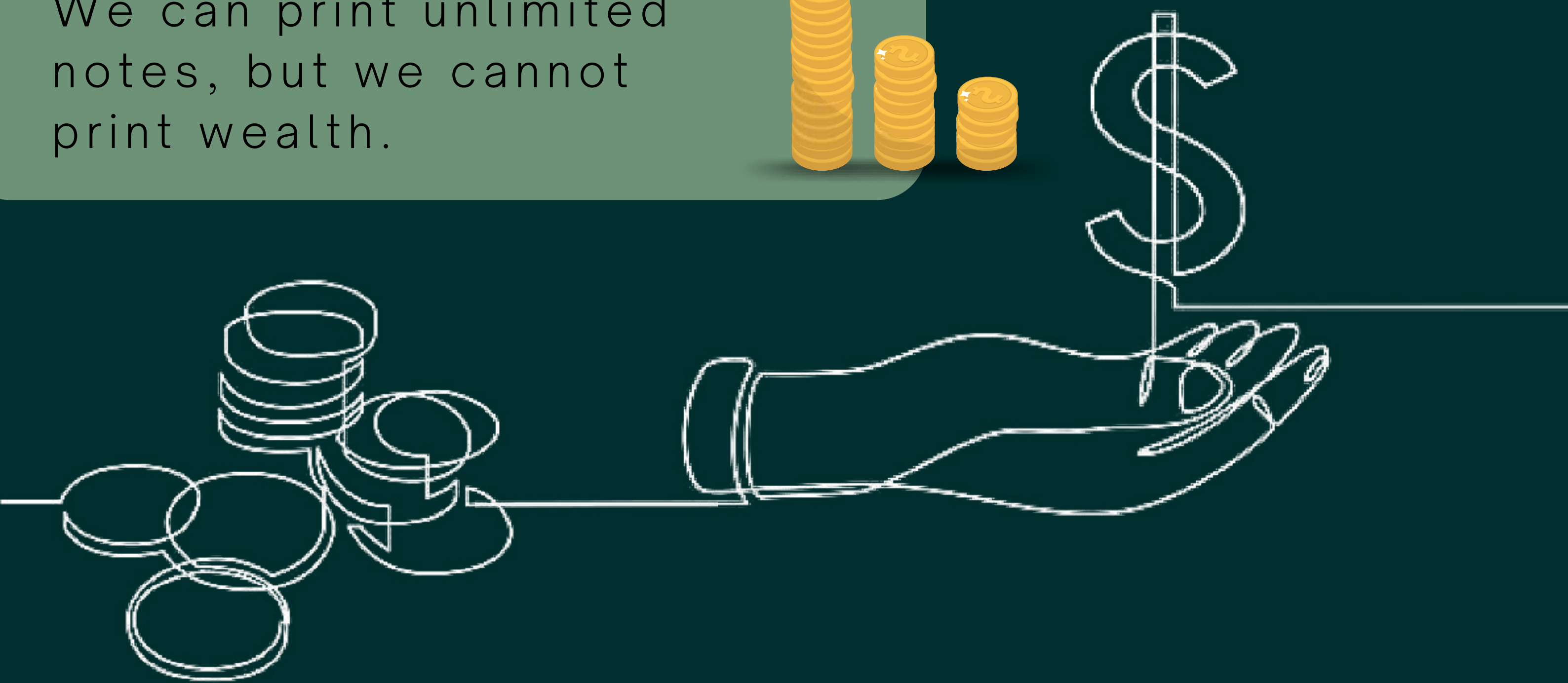
WHAT'S INSIDE

WHY CAN'T THE GOVERNMENT PRINT MORE **MONEY?**

Increasing the supply of money won’t increase the supply of resources. This will only lead to prices to rise exponentially.

Zimbabwe carried out this process in 2007 and this resulted in Hyperinflation in the economy to the point where even a loaf of bread would cost $30 million.

We can print unlimited notes, but we cannot print wealth.



PRINTING MONEY: THE SOLUTION OR THE PROBLEM?

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Economic and social activities came to a halt in the whole world, including India. Because of the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic, the financial condition is deteriorating day by day, questioning whether a financial emergency can be declared in India?

The Indian monetary administrations, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has endured the Covid storm and the effect of lockdowns has been less daunting than at first conjecture, however, with the full impacts. The Indian financial services sector has disintegrated after the Covid storm and the effect of lockdowns has been less extreme than at first assessed. In this case, you might think, Why doesn't the RBI print enough money to deal with financial conditions.

The idea to print cash and lessen destitution likewise went to the head of African countries of Zimbabwe in February 2007, prominently known as **HYPERINFLATION OF ZIMBABWE**. Zimbabwe was a British state. After their autonomy, their leader considered ownership farm landscapes ought to be moved from white landowners to nearby labourers. Local people got land proprietorship yet didn't get the hang of cultivating methods. As a result, farm produce actually declined, unemployment and poverty both rapidly increased. And the need for money didn’t meet. Zimbabwe did not consider it a big deal, they started printing more money. To satisfy people's needs they started printing money in big denominations like 100 billion dollars, thousands of billion dollars. Did this make people rich?

The answer is no. Because the people's money was increasing but resources were in limited quantities and that led to exponentially increase in price. And there was a point when a loaf of bread would cost 30 million Zimbabwe dollars. Eventually, Zimbabwe abandoned their own currency and in April 2009 started using currencies like the US Dollar. During the stature of expansion from 2008 to 2009, it was hard to quantify Zimbabwe's out-of-control inflation because the public authority of Zimbabwe quit recording official swelling insights, Be that as it may, Zimbabwe's pinnacle month of swellings assessed at 79.6 billion percent month-on-month, 89.7 sextillion percent year-on-year in mid-November 2008.

What Can India learn from Zimbabwe's hyperinflation? "Money has value when people and government believe in its value." That is how the economy works when individuals participate in work and add to the economy and consequently, they get money-related worth in return for their endeavors. Yet, if everybody begins getting cash for nothing, the speed at which the amount of cash will rise will be higher than the speed at which different things will increase.

"We can print unlimited notes but we cannot print wealth". And that's the reason why we can't give money for free. But the fact is that in the future we have to give money for free. The reason is the IT Revolution. Robots will take your jobs. The Industrial Revolution has made steel engines and horses no more in use for transportation.

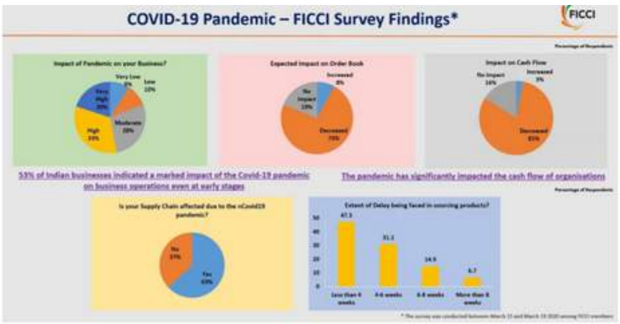
“

We can print unlimited notes but we cannot print wealth.

Similarly, due to the IT revolution email has made posting outdated material. And in the upcoming year, self-driving cars will make driving as a profession (taxi driver) totally obsolete and unnecessary.

But this is not just about drivers, whatever our profession is, there are high chances of unemployment in the country up to 90% of the population. Because most jobs will be performed by Robots. Well, if you are young and haven't picked a career yet, try and find a career that won't be so susceptible to automation.

Machines are wonderful workers. Machine and man-made brainpower can work 24×7, they don't take pay rates and they don't go on strikes. According to research, unemployment will increase and reach up to 90%. In such a circumstance, individuals will come out in the city. There will be high chances of riots.



Solution

The idea of distributing money for free is being discussed in many countries including India and is called Universal basic income. Universal basic income (UBI) is a government program in which each grown-up resident gets a set measure of cash consistently. The objectives of a fundamental pay framework are to Reduce Poverty and supplant other need-based social projects that possibly require more prominent administrative inclusion in which every adult citizen receives a set amount of money on a regular basis. The idea of universal basic income has acquired force in the U.S. as robotization progressively replaces laborers in assembling and different areas of the economy. In this scheme, the government covers the cost of living. This is not a welfare scheme. This is a universal scheme. There will be no check of the wealth of a person in this scheme. Adults above 18 years are given a fixed sum at fixed intervals. But the success and failure of UBI will depend on what it is used for.

During Coronavirus South Korea is trying an intriguing strategy for Universal basic income. People will not get cash, a balance of 200 US Dollars will be added after 3 months. The condition is, people can only spend this in local shops and they can only spend it on necessities for their survival. There are two benefits of a condition scheme like this: local businesses can earn revenue to sustain and consumers get relief because their spending reduces.

The idea of universal basic income has gained momentum in the U.S. as automation increasingly replaces workers in manufacturing and other sectors of the economy.

Conclusion

There are a lot of things India can learn from the case of Hyperinflation in Zimbabwe and Venezuela. To get more extravagant, a nation needs to make and sell more things – regardless of products or administrations. This gets it protected to print more cash flow so that individuals can purchase those additional things. If a country prints more money without making more things, then prices just go up. No one is making any more of these models. So even if everyone gets more money to spend, it won’t mean that more people can afford to buy them. The sellers will just put the price up.

Well, this could be just conceivable if individual government offices, related to different associations as needed, of India, will carry out a Universal Basic Income plot with appropriate plans of an approach proposition that will be successful at the season of monetary emergencies.

A BOOTLESS VENTURE

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The third-biggest reason for road accidents in India, it causes problems to the health and finances of one-third of males and one-fourth of females in India who have made it a part of their lives. Alcohol consumption is a politically sensitive topic in India, add India's diverse religious base to the mix and alcohol becomes a pretty controversial topic. One would think that in face of a mountain of cons, steps would have been taken to ban such a commodity. However, to the contrary alcohol trade continues to flourish in India.

From time immemorial, alcohol as wine or fermented juice has been consumed for medical purposes in Ayurveda. As more variants were discovered, alcohol started being used as a beverage for pleasure purposes. India's annual consumption per person reached 6 liters in 2020, an increase of around 150 percent since 2005. This sudden growth is attributed to the increasing urban population and the middle class with rising spending power. Today, India is the 9th largest alcohol market in the world.

India's alcohol market comprises Indian-made Indian liquor (IMIL), Indian-made foreign liquor (IMFL), wine, beer, and imported alcohol. Heavy import duties and taxes make the latter a minuscule player in the country's alcohol market; beer and wine make up eight and less than one per cent of the share respectively. The legal drinking age is different in every state. Alcohol is banned in Bihar, Gujarat, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, and there are partial bans in Manipur. "Dry days" also occur throughout the country on Republic Day, Independence Day, Gandhi Jayanti, and voting days. The sale of alcohol is banned throughout the country on these days.

Before we figure out why we can't ban alcohol, we need to understand why alcohol is required. Even after knowing the numerous hazards it poses, why do people continue to consume it?
Alcohol and intoxication became the talk of the town when it was glorified in movies and by famous personalities. It became associated with a drink that

you have after a tiring day, something that will help you relax. For many, it became an escape from reality. Today, we live in a society where every third person consumes alcohol. People have come to see it as a necessity, as it can be seen as a regular at parties, weddings, reunions, etc. This is a relatively new development considering the reservations of the Indian culture. There is the added social stigma that you tend to enjoy "more" once you are under the influence. Losing your inhibitions has been romanticized over the years.

While some might drink just for the thrill of it, for some it is the science behind drinking. It has been scientifically proven that **alcohol numbs your senses** by slowing down your cells. It causes the brain to release more 'dopamine', which is a chemical linked with pleasure. This stage is called "Euphoria".

> **Laws work better when instead of being 'reformative', they are 'retributive'.**

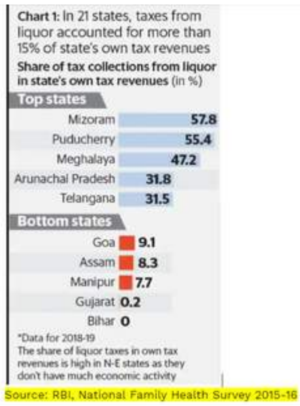
It interferes with your brain's communication network, thus making you **relax and 'feel' calm**.

Whatever justification one might give, for many it has become a psychological thing. Due to the stigma, peer pressure, and alcohol as depicted on the big screen, people tend to believe that consuming alcohol is giving them pleasure. At this stage, it doesn't matter whether their blood alcohol level is high enough to intoxicate or affect them, they just believe that they are feeling relaxed due to it.

As humans continue to evolve, the psychology behind alcohol will keep on changing, but until then let us move on to the economic reasons as to why such a ban on this commodity is not feasible.

The first one being that alcohol is a cash cow for many states. A strange dichotomy runs through the alcohol economy. Neither will it be owned, nor it will be disowned. State governments, which often stress alcohol regulation with moral overtones, become over-dependent on alcohol in a moment of crisis. Certain commodities are excluded from GST due to opposition from state governments. Two major items under this are alcohol and petroleum products. This is for a very simple reason that both generate massive revenues for the states.

Whenever the states need money, they increase taxes and other duties on these two products. They get a good amount of money due to the high sales volume of these products. Because of these exclusions, GST is not 'one nation one tax' in its truest sense. Many states attribute almost 15% of their tax revenue to alcohol, with Mizoram and Puducherry earning more than 50% of their tax revenue from alcohol in 2018-19.



The second reason is that curbing alcohol consumption is not an easy task despite the prohibition in many states. There is a wide network of bootleggers ensuring timely delivery of liquor from the neighbouring states. There is a system of checks and balances at the borders. However, that is often rendered useless in front of the corruption money that fills the pockets of the road transport, excise, police, and other government officials. Moreover, estimates suggest that Gujarat loses INR 10,000 crores annually in enforcement and loss of tax due to the futile attempt of prohibition. So much for so little!

It is difficult for states to ensure prohibition even if they want to. This is because the government officials are more than happy and motivated to take a bribe rather than do their jobs. The remuneration that the officials get for a job well done, is a joke when compared to what they'll make through their implicit relations with bootleggers. The idea of prohibition is a 'precaution', not a cure. It is a myopic idea that might get rid of the symptoms, but won't be able to fully cure the disease.

The third problem and probably the biggest of them all is that each state has the right to govern the consumption or non-consumption of alcohol in their respective jurisdiction. This makes it impossible to impose a nationwide prohibition. Alcohol, rather than coming under the 'Union list', comes under the ' State list', which means that as long as this situation prevails, each states' legislature will have the power to make laws on it and avail the tax benefits from it.

There is a lot of paperwork required to impose a nationwide ban on alcohol. Even though theoretically such a ban is possible, it is highly unlikely. The constitution will have to be amended to include alcohol in the 'Union list'.

This requires a bill to be passed by a majority in each house or sabha, with at least two-thirds members present and voting. Post this the government can then issue an order for liquor to be banned overnight. If we keep in mind demonetization, GST, Uri attacks, overnight changes have been pretty much the hallmark of the Modi government. It is almost impossible to pull this off because states might contest this decision, leading this case to the Supreme court. And we all know the amazing judicial system of India. Alas! So much for an overnight move. Still, who knows maybe there is a plan that we are not aware of yet!

You will be surprised to know that a Prohibition Enquiry Committee, known as the "Shriman Narayan Committee" was appointed, to assess the topic of prohibition in 1954. In the committee's report, which was released at the end of the year, they had set a deadline for the states to carry out nationwide prohibition by 1 April 1958. A non-official resolution was also passed by the Lok Sabha on 31st March 1956, emphasizing the same. However, the plan never really materialized due to unforeseen circumstances.

State	Prohibition Period	Comments
Maharashtra	1950-64 1964-92 (1 district) 1992-2010 (2 districts) 2015- (3 districts)	Drinks with alcohol content up to 3.2% became legal in 1964. In 1973, even these limits were removed. Three districts, Wardha (since 1950), Gadchhiroli (since 1992) and Chandrapur (since 2015) are dry districts.
Gujarat	1950 -	Residents can get alcohol on medical grounds. Visitors and tourists can pick up alcohol legally quite easily, thanks to easing of liquor laws, so as to enhance tourism and business travel.
Tamil Nadu	1948-71 1974-81	There have been several bans and subsequent reversals on toddy and arrack since 1981.
Andhra Pradesh	1958-69 (11 districts) 1994-97 (entire state)	
Haryana	1996-98	
Bihar	1977-80 2016 -	
Rajasthan	1977-79	
Nagaland	1989 -	
Mizoram	1997-2014	
Manipur	1991-2002 (entire state) 2002 - (5 districts)	
Lakshadweep	1979 –	Liquor is available only Bangaram Island as it is a tourist hub.
Apart from the above, states such as Kerala, Orissa, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, etc., had partial prohibition in certain districts during the 1950s and '60s. There was a trend of creeping prohibition in 1950s where states gradually increased the number of districts in their state under prohibition. The goal was to eventually move to total prohibition. But over time the need for revenue led to the end of creeping prohibition.		

While prohibition might never be a successful idea in curbing alcohol consumption, there are other ways to do the same. We need to understand one thing, alcohol consumption cannot be defined as 'right' or 'wrong', it exists in a little grey area. It need not be completely banned, however, its usage has to be curbed, restrained, and monitored for safer alcohol consumption practices. Problems related to alcoholism affect the poor more than the rich. We need to empower women in poor families to address this social evil. If they are empowered, they can handle these issues better. For example, the majority of the direct government cash benefits should be transferred into bank accounts of women heads of the family. When they have money they can handle men better. We can also find education and jobs or small business opportunities for them in their surroundings. It is statistically proven that an educated and financially independent woman can handle the situation better. An increase in taxes will have a two-pronged effect. On one hand, it will cause a drastic reduction in consumption, while on the other it will lead to an increase in the revenue earned. The increased revenue can be utilized to strengthen law enforcement and simultaneously open reformative centres for addicts. It can also be used to increase awareness among the community about the perils of alcohol consumption like domestic abuse, road rash, sexual assaults, etc.

Last but not the least, laws work better when instead of being 'reformative', they are 'retributive'. One cannot expect to change someones' mindset overnight. It is a lengthy process and as it is very rightly said, "The situation becomes worse before it improves".

MORE THAN JUST A GAME

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Sports is something most of us have always been fond of since our childhood. For some, it is just a leisurely activity while for some, it is a means for their livelihood. But not most of us are aware of the finance and management involved in sports. Ever wondered why Reliance industry limited bought an IPL team Mumbai Indians or why India cements bought Chennai super kings. It is just because along with on the field, sports play a major role off the field which includes branding and marketing, managing the sports operations, sponsorship and endorsements, broadcasting, risk management, retailing and merchandising, the media and public relations. In 2020, the Indian Sports Industry was estimated at around 6000 crores with cricket claiming a major 87 per cent share in the sports sponsorships.

These sports activities are governed by various organisations at various levels. For eg. International cricket is governed by ICC (international cricket council), international football is governed by FIFA (Fédération International de Football Association), international tennis is governed by ITF (international tennis federation) whereas in India cricket is governed by BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India), football by AIFF (All India Football Federation), and tennis by AITA (All India Tennis Association). These governing bodies form rules by which a sport is played and the lack of which will lead to unfair practices in sports like spot-fixing, doping etc. The governance is affected by several factors which include especially political and legal factors.

Finance

Finance is the blood of a business. You require finance to start a business, expand it or meet its day-to-day expenses. Similar is the case with sports businesses where finance is generated through bank loans, selling off assets, bringing in investment. People have an emotional connection with sports and they are very much involved in it. The whole country of Croatia was disheartened when they lost the final of FIFA 2018, most Indians were in tears when India lost in the 2019 cricket world cup semi-finals whereas everybody in South Africa celebrated when they won the rugby world in 2019. This is how sports dictate the mood of not a single person, but a nation as a whole.

Because of these emotions, fans do spend a lot of money on sports and this gives sports businesses other options to generate finance apart from the traditional ones which include sponsorships, telecasting rights, merchandising. Among the above-mentioned telecasting rights is the major source as while only some of them can visit the stadium to watch the match while most of them prefer to witness it live on televisions or their phone screens through various channels and applications. Star Sports have bought IPL's telecasting rights for 16,347.5 crores it has also bought telecasting rights of ISL (football), PKL (kabaddi), HIL (hockey), and also of international leagues like Bundesliga and English premier league. Just like SKY sports in the UK, Star sports enjoy a monopoly in India.

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Apart from it, you see your favourite sports personalities advertising for various companies. These are because of sponsorship deals where a company pays an amount of money to a club and in return, they promote their product through various ways like advertising, shirt sponsorships, naming rights for the stadium. Fosters oval and brit oval, the Allianz Stadium for Bayern Munich and Surrey county cricket club is now known as kia oval.

You see many people wearing their favourite team's jerseys, footwear. Especially when the tournaments are going on, consumer demands for such products are very high and that's how the clubs further generate more revenue. Nike is involved in three of the biggest endorsement deals with Lebron James, Tiger Wood and Cristiano Ronaldo.

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Risk Management

On 27 November 2014 Phil Hughes an Australian cricketer lost his life as he was hit on his neck by a bouncer. This shows that risk and sports are inseparable from each other. calculated risk has always been a part of sports as decisions like how many tires are to be switched during a formula one is very essential as maximum accidents take place due to the same reason. Apart from this the safety of spectators are also a very important factor as we have seen during these covid times, matches are being played under closed doors.

Betting and gambling

Predicting the result and placing a wager on the outcome legally or illegally is sports betting. Though all sports include betting, still very high bets are placed on boxing matches and horse races. Some People are fascinated by high financial gains, some have confidence in their intelligence and look for all conditions and possibilities before placing a bet, while some just do it for pleasure and excitement.

The amount of illegal betting is very high. Many sports are being affected by these betting scandals. This gambling further results in match-fixing and spot-fixing where players take a huge sum of money and perform according to the wish of the betters by compromising their natural games.

In 2007, Tim Donaghy, an NBA referee, placed a bet on the NBA matches and also leaked out the information to the gamblers after being caught in a debt trap. This was a huge scandal.

The governing bodies need to work very hard to put a pause on all such illegal activities. The punishment should be very strict for the offenders. There is a need to develop a framework for legalized betting.

Public Relations

In this new media era, public relations have become very important for a sports club. Social media has played a very major role in bringing up this revolution. Public Relations help sports clubs or individual players to manage communication with the public and repair their damaged reputation at the time of any crisis.

There are two major models of public relations, a one-way model and a two-way model. In the one-way model, sports clubs usually focus on spreading their message among the public basically through media while in a two-way model more emphasis is laid on interaction and communication. Social media is the best way for a two-way public relations model in today's time.

The future

The future of sports management is both inevitable and somewhat unpredictable. But that doesn't mean the managers can sit back and relax. They need to work hard on forecasting the possibilities of the future. Usually, we take the past and the current data and see the change and consider the change and try to predict what can be the future.

Though no one can generate an accurate picture of the future but with a correct operational strategy, good management and strong leadership, the future provides opportunities for success, not a portent for failure.

UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME: POSSIBLE REALITY OR BEAUTIFUL FANTASY?

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What is universal basic income?
Universal basic income refers to the fundamental income provided to each individual no matter their background to sustain their livelihood. The concept of UBI goes back centuries, brought in by the 16th-century English philosopher and statesman Thomas More in his best-known work, “Utopia”. Martin Luther King Jr. proposed the thought of “guaranteed income” in his book “Where can we Go from Here: Chaos or Community?” published in 1967. In layman’s language, we will explain it as getting money free with no questions asked.

UBI aims to supply people with minimum wherewithal with which they will access credit, safety against damages caused(insurance) and investments.

The need for universal basic income was observed during the recent covid-19 pandemic. Countless people lost their jobs, many businesses were finished off and folks were striving to urge a good standard of living.

Also with numerous industries moving towards automation for instance numerous supermarkets are adopting self-checkout counters which put the cashier's job in danger, similarly with self-driving cars by tesla and robot vacuum cleaners puts the roles of drivers and house helpers in danger respectively.

At these times it's important to usher in the concept of universal basic income so people can have a way of security during this ever-evolving environment. Aside from this, it'll increase the standard of our society by allowing everyone to pursue higher studies and have more freedom to decide on the roles that they're obsessed with without the fear of the way to afford the fundamentals.

According to data from Census 2011, the number of child labour in India is 10.1 million of which 5.6 million are boys and 4.5 million are girls. Universal basic income can eradicate child labour in India as there'll be no reason for kids in underprivileged households to work after they can afford the fundamental necessities.

Although there are other problems associated such as inflation. This can be because with providing a particular income to each individual the spending will increase resulting in a rise in demand and so prices of products leave people to their original state of not having the ability to afford necessities. However, this is often only supported as an assumption as Inflation may be a complex phenomenon and is affected by many other factors aside from the one mentioned above.

Some people also argue that UBI can also cause over-dependence or laziness amongst the people as they're getting the essential income to sustain themselves and so wouldn't work for a living which can have a negative impact socially and economically.
The results of this argument are shown within the real-life testing of UBI in many countries.

Karl Widerquist believes that it's wrong to come between anybody and the resources they need to survive.

REAL-TIME EXPERIMENTS:

The concept of UBI was experimented within Madhya Pradesh by selecting 20 villages and giving 8 the essential income. The opposite 12 were used as a support group to differentiate. The results were increased spending on food and healthcare. Children's performance was improved by 68%. Other results were savings and businesses doubled, sanitation, nutrition, healthcare and schooling improved and poverty declined.
Some other international experiments are as follows:-

From the above-conducted experiment, the results were as follows-

Finland
It was observed that the experiment provided a stronger incentive to work as in to pursue a less paid job that they like instead of a high paid job where they are not even getting the time for basic enjoyments of life. Within the case of Finland, there was no improvement in employment levels which proves the disadvantage of individuals getting lazy. An improvement in health care was observed and there was a rise within the happiness level of the sample group. Also, that they had less experience with bureaucracy and better financial well-being.

Whenever the states need money, they increase taxes and other duties on these two products. They get a good amount of money due to the high sales volume of these products. Because of these exclusions, GST is not 'one nation one tax' in its truest sense. Many states attribute almost 15% of their tax revenue to alcohol, with Mizoram and Puducherry earning more than 50% of their tax revenue from alcohol in 2018-19.

Canada
The experiment in Ontario Canada was started for 3 years in 2017. However, in July 2018 the experiment was stopped because of the change in government.
There was an improvement in healthcare in Canada and also the government saved money in healthcare thanks to this. Since it was a 3-year experiment and came to an end within a year it had a psychological effect due to their mindset of the experiment continuing for the full 3 years.

Even then it was reported that only 17% of the people left employment once the fundamental income was started and even during this half the population wanted to pursue higher studies and learn new skills for future employment.

Uganda
In Uganda, 535 people were selected and given grants of $382 and it had been observed that job opportunities increased and other people started their businesses which caused an overall improvement.

From the above results, it may be concluded that although within the case of Finland there was no increase in employed status in many other cases like that of Madhya Pradesh, Uganda and Canada a positive impact was observed.

Thus, we will say that this universal basic income may be seen as a basic right towards economic security to each individual and as Karl Widerquist believes that it's wrong to come between anybody and the resources they need to survive. Until now only some experiments have been conducted. More countries like the UK, Germany, Kenya, France, Canada, Netherlands, Sweden and plenty of other countries are springing up on how to conduct more experiments. we should always come up with ways on how to conduct more experiments in our country because it will solve many widespread problems like poverty, child labour, illiteracy by providing people with a basic income to sustain themselves, add on skills for his or her employment and pursue their passions instead of working on jobs they don't like they ought to get more skilled to try and do a job they always wished to do.

WHERE WILL THIS MONEY COME FROM?

For UBI to figure the largest challenge we perceive is to come up with such an enormous amount of cash so that every citizen can afford basic necessities. Once we consider the value that will be required to implement UBI we simply multiply the whole population by the essential income which could be a very simplistic calculation and doesn't consider many other factors.

Many experts like Karl Widerquist and George Arendt believe that the particular cost to the government would be much lower than actually multiplying the population by basic income provided to each individual. Many other factors would be involved like taxation, cut down of ineffective government schemes and subsidies to get replaced by UBI that might be implemented to support the value of UBI like UBI provided to the rich and upper-middle-class would return to the government by the means of taxes and thus the net benefit would be acquired by poor people.

Over the years we must observe and analyze the results and see whether the positives outweigh the negatives and find some way to attenuate the negatives to induce an improved implementation for UBI.

I WANT TO BE A FEMINIST

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I want to be a feminist, trust me I really do but as fascinating and righteous as it sounds to me, it's that much difficult in today's world. You might already have assumed what my gender is, still, let us try not to mention it because it should not really matter.

Feminism (n): the theory of advocacy of women's rights on the basis of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes. If you pick up a dictionary, that's the definition you are likely to find for the term 'feminism'. In layman's terms, feminism is a belief that men and women must have equal rights and opportunities. It also means that no injustice should be incurred on either of the sexes. There is a need for the utmost presence of a level playing field that respects the voices of all. In recent years, a new term has been surfacing the minds and the media, which is rightly called pseudo-feminism. Pseudo-feminists hold a strong resolve to correct all the injustices done to women, mostly by lashing out at men and demeaning them.

What they forget is the basic essence of the feminism movement: equality. Decades ago, there was a major imbalance of power as a result of deep-rooted patriarchy that made recognition of women's rights a difficult task. Common women weren't allowed to vote, were less educated and did not have near equal opportunities to grow.

The 'Feminism' movement was started to create balance and recognition of women's choices, their very lives outside of the household and inside as well, without being limited and restrictive. Situations and needs change with time, and they certainly have in the past century. Today, we acknowledge and admit that true feminism must only mean equality among both sexes. The youth of contemporary households are brought up in feminist environments, where both men and women do some share of work at their house. At the same time, they are exposed to the internet, flooded by the ocean of misinformation, especially about feminism.

Activists and even organizations routinely quote figures misinterpreted from studies and reports, portraying a very inaccurate picture of the world scenario.

Not that there is no injustice, but tens and hundreds of times inflation of a problem gives no solution. Always portraying women as victims creates a stigma in society and even traumatizes girls and even women, keeping them from one of the most normal things to experience as humans, interaction with the opposite gender. This is not what we have just heard or read, but what we have experienced ourselves. Treating women like a minority constantly re-enforces the societal belief that women are somewhere less able or valuable than men, which is the very thing feminism was meant to eradicate.

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Feminism is not a struggle to prove who suffers more.

Feminism, which was once a movement for good has turned into propaganda for organizations, activists, politicians, inaccurately depicting the condition and needs of one gender to promote a cause that has apparently lost its meaning. Men are often portrayed as evil beings from whom women need to stay safe, even the laws written in the constitution of India mention specific rights and provisions only for women. Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) has defined rape as an act of sex by a man with a woman if it was done against her will or without her consent. The clear demarcation of the two sexes has been made even in crimes as serious as rape. The use of terms ‘against HER will’ and ‘offense committed by HIM’ exhibit the disparity in true feminism. We urge you to think, how can it possibly be wrong to identify 'humans' as victims and accused, instead of women and men, respectively.

A woman's word against a man's is almost as equal as evidence. Looking at child sexual abuse specifically, the Indian government did find in 2019 that, children who were surveyed reported experiencing severe sexual abuse, including rape and sodomy, 57.3% were boys and 42.7% were girls. More recently, the Delhi-based Centre for Civil Society found that approximately 18% of Indian adult men surveyed reported being coerced or forced to have sex. Of those, 16% claimed a female perpetrator and 2% claimed a male perpetrator.

Women empowerment is given more weight than improving human life, which in fact can even be the need at times but often turns into resentment towards men. Being a man in such an environment feels patronizing, at times.

Women had fought for basic rights and equality, for their upliftment in a more male dominant society. We agree and say this again, to have ‘equal’ status and 100 years later, trying to turn the tables and re-establishing the very thing they fought, the other way around is certainly not the way feminism should be led. Aren't we all capable and competent beings who should be treated equally and not women who need to be brought up to the level of men?

Another popular belief is that there is gender bias in academics, industries, but the truth is jobs are not specifically labelled for men and women. Job segregation may still exist but is not based on the fact of one being a male or a female, but on biological factors and abilities, which cannot be argued upon.

Most teachers are women and they make great ones. At the same time in India, the labour sector has been predominantly consisting of males. Now, this cannot be remarked as sexist because there are not any gender-specific reservations equipped for these jobs. The sole reason for employment has been and should only be a person’s competence. Men are mostly found doing dangerous tasks like constructions, deployed in mines and various hazardous environments. According to a Forbes 2017 report, 4761 men died on jobs compared to 386 women. Where are these Feminists, advocating for rights irrespective of gender? The segregation from employment to social settings to households is the root cause for creating a vivid divide between the two sexes. This divide causes people to believe that there is, in fact, a vast distinction between men and women.

While every human deserves equal opportunity irrespective of gender we must also identify and accept biological, physiological and cognitive differences to be the common case. We need to stop these fabrications and work together to develop a healthy and competitive environment where humans mutually respect each other. We need to stand by each other and identify people as humans.

Feminism is not only a woman's battle, it is not a struggle to prove who suffers more. So, I guess I am a Feminist but most people who claim to be are not.

THE DAWN OF MODERN MARKETING

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What is the biggest transitional phase in one's life if we talk about the professional front? It is when he budges from high school to the university, the early adulthood phase. In school, the only concern one has is how to maximize their unit test marks, whereas when in college, he ponders upon a lot of things.

Getting good grades is not the only major concern, or rather not even a matter of concern in some cases. School offering a very protective and secure environment does not open many possibilities for a person to pursue. On the contrary, after passing out from school, one has to pave his way through the ocean of challenges, to reach the island of opportunities.

Exploring various industries is a must to get a clearer vision to understand where you want to head. One of the most promising industries which have shown humongous growth in past years is digital marketing. Digital marketing has shown a jump of more than 27000% from 2003 to 2017 in terms of revenue. It is expected to rise even more and touch a market of 151.8 billion US Dollars by 2027.

What is digital marketing?

Connecting with the audience in the right place at the right time has always been the goal of marketing. Today, it means meeting them online, where they already spend most of their time. Digital marketing is a method of marketing that makes use of the internet to endorse a product or service. It includes studying the online consumer trends and utilizing techniques like search engine optimization, Google AdWords, google analytics, social media, etc. for marketing a business both organically and inorganically. Organic here means creating a digital presence while not spending a penny like growing the Instagram page. Whereas when we use the help of paid tools like Google AdWords to showcase our ads to users, it is called inorganic marketing.

Why Digital Marketing?

Digital marketing enables a business to create its online presence effortlessly in the eyes of modern consumers most of whom are netizens. When everyone is spending a major portion of their routine immersed in the internet, the internet is undoubtedly the best platform to capture the attention of users and getting known. Digital marketing came into the lives of small and medium businesses as a boon. Everyone can't afford burly expenditure on marketing, neither everyone wants a pan-state ad for themselves. Digital marketing offered this group of select businesses an opportunity to grow by effectively marketing as per their choice without even spending too much. Due to the dynamic nature of this marketing tactic, every business, be it large corporates of times square or small enterprises of Chandi Chowk, is now adopting digital marketing as they gain awareness about the same.

The difference between conventional marketing and digital marketing:

Conventional marketing includes all the mass media sources of marketing that were used to communicate with the audience. Advertisements in newspapers, television, radio, hoardings, billboards, kiosks are all tools of conventional marketing. If we look at it, these media sources cater to a huge population without even considering if they even need or are interested in showcased the product or not!

"Instead of one-way interruption, Web marketing is about delivering useful content at just the right moment that a buyer needs it.

Let's take a hypothetical example. There is a Delhi-based matrimonial company that has published their advertisement in Delhi-NCR's newspaper. No doubt it received a wonderful reach of 4.5 crores, but only 1.70 crore people are unmarried out of which only 60 lac people were actually looking for a spouse. The advertisement had a wonderful outstretch but the conversion rate was extremely low. Since the advertisement was also seen by people who don't even need it, this implies that the conventional marketing strategies do not have a target audience and market (almost) aimlessly, spending hefty sums of money at the same time. Digital marketing solves this problem as it focuses only on the target audience keeping the cost minimal and results effectively at the same time. It won't show a matrimonial site to a 14-year-old or a 78-year-old searching science notes or hymns respectively on the internet. Since it presents the business/ product to the target audience only, the cost and conversion rate also improves.

How does digital marketing works?

Ever happened that you searched for a smartphone on google, and minutes later you start seeing ads of that and related smartphones on your social media and the websites you visit? This happens because the Internet never leaves us alone. Every application we use, every website we visit, search engine keeps a tap on our activity. They know everything about us from our favorite movie series to the phone we use. Analyzing this data helps businesses understand the mood of the public and market trends. This enables them to create effective digital marketing.

Is digital marketing useful for everyone?

Pertaining to the dynamic nature of digital marketing, it can work for any sort of business irrespective of the size of the organization, the product they deal in, and the place they are located. With the online world constantly evolving, newer digital marketing trends and strategies are coming into the picture unlocking more and more opportunities for businesses to prosper while creating a digital presence. However, the end goal and ideal result differ from business to business while creating a potent strategy. A family restaurant may aim to get as much as reach as possible, whereas an e-commerce store may aim to get maximum sales.

Future of digital marketing

With internet users increasing each day, digital marketing is sure to see an uptrend. When all the offices were shut down due to lockdown, digital marketing was the only industry to have a negligible impact on its revenue. The worldwide digital marketing software market was estimated at USD 49.43 billion in 2020, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 18.2 percent projected from 2021 to 2028. The market's growth may be ascribed to people's increasing desire for mobile devices for obtaining information on the move, as well as the ongoing shift from desktop PCs to smartphones. The development of smartphones has prompted consumers to consume more digital media, leading marketers to place more online advertising on social media and other digital platforms in order to gain greater exposure and visibility.

PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND IRRATIONAL DECISIONS

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Are humans actually rational like assumed in economic theories?

Traditional economics assumes that all individuals behave rationally — they have well-defined preferences and infinite cognitive abilities i.e. they are as smart as the smartest economist. Do you think you, as a consumer, behave that way? Do you think when you went to the shopping mall, your decision of buying that t-shirt that you thought was a bit overpriced was the best choice available to you? Did you look for that t-shirt online and in other stores to see if you can get it for a less price? Did you consider investing that money and then comparing the utility derived from buying that t-shirt with that derived from investing? You just liked it and bought it anyway, right?

A homo economicus mentality is assumed in traditional economics to explain economic theories and models.

An individual is considered to be an economic entity (homo economicus) who behaves in accordance with their rational self-interest and who is insensitive and emotionless. Students in their very first class of microeconomics are made familiar with such assumptions. However, humans do not always act "rational". They are often led by their emotions and biases. They do not necessarily view all decisions from the eye of an economist. This traditional view of people having fixed choices of rationality and making decisions to maximise pre-assumed and predetermined standards of utility cannot explain how individuals and firms make decisions in real life. This is because traditional economics talks about what people should do and not what people actually do.

In the eye of a traditional economist, an irrational decision is a decision that does not maximise the predetermined utility.

From individuals to firms, to policymakers who are experienced and professional economists, everyone makes decisions that do not pass the traditional rationality test. Behavioural economics talks about human behaviour in terms of making economic decisions. It gives economics a psychological perspective. The presence of psychology in economics was felt at a very early stage. However, it was studied and talked about in the mid 20th century. According to Laibson and List, “behavioural economics is a series of amendments to, not a rejection of, traditional economists.” Similar views are shared by other economists stating that behavioural economics is an advancement to traditional economics.

According to Laibson and List, there are six principles of behavioural economics-

1. While people attempt to select the finest possible choice, they are not always successful.
2. People are concerned more about losses than about gains.
3. People plan to do different things, but change their minds at the last minute.
4. While people care about their own benefits, they also care about the behaviour and benefits of others. In other words, people are not selfish.
5. Psychological factors make a difference in market transactions.

While, in theory, intervention is useful to prevent people’s behavioural bias, extensive use of intervention might not always be good.

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We need more than standard economic thinking which is based on an idealised conception of behaviour.

Famous economists and psychologists like Herbert Simon, Daniel Kahneman, Amos Tversky and Richard Thaler believe that irrational decisions are a result of cognitive biases and heuristics and have performed different experiments and proposed theories. Cognitive biases mean a systematic error in thinking that occurs when people are thinking and processing. Heuristics refer to mental shortcuts that individuals take to make decisions quickly.

Herbert Simon, an economist and cognitive psychologist was the first one to talk about heuristics in the 1950s. He suggested that though humans aim to make rational decisions, their judgement is subject to cognitive limitations.

Later, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky introduced the study of Heuristics. They described different ways that people engage in to fasten their decision-making process. Mark A. Calabria described many biases affecting the monetary policymakers in the USA like availability bias, representation bias, status quo bias, loss aversion, etc.

Later, Richard H. Thaler, who was awarded the 2017 Nobel Prize in economics for his contribution to the field of behavioural economics, said: “We need more than standard economic thinking, which is based on an idealised conception of behaviour. Instead, we need to focus on how people actually behave-a sensibility that defines the new field called ‘behavioural economics.” In 1994, Thaler, being concerned about the low rate of personal savings in the USA, emphasised the need to include psychology in traditional economics to understand the public's saving habits. He described that if people act rational i.e. in accordance with their life-cycle theory of saving, then under-saving would never occur.

Thaler believed that modern behavioural economics has three salient features. Traditional economics or fixed rational choices form the basic structure for developing theories of economic decisions and market equilibria. Consumer behaviour is analysed by various data-collection methods.

Observations of human behaviour, along with psychology concepts, are used to explain and understand why rational economic theories fail to describe the real world.

Kahneman and Tversky in 1979 critiqued the traditional utility theory and proposed an alternative model that people while making decisions “underweight outcomes that are merely probable in comparison with outcomes that are obtained with certainty. This tendency, which is called the certainty effect, contributes to risk aversion in choices involving sure gains and to risk seeking in choices involving sure losses.” In other words, a potential loss is psychologically perceived as more severe than an equivalent gain i.e. loss aversion. If an individual has to choose between an assured amount of $500 and a 50% possibility to get $1000, they would go with $500. Similarly, if an individual has to choose from an assured loss of $500 and a 30% possibility to lose $1000, they would go with a 30% possibility to lose $1000.

Thaler’s experiment of the Endowment effect offered a new addition to economic decision-making. The endowment effect describes a situation where people put more value to things merely because they own them.

Thaler, along with Kahneman and Knetsch, conducted an experiment where a few students of Cornell University were given coffee mugs and asked to sell them to those who haven't. This seemingly simple experiment made a very different observation. Those who had mugs were willing to sell it at a much higher price than those who did not have the mug and were willing to buy it at a much lower price. This made an observation of humans having an endowment towards products and how they value it higher than any similar good. We can therefore say that there exists a huge disparity between willingness to pay and willingness to accept the price.

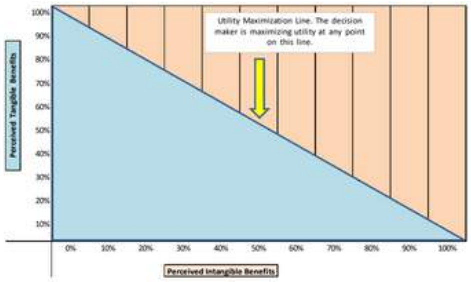
The recent work of Mahmoud Yousef Askari and Ghaleb A. El Refae gave behavioural economics a new perspective by describing the rationality of irrational decisions. Humans behave and act differently. Each individual should be seen as one and not whole. The perspective of seeing things that align with the traditional view as rational and everything else as irrational is, indeed, "irrational". The utility is beyond what people see or measure. Therefore, someone's utility cannot be determined and measured by someone else. Individuals, firms and nations make decisions to maximise their customised utility that serves their needs and circumstances. These decisions make sense to them, even if they do not pass the rationality test of traditional economists. This can be explained by saying that people judge others' rationality of decisions by using their own perception of rationality and utility.

Askari and Rafae propose a model where utility is the sum of tangible and intangible benefits that an individual would gain or expect to gain. This value of utility is maximised and determined by each individual based on the available information and the known alternatives at the time of decision making. This means that the utility of different individuals can be so different and their decisions can still be so rational and lead to maximisation of utility. This makes both buyers and sellers of stock rational, both heavy savers and heavy consumers as rational and both risk-averse and risk-takers as rational. Both tangible and tangible benefits should constitute the utility, even if those benefits are to be gained some time in the future. An individual is making a rational decision i.e. maximising utility as long as they are seeing the benefits that are to be gained.

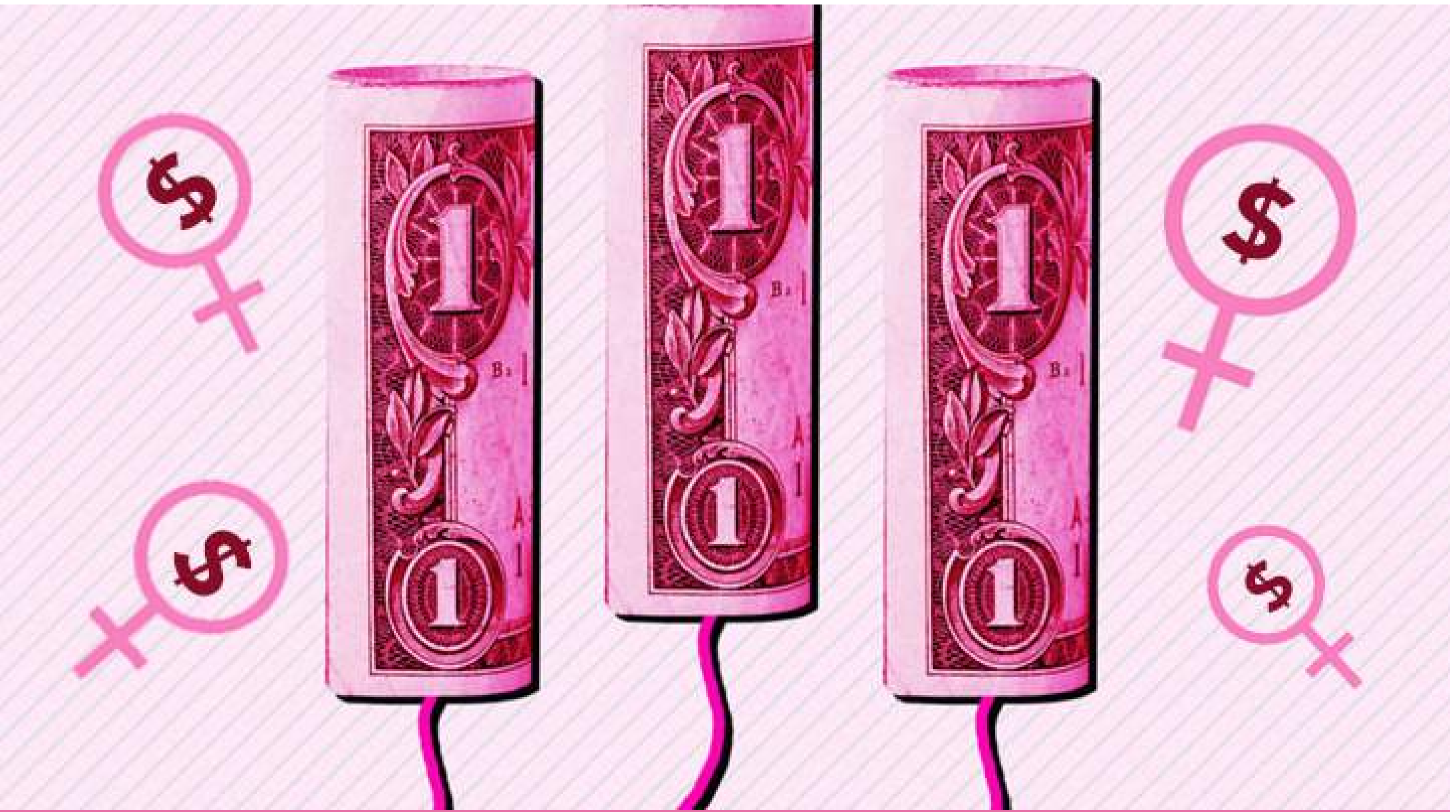
Following is the formula of utility proposed by Askari and Rafae that shows the rationality of every decision-

$$U=PTB+PINB$$

where:
U: Utility
PTB: Perceived Tangible Benefits
PINB: Perceived Intangible Benefits
Here, the sum of tangible and intangible benefits is the maximised utility which is 100%. Therefore, there could be infinite possible combinations of tangible and intangible benefits, eg- 80% attributed to tangible benefits and 20% attributed to intangible benefits.



Economics is a field of social sciences and is not a pure science like mathematics or physics. There isn't one right answer and no one can claim to have the right answers alone. Therefore, economics cannot chase one "right" answer. Individuals make decisions every day. From deciding whether to buy a t-shirt or not to choose from various investment options, they try to maximise their utility with given information, knowledge and time. However, they make mistakes. Their cognitive biases and heuristics affect their decision-making. They do not always act rationally. However, this could be countered by saying that every decision an individual makes is rational as long as they see the intangible and tangible benefits. An individual's rationality cannot be defined and determined by someone else. A decision that is seen as rational by one, could be considered irrational by others. Economics assumes rationality and ceteris paribus to make a basis for theories and models. However, the real world is more complex than that. It needs a behavioural eye to understand human behaviour and decision-making.



THE HIDDEN SEXIST BURDEN: PINK TAX

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What does the colour Pink conjure up in your mind? Does it symbolise childhood, romance, sweetness or a classic - it's a girly colour.

What is Pink Tax and how does it work?
It is an invisible tax that creates gender-based pricing, with women being charged more for the same line of products than men. To put it another way, it's not a tax at all but it's a pricing model.
For Example - A razor marketed for a man and coloured blue perhaps or black or silver is charged mere rupees 80. On the other hand, a razor marketed for a woman coloured pink filled with strips of moisturizer magic that will make your skin sparkle like a diamond is charged for 250. In a nutshell, products made for women generally cost more.

According to Jennifer Weiss – Wolf, a lawyer, vice president for the Brennan School of Justice at NYU School of Law, and co-founder of Period Equity it's an "income-generating scenario for private companies who found a way to make their product look either more directed to or more appropriate for the population and saw that as a money-maker,"
"I think the motivations around the pink tax come more explicitly from a classic capitalist stance: If you can make money off of it, you should," she continues.

According to a 2015 report by **New York City's Department of Consumer Affairs,** they looked at 5 industries, 24 stores, 91 brands, 35 product categories, and 794 products for this study, and here's what they discovered: Women's items cost 7% more than men's products on average across all five industries, according to Department of Consumer Affairs.
Specifically
· 7% more for toys and children
· 4% more for children's clothing
· 8% more for adult clothing
· 13% more for personal care products
· 8% more for health care products
Product prices for female customers were higher than those for male consumers in all but five of the 35 or product categories studied. DCA reported that

women's items cost 42 percent more than men's products on average, while men's products cost 18 percent more.

According to the Financial Survey on parents by British-based Company LoveMoney says that raising a daughter is costlier, though they estimate it at only $200 extra per year.

Gender-biased IT algorithms have been discovered as a result of recent technological advancements, and online consumerism research. Gender inequalities in recommender systems in fashion were explored in a study published in 2020 by the University of Bamberg in Germany. This study found that pricing recommendations differed significantly depending on which gender was being targeted, indicating that gender-based price discrimination exists online. Overall, female product suggestions have a 5% larger premium than male counterparts.

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The pink tax has a negative economic impact on women's purchasing power, especially when combined with gender pay gap.

Women are already at a disadvantage in terms of purchasing power due to the salary disparity. In the United States, women earn on average 89 cents for every dollar earned by males, implying that women have less money to spend on goods and services than men. This alone provides men with more money and, as a result, more purchasing power. The pink tax exacerbates the disparity in income between men and women. Men have the bulk of the purchasing power in the economy since they pay more for goods and services promoted to women while earning less than women. Taxes on feminine hygiene items that males do not require exacerbate the disparity.

While the pink tax's longevity is rooted in social and cultural standards, the economic imbalance is directly passed on to consumers by companies. This isn't to say that companies actively seek out direct instances of gender discrimination when marketing to customers. Often, marketers are simply taking advantage of the chance to overprice female things to maintain what has become a constructed standard of female consumption.

Women are less price-sensitive than men as a result of society's gradual creation of deep underlying prejudices that convince them that such things are required. Men, for the most part, are unaffected by these biases. As a result, men's items are frequently packaged in neutral packaging that does not specify the product's features.

Said product may even be packaged in a squeeze tube, whilst women's items continue to be packaged in glass bottles and eye-catching pricey packaging designed to provoke emotion in female consumers to prey on their fears about gender norms. The strategy to differentiate packaging among equivalent commodities to target different genders using cultural perceptions would thereby raise the price. Producing a little quantity of pink product is more expensive than producing a huge quantity of another colour, such as black or blue. Of course, the packaging is not the only cause of the pink tax and the only issue that needs to be addressed to alleviate it. The issue still includes services and articles of clothes that haven't been packaged. All of these antics, as well as imagined demands from the news and media, teach women the expectations of them as a result of their membership in the female gender from a young age. Women are socialized to believe that their natural beauty is insufficient and that the only way to be accepted is to buy these pink branded items. The pressure that women face in their daily lives to meet society's expectations of their appearances remains unacknowledged. Women are educated from an early age to buy pink products to appear feminine, therefore these expectations go hand in hand with gender pricing.

What can be done to tackle the problem of the Pink Tax?

This is the problem that everyone has to come together to solve. Educating each other on Pink Tax is vitally important. Exposing these problems on social media and mass campaigns can also make a huge difference.

- Refrain from patronizing stores that charge a pink tax.
- If the difference isn't significant, go with the generic version.
- Support companies who have shifted to gender-neutral pricing

So we can give the Pink Tax a red slip and let's enjoy the colour pink the way it was meant to be enjoyed.

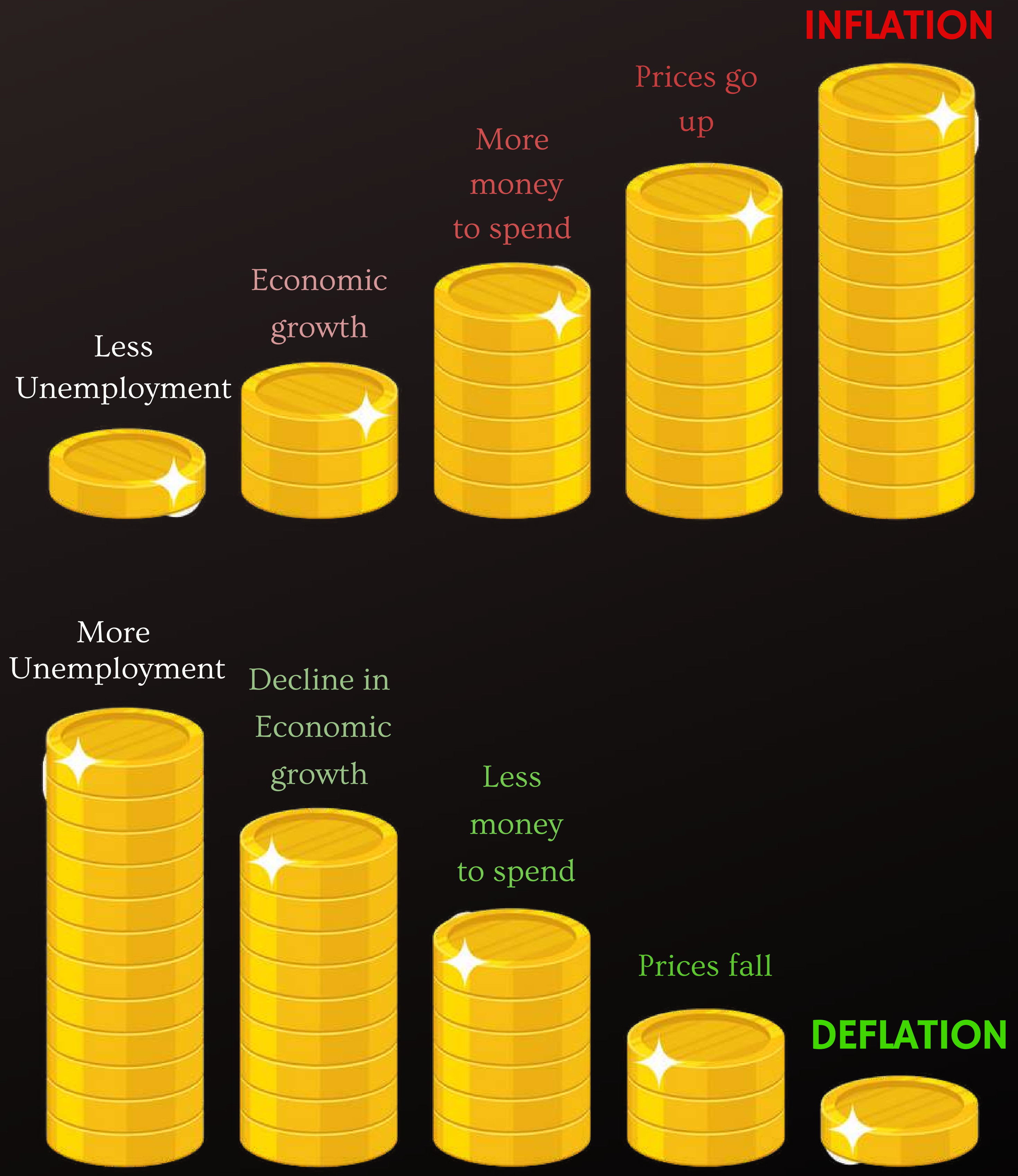
ECONOMICS

U N B O U N D E D

WHAT'S INSIDE

- The Matrix of Modern Indian Economy
- Happily Ever After with Economics
- Job Destruction: Precursor to Real Growth

THE PHILLIPS CURVE: EXPLAINED



THE MATRIX OF MODERN INDIAN ECONOMY

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Recent Indian economic trends have seen a shift from the earlier mixed economy to a more capitalistic one. One may debate that the new generation of Indian government and economists is what's causing this.

Adam Smith would say let the markets be further free of restrictions which is contrary to what India does and how it does it. With so much of the economy dependent upon globalization and foreign outflows, many scholarly people believe that the risk we are exposed to is also more compared to earlier times when the entry was restricted. Capitalist ideologies and active privatization would increase the market dependency and competition in the economy, and any kind of low efficiency in the industries would cease to exist under perfect competition.

Although modern economics is not free of bias, capitalism is deeply rooted and important in modern society where the efficiency of workers is required in a competitive globally integrated market. Now communism, anarchy and socialism are also widely debated in Indian economics but the influence of Keynesian theory is much more in the structure of India, as the financial stimulus packages announced by the current ruling party to offer some relief to the agricultural sector, MSMEs, street vendors, NBFCs, DISCOMs and real estate sector are very much in line with Keynesian economics, as the government has intended to spend more, create more Agro-infrastructure, but more money in the hands of the people. Now communism, anarchy and socialism are also widely debated in Indian economics but the influence of Keynesian theory is much more in the structure of India, as the financial stimulus packages announced by the current ruling party to offer some relief to the agricultural sector, MSMEs, street vendors, NBFCs, DISCOMs and real estate sector are very much in line with Keynesian economics, as the government has intended to spend more, create more Agro-infrastructure, but more money in the hands of the people.

The Indian government is also seen using the modern Nudy theory by Richard thaler by implementing various campaigns for the public benefit both economically and socially for eg Swachh Bharat Mission, GiveItUp campaign for gas cylinder subsidy,and Beti Bachao Beti

Talking about the current Indian economy, the past Indian economy has been through a lot of ups and downs to recognize the need for combination, integration to modern economics. Indian economy went from a socialist conservative to an active privatizing economy that we are seeing now, some believe that "Government has no business being in business" and should focus on the country's management while some contrary to this belief want the government to withhold control in PSUs. Now, the Indian economy pre-1991 reforms had a slow growth compared to the modern world and satirically it was mentioned to be 'Hindu Rate of Growth' as economists believed that it was due to religious constraints that caused hindrance in the development and modernization. This wasn't true as it was the constraints that caused slow economic growth.

> **Although modern economics is not free of bias, capitalism is deeply rooted and important in modern society where efficiency of workers is required in a competitive globally integrated market.**

The entrance of foreign companies caused a robust growth and boost in the modernization process of India. FDIs introduced new technology and caused crowding in effect ('Crowding in' is when the Introduction of Foreign technology causes an increase in profit/sales for the domestic firms). MNEs (Multinational Enterprises) expect a positive outcome of the new reforms and thus FPI/FIIs (foreign Portfolio Investors/Foreign Institutional Investor) inflow have increased tremendously in India. Minimum government, maximum governance imply that both structural reforms and ease of doing are being undertaken. Disinvestment, deregulation, monetization is happening equally as archaic laws are being banished, compliances are being brought down in number, and greater transparency is infused by the adoption of technology.

Thus, globalization exposed us to newer challenges and mixed economic transformation, a capitalistic one is what modern society requires. Slight interference or Nudge by the government is indeed very important for the safety of an economy. We have seen how dependence on Foreign flows is exposed to the World Economic crisis where BPL (Below Poverty line) people of our country are exposed to more damages than everyone else. Sudden inflow and outflow by FIIs are further deteriorating the Indian economy. They act as market takers instead of market makers which is harmful to an emerging economy like India. For every 1$ invested by Foreign Institutional Investor, considering 30% return, we are bound to give them 1.30$. Thus, we are exposed to much more risk, return, damages than the benefits we receive from globalization. Integration of MNEs (Multinational Enterprises) with deeply rooted Indian markets is taking away jobs of people employed in SMEs (Small Scale Industries).

Even the New agriculture reforms are believed to have a deteriorating effect on the agriculture industry as exploitation is believed to be more when Private Industries enter the agriculture market.

What type of economic school has India followed?
Well, India's economy doesn't necessarily follow one economic thought and it is perhaps even impossible for an economy to stick to one school of thought. Our economy has perhaps taken good parts of various economic theories and that is one of the best aspects of India. From old Keynesian theory to recent Nudge theory the government has introduced every possible behavioral/technical economical tool required to uplift the economy. GST(Goods and Service Tax is an indirect tax (or consumption tax) used in India on the supply of goods and services.) The introduction was one of the driving forces and perhaps one of the major modern decisions by the government that shifted the burden of tax and introduced new areas of revenue collection by withholding tax revenues to earlier areas. States faced a lot of deficits in revenue due to GST introduction but the overall result of GST has been positive. GST has changed VAT all over India. Now there is no need to pay taxes all over the states. Also, the tax administration has started working corruption-free enabling sales invoices to show the tax applied has resulted in transparency. New economic reforms bring problems for a few but without a change, the society will remain to what it was and we wouldn't be able to reach our potential. The introduction of new reforms in economics, debated by many, is necessary for the development and moving forward.

Thus, the modern Indian economy can be divided into various segments and various methodologies which can be observed in the Indian economic structure. What is good for India? New privatizing reforms? Old Public Benefits which encourage freeloaders? Listening to Biased Public Opinions? All these unanswered questions will be answered by the passage of time when the economic endeavour India takes will result in either success or failure.

HAPPILY EVER AFTER WITH ECONOMICS

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Economics is often deemed to be alien, cold to realities, and riddled with never-ending theorems, formulas and principles. To an outside eye, they might look downright insane, but such a proposition can not be farther from the truth.

Economics is the other word of dynamism, it is ever-changing and brimming with activities yet subtle and calm, but it is seldom that one gets to observe economics in this way. Compare this to a Big Fat Indian Wedding, the contrast could not be more stark, right?
The pompous show of overflowing extravaganza dwarfs even the mightiest of Bollywood movie sets. It is colourful, dazzling, moving and foremost it is Alive.

Let's be honest, however brilliant an economic equation might be, it can not stand a chance in front of that Punjabi tune, in the late-night wedding, which always makes you move a step on the dance floor, but wonder what would happen if we'd connect these two?
Economists have a funny habit of deriving lessons of economics even in the weirdest of the places and this

In The Search of 'Suitable' Love
Well, before we start our preparations for our royal wedding, first let us find a match. We really can not start talking about weddings without finding the significant other you plan to spend the rest of your life with. This is exactly what many startups are actively targeting as a viable and profitable business plan.
In this world of crazy matchmaking, Matrimonial apps and websites are emerging as the most popular window to find a suitable partner. Like everything in India, the variety of Matrimonial apps you will find in India, each designed for a targeted audience is mind-boggling.

A different platform for each group, 'Elite Matrimony' for IAS and Doctors, one for NRIs, one operating specifically for those working in Google and other biggest corporations in the world. The combinations of targeted audiences for such platforms are endless. The varieties of the same platform, working for various sections, is what makes many go crazy, and it is here, we do matchmaking of Matrimonial platforms and Economics.

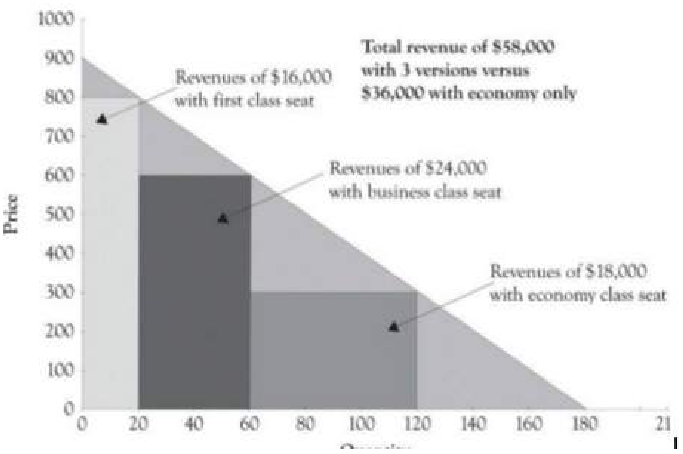
The most evident application of Economics on these Matrimonial platforms can be observed in the practice of ‘Quality Discrimination’. The more specific the service you demand from the Matrimonial apps and websites, the more they will charge you.

For example, a general search for partners would cost you less than, let’s say if you want to find a partner who has studied in IITs and has cleared the UPSC, or someone who is settled in some foreign country. It might be very difficult, even next to impossible, if you would try to find an NRI on your general search.

Companies deliberately disable some parts of their platforms, to charge a premium for a better quality of search options. This practice is called ‘Versioning’, where Matrimonial apps create versions of their platform to earn a better profit.

Economic applications can be found even in the wildest places, only if one looks with a keen eye. This is the interesting world of Economics, which truly blends into our world and creates the most magnificent of our symphonies. Humanity has found its perfect match: Economics!

This can also be observed when these platforms restrict you to access to the bio-data of a potential partner, and reserve this option only for the ‘Premium’ users, who of course pay them more. In the crazy world of searching for love, Economics and Matrimonial apps have entered into an exciting partnership!



In Sickness and In Health

Well, now that we have found your significant other, let us start your wedding planning. Unlike your family deciding or approving your partner, now, it would be the society deciding how you will plan your wedding.

Yes! Again, not you, but society will decide how your wedding will look, and with all the other crazy unexplainable things, economics will play a major part in it. It relates to how most of our decisions are taken in a social context within social networks and norms.

What it means is that people imitate each other, within a social network, and when a societal norm is fixed, everyone tends to follow it, irrespective of their rationality. In Indian societies, weddings have been closely linked to societal status, and extravagant weddings, sometimes even beyond households’ capacity to arrange, are considered normal.

So strong is this societal norm, that it has even rendered the ‘Indian Wedding Market’ almost recession-proof. Be it slowdown or a boom, the Indian Weddings never fail to impress anyone, if anything they just grow bigger. This is the sphere of Behavioural Economics, which gives paramount importance to consumers’ behaviour in their decision-making process.
Behaviour Economics challenges the notion of consumers making ‘Isolated’ and ‘Rational’ decisions, as suggested by Classical Economics. Contrary to rationality, the parents, or whoever is financing the wedding, get so irrational, that they get ready to use their entire life savings in organizing just a single event.

It defeats the basic assumption, of almost every economic model, that people are ‘Rational’, that they would try to save money by doing a small ceremony, that they would like to cut down on the guest list. They will not, and they can not because fitting into the social hierarchy is as important as saving money, if not more.
So, it turns out that even your long-forgotten uncle meeting you in your marriage can again be blamed on Economics. A purely rational economic man is indeed close to being a social moron. So your wedding will be as good as others in your community, because Indian Weddings are supposed to be extravagant, in sickness and in health, thanks to Economics!

Till Death Do Us Part?

Once you have married and the happy honeymoon phase is over, now comes the tricky option and struggle of continuing with your marriage. It is indeed a daunting task, with many even claiming it to be perpetual imprisonment. But what is the benefit of continuing a marriage?

Well, looking at it from a pure economics point of view, the benefits are immense. According to research, it has been established that married people tend to be richer than their unmarried counterparts, with an estimate, pegging this growth of married couple's wealth, over the unmarried people, at 77%.

But hold on! It is not your love luck that is making you richer, it is Economics that is making you richer, and here enters one of the most popular economic principles, 'Economies of Scale'. Economies of scale say that firms become more efficient when the cost is spread out over a large number of goods.

Such a principle can also be applied to households, where the cost of common utilities, such as cooling services, car maintenance, and many more expenditures, is divided among you and your partner, reducing the per capita expenditure on both of you. Indeed sharing is caring, but sharing is saving too.

But marriages also let you focus on your turf, while the other work is managed by your partner, which leads us to our next Economic principle, 'Specialisation'. It makes you more efficient and effective at your work, leading to more growth. Overall, marriage makes you grow richer, so stick to it. Love and Economics bring everyone closer!

Economics: The Love of Everything

Through a single event of a marriage, we have already discovered the interesting story of 'Quality Discrimination', 'Behavioural Economics', and 'Specialisation'. Who could have wondered, that even something as moving as an Indian Wedding, would be so finely meshed with alien seeming theorems and principles?

One can confidently claim now that Economics truly moves with you, on each step of your wedding. But do you know what the best part is? It is just the tip of the iceberg. There are many principles, influencing not only weddings, but everything, from our sleeping pattern to our dinner, from our friends to our families, and everything in between.

Economic applications can be found even in the wildest places, only if one looks with a keen eye. This is the interesting world of Economics, which truly blends into our world and creates the most magnificent of our symphonies. Humanity has found its perfect match: Economics!

JOB DESTRUCTION: PRECURSOR TO REAL GROWTH

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An economy that really wants progress, needs to understand that it would be able to embark on the vehicle of progress only when it comes to terms with the fact that the ticket of the vehicle costs job destruction. I might sound inhumane and my words might seem inconceivable. However, the eternal truth is that "Real progress comes from job destruction". When an economy ascends the vehicle of progress and growth then it traverses the paths where it witnesses new types of jobs being created. But, if it continues to hang on to the original jobs, only these new jobs requiring new skills won't get created and would ultimately hamper the development. Instead, we should make the original jobs more productive so that fewer people can produce and allow others to move on to newer types of jobs. Job destruction aims at improving the present jobs so that marginal productivity could be increased. Job destruction is about the willingness to completely utilize all inputs, especially human resources.

When we talk about job destruction by optimally increasing marginal productivity of a job then the classical trade-off between efficiency and equity comes into the picture. This is because we misunderstand the idea of destroying jobs that are redundant. An economy doesn't progress when it only focuses on making the jobs efficient and doesn't take the inefficient labour forces into account. An economy can never progress when it ignores its most valuable assets i.e., human resources. It is about holistic development which is possible only when we accept whatever we have (efficient and inefficient labour forces) and with this acceptance, moving towards the desired result. If we closely study the road map of the development of some super economies then we will witness the multiplier effect that increasing marginal productivity has in creating spheres of development by creating new jobs.

Thus, job refinement or what we say job destruction has a multiplier effect which, although it starts with making some people unemployed yet ends up creating far more employment. So, it's not about heading towards a conclusion without having a comprehensive idea of the entire process. An economy of vision inevitably understands that when it is about economic growth then there might be some chaos in employment but that is not the end of the process, it is the point where the real progress begins. However, this process is not observed explicitly by everyone and people might ask how the chaos in the labour market results in the creation of new jobs. This process is possible when an economy has active citizens. Merely the Government can't help an economy in the process that starts just after job optimization, which leads to job destruction.

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Every economy should aim at acquiring the vision which allows them to see the beauty of job destruction.

This begins with the idea of incorporating and nurturing new skills and only the Government is not responsible for this. It requires efforts from both ends .i.e., Government-Public. As the sole blood of democracy is its people , people cannot act as a dependent variable because then the democracy would succumb to death. Thus, we people cannot only depend on the Government, instead we ourselves have to take responsibility. Yes, it is true that the Government, as a representative body, ought to complement the people but a Government wouldn't be willing to complement a passive population who has given the control of its destiny to someone else. We people only blame the Government but never understand that it is our own making and thus we ourselves are to be blamed. A complacent and passive population only mourns the instability and thus shouldn't expect a development oriented and active Government . In democracy, if the Government is the king then one must not forget that we people are the kingmakers and with the same analogy if the Government is evil then we need to blame ourselves as we are the evil makers. So, it is always about consciously looking at the purpose- action relationship and vice versa because purpose determines actions and vice-versa. Thus, developing and acquiring new skills & knowledge should be the purpose of the people and the Government would respond accordingly. So, that's how this process of new job creation is accomplished. However, the smooth processing of this process is hardly seen as people are complacent and passive, and so is the government.

About 48% of the Indian population comes under the age group of fewer than 21 years (According to the census of India,2001). This means that the future of India could have been redefined into a super economy by redirecting the efforts into making people super skilled. However, in India most of the Govt. sectors have redundant jobs, a prime example that I Clearly see around me is 'BCCL'. As per recent sources, more than 50% of the Indian population comes below the age of 25 years. So, if people and Government were to aim for real growth and if people and Government were to work on developing skills then few fields wouldn't be flooded with redundant employees. So, what an economy needs is an effort from both ends. In the context of India, it is said that since it is a populous country it should go for labor-intensive technology. As a result, about 60% of the Indian population works in agriculture and disguised employment. If we compare this with America then we find that only about 11% American population relates to agriculture. Indian ideology believes that more population means more people to be employed in agriculture and thus more employment generates and agriculture prospers and so does the economy. See, this ideology ignores the beauty of job destruction. Just because India has a huge population doesn't mean that most of the population should be employed in agriculture. It is so because agriculture doesn't need that many people. Instead, people should be trained so that new jobs could be created. As a result, agriculture would have fewer participants producing the maximum output. Thus, their prosperity would touch the sky and there wouldn't be cases like suicides, which have been quite a common thing in Indian agriculture. The remaining 40-50% of farmers would now have the opportunity to become inventors, entrepreneurs, economists and that's how an economy develops. This clearly shows how the Government deceives people in the name of jobs or how people get themselves deceived in the name of jobs.

People must not fall for job creation because job creation, most of the time, hardly matters as job creation has many ulterior motives which aim at jeopardizing the mass. Government programs should be judged according to how it serves the long term goals of the economy, how it serves in creating new areas instead of hanging on to original jobs. One of the parameters on which a Government program could be justified is how it helps in improving the present jobs and thus improving the economy as a whole and how it helps in making the economy dynamic. And a dynamic economy needs flexible and dynamic human resources and Government and thus the cooperation of both. I would love to end this by accentuating the fact that every economy should aim at acquiring the vision which allows them to see the beauty of job destruction because within it lies the seeds of holistic development and growth.

BUSINESS & FINANCE

- The great retail industry: beyond the numbers and the buzz.
- A leap of faith

- Zombie companies: dead or alive
- Stock market: parallel world or perfect yardstick?

WHAT'S INSIDE

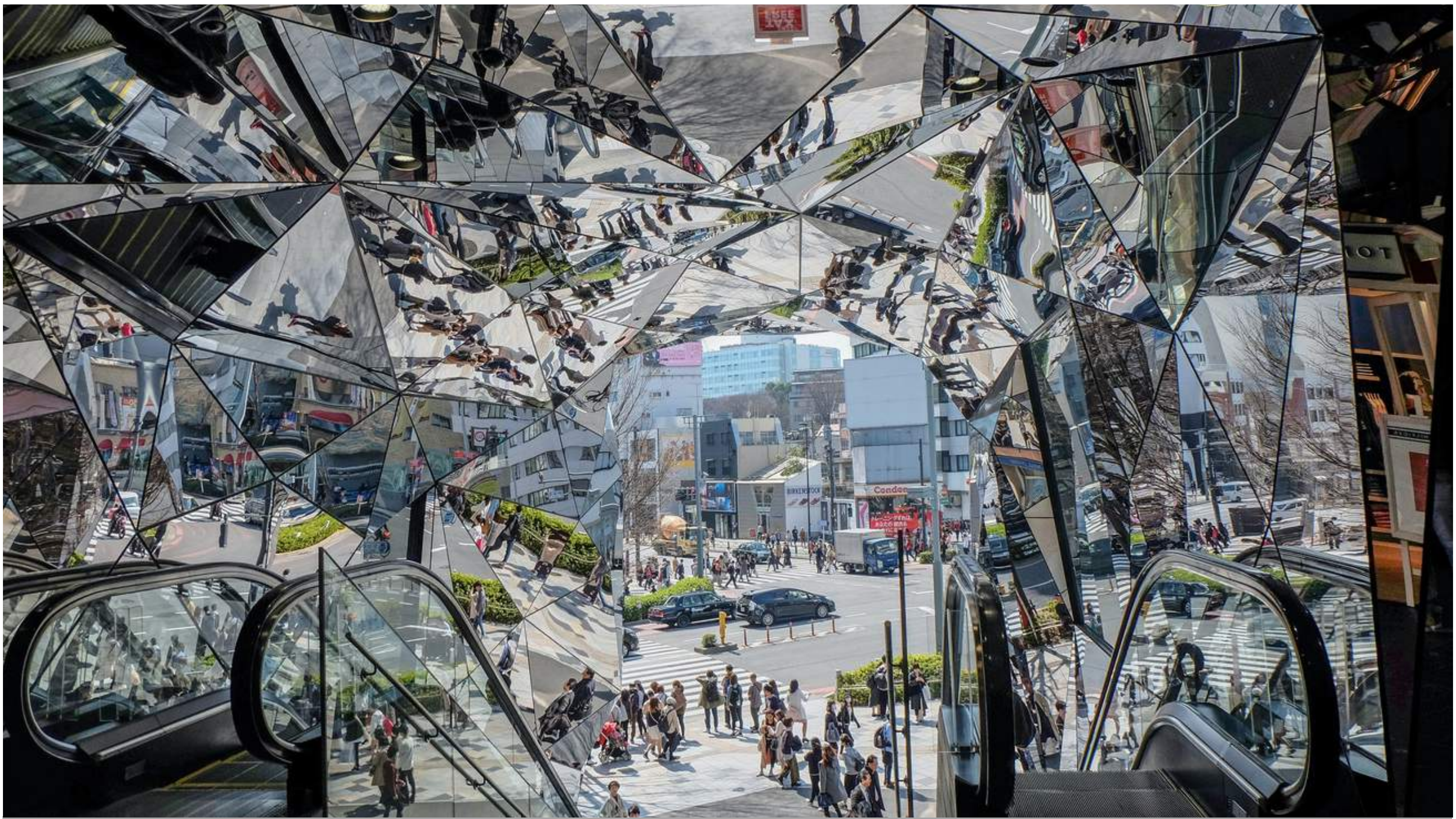
HOW STARBUCKS FUNCTIONS AS A BANK

Starbucks initiative of Starbucks Reward System is the beginning of the story. Now according to the system when an individual deposits money in Starbucks Account on the app.

In the USA 41 % of its customer uses the application for payment and deposit money in the application. Now the money deposited in Starbucks (for coffee) at 0 rates of interest has assisted the firm to earn $ 1.5 billion

As money in the account can only be withdrawn for coffee this gives advantage to Starbucks to bypass several financial regulations.

System assisted it to earn such a large amount for 0 rates of interest, which they can use for their several investment ventures.



THE GREAT RETAIL INDUSTRY:
BEYOND THE NUMBERS AND THE BUZZ

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The Indian retail sector has come a long way since its official inception. India is the 5th largest global destination in the world for retail space. Retail is in our culture from small pan shops right across the streets to local Kirana stores to some of the biggest malls in the country, retail is everywhere and it is a big part of our day-to-day life. With technological advancement and better internet across the country now a customer can readily order food, groceries and much more with just a couple of clicks and all this without the hassle of leaving your house and searching for products in the market that suits your needs. All this can be done because of technology and improvement in the retail sector.

The Retail industry has seen tremendous growth in the last couple of decades mainly due to high customer penetration and increasing middle-class families in the country.

The retail industry is expected to reach a whopping $1 trillion by the end of 2025. Currently, the retail sector contributes roughly 10% to India's GDP which is amongst the highest across different sectors. This industry is also one of the biggest employers in the country currently giving employment to more than 35 million people and is expected to add another 25 million-plus by the end of 2030 (Report by "To Retail 4.0" by NASSCOM). The Retail industry has a symbiotic relationship with the financial sector to maintain their working capital and the short-term loan they are heavily dependent on banks and the banks are dependent on them for the higher interest they charge on the short-term financing as opposed to long term financing. Indirectly the sector employs and supports a huge population of working people in the country.

Post-independence India had a strong policy against FDI and their role especially in the retail sector and this has led to the industry being dominated by unorganized retailing. Also, the majority of the population of our country lives in rural areas as compared to urban areas. After the liberalization of the economy in the 1990s, the country saw huge FDI inflow but not in the retail sector until 2006 when another law allowed FDI to invest and increase the rate at 51%. The big change was in the year 2011 when the government allowed full participation of the FDI's in the retail segment. Due to being so unorganized the true value of retail is estimated to be around 90% of overall retail in India in 2015 and is expected to decrease to 79% by 2025.

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Caring about customer and product is the most important thing in retail.

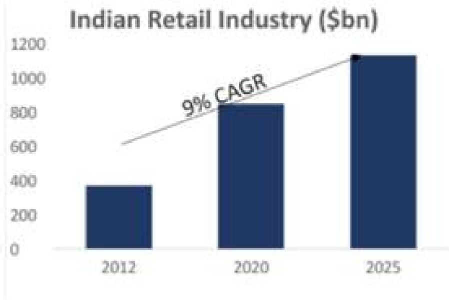
The growth in the organized sector is mainly because of less stringent policies towards FDI and more entry of private players in the segment. The rise of the middle class in the country is also one of the major factors as more and more families are earning well so they want to shop at better places that are generally organized and are maintained by private players.

Also, one of the major players in the retail segment is the E-Commerce segment, which has not only increased the customers reach but also has helped the companies in delivering a better product to their customers. E-commerce is expected to reach 8% of the overall retail industry by 2025 from just less than 1% in the year 2015. The rise of E-commerce is led by big MNCs investing heavily in the Indian market, for example being Walmart, Amazon, etc. This rise has also led the existing players in the retail segment to introduce online selling with better prices and discounts. The overall e-commerce is believed to be around $200 billion by 2025 as opposed to just $40 billion in 2018 (according to ibef.org).

The retail sector in itself is elastic but some of its constituents are inelastic and hence have shown more growth than others. For example, food and groceries are one of the fastest-growing sectors followed by Fashion, jewelry and handbag.

The Covid-19 pandemic affected the world when it started in early 2020 but in India, the major setback came in March in the form of a Nationwide lockdown. The lockdown not only affected lives but also businesses and the Retail sector was one of the hardest hit among others. Shops were either fully closed or open for just a couple of hours. Amid the pandemic, one part of the sector was growing. It was online or e-commerce and this led to other businesses to partially shift their traditional brick and mortar-based shops to sell online or via omnichannel presence.

The retail industry as a whole has shrunk to $750 billion as opposed to a projected increase to $900 billion. But, it is also the fastest recovering sector as more and more states are imposing less stringent lockdowns.
Organized retail is dominated by a handful of companies that are run by some of the biggest families in India.



Source- BCG-RAI report 2020.

1) Reliance Retail
RR is the biggest retailer in the country with revenues close to Rs1,50,000 Cr. It has more than 12000 stores in the country and is present in almost every sector. With its recent launch of Jio Marts, it has stepped into the E-commerce segment and is now fighting the traditional players for market share.

Some of the traditional companies in the retail sector are- Trent, V-Mart, D-Mart, Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail, Titan and Spencers.
Some of the E-commerce and E-Grocers in the retail industry- Amazon, Flipkart, Grofers, BigBasket, Dunzo, Easyday, etc.

India is one of the fastest-growing economies and with a large consumer base and now easing of FDI by the government we can expect a better and brighter future for the Retail sector in the country.

and said, “I think it’s a bubble, If it’s not a bubble now, I do believe it probably will be a bubble at some point because there are just so many people rushing into this space.” It’s a valid concern though. How can easily replicable jpegs that can be screen-shotted with a single click have a real long-lasting value? Is this just another pyramid scheme to come out of the world of crypto? The answer is Yes and No as some say that calling NFTs a pyramid scheme would mean calling sales a pyramid scheme and some say that due to NFTs being pyramid scheme people are already losing money and on one hand, the media will tell that the bubble has burst.

A great many NFTs have been losing the majority of their values over the last little while. However, something else has come of all of this, it has ushered in a new way of investing and purchasing. While it may seem like a fad now there’s a very good chance that this will be built upon totally transforming the way things work from now on.

A LEAP OF FAITH

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A lot of people wonder how Warren Buffett became so rich just by investing in stocks of different companies. The answer is simple- **BY STARTING.**

Taking the first step is the most important thing in doing anything. You must gather the courage to start, success and failure are a part of the journey. People fear the risk associated with the stock market. Everyone must understand that there is risk in every aspect of life and the benefit that we are presented with is the reward of taking that risk. To be a successful investor you have to mitigate the risk as much as you can.

Beginning your journey requires patience, investing your time to do your research and believing in yourself. I myself started my stock market journey a while back, it hasn't been a long time but it has taught me a lot of things till now and still, a lot is left to be learned. One cannot gain all the knowledge or learn all the lessons in a day or in a year, it takes time and with every passing day you learn something new. The one thing that is considered the most important and remains constant in one's journey is to learn to have patience and wait. Famous investor Charlie Munger once said, "The big money is not in the buying and selling, but in the waiting." None of the successful investors got rich overnight, it took years of investments and wait to be where they are currently.

Starting early and being consistent plays a big role in how much wealth you acquire over a period of time. Warren Buffett started investing when he was only 11. By starting early you give yourself a competitive advantage over others and give yourself ample time to learn and rectify mistakes early. It also gives your investments enough time to grow. Markets are always volatile and risky in shorter durations but generally, there's an uptrend and consistent growth over a longer period of time.

New investors often don't want to wait for a long stretch and cash out their investments when their investments go up by a certain percentage that they were anticipating or are happy with. They also panic when the stocks go down slightly due to any bad news about the country or any other reason. This causes them to panic and even sell their stocks at a loss sometimes. One can make a quick buck by buying and selling stocks in a short period of time but they must know that it involves a much higher degree of risk as compared to long term consistent investing. One of the famous sayings of Warren Buffett is " Successful investing takes time, discipline and patience. No matter how great the talent or effort, some things just take time: You can't produce a baby in one month by getting nine women pregnant".

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You must gather the courage to start, success and failure are a part of the journey.

New investors also often trade or invest in certain stocks just on some other person's or brokerage house's review, without doing any personal research. Blindly following a successful investor's stock picks is also not the way to go. It is important that one conducts his/her own proper research on various parameters and believes his/her own intuition. When starting your journey,

devise a strategy that suits you and your goals. Make changes and improvise your strategy over time with changing environments. It is advisable that at the beginning of one's journey one don't take huge risks. Start slowly and steadily and invest in blue-chip and dividend stocks at the start and as you gain knowledge about the industry you can start taking risks as per your own risk appetite. A famous saying

on taking risks by the oracle of Omaha- "Never test the depth of a river with both feet". Diversification is an important aspect to keep in mind while investing. It gives your investment portfolio room to breathe in times of economic instability. Diversification reduces risk and maximizes your returns.

A thing that must be in your mind always - DON'T PUT ALL YOUR EGGS IN ONE BASKET. It's not necessary to diversify in stocks only, you as an investor can diversify into various asset classes as your liking and comfort.

Diversification can be made within the stock market by investing in stocks of different companies belonging to different industries or by investing in different asset classes like bonds, precious metals and real estate.

I very clearly remember the day when I opened my Demat account and bought my first stock, it was a beautiful moment. I was both nervous and excited at the same time. It was a thrilling experience. The moment I started investing it gave me a sense of accomplishment. Before starting I had formulated a plan to invest and I went ahead with it. I had bought several shares so as to diversify my portfolio. I incurred both profits as well as losses in these shares. Watching the investments go down was nerve-wracking and scary at first but I gradually learned that it is a part and parcel of the experience.

The profits taught me what to do and the losses taught me what not to do. One thing that I learned from the stock market is that you never lose, you only learn.

I have made a lot of mistakes since I started and have lost money in some trades but I made sure that my profits are greater than my losses with the things I learned and the determination to succeed. I have come a long way since I started my journey on this path and I can definitely say that it is a beautiful path if you are interested and motivated.

ZOMBIE COMPANIES: DEAD OR ALIVE

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"Like the characters after which they are named, zombie firms are creatures that really should have shuffled off to the next realm some time ago. Instead of embracing death, they soldier on, usually wreaking havoc on the rest of society"

Zombie companies date their existence back to the 1990s wherein the burst of the Japanese asset pricing bubble brought a stagnation in the Japanese economy and the government and the central bank were rapidly bailing out companies with high debt obligations. As the name suggests, zombie companies are neither dead nor alive. These companies earn just enough operating revenue to finance their interest payments but are unable to repay the principal over the years. Therefore, they do not have any extra cash to fund their growth or investments. Similarly, zombie start-ups are those corporate entities that have received their initial funding but have no long-term prospects or cash flow to further their growth. These companies are stagnated or are near insolvency and in critical need of a bailout.

As the existence of zombie companies depends on creditors, a hike in interest rates will wipe out a significant number of zombie firms. The cost of debt will increase and the companies will not be able to meet their interest obligations. They are seen as a barrier to productive growth, which consequently affects their economic growth. Zombie companies have adverse effects on the economy from creating a blockage in the credit creation system to loss of jobs and significant societal impact. These companies depend on cheap credit with no intention of repaying the principal amount thus turning into non-performing assets for the respective banks. They operate in a dynamic business environment and cannot cater to changes in it. With a sudden change in the business environment, these companies tend to collapse and their collapse seeps into the economy like a contagion leading to a downward growth trend.

According to the Swiss-based Bank for International Settlements, zombie companies are now 12% of the publicly listed companies across 14 advanced economies. The above graph depicts the rise in the number of zombie companies since the financial crisis of 2007-08. The impact of zombies has been felt by major economies with the United States leading the number of zombies.

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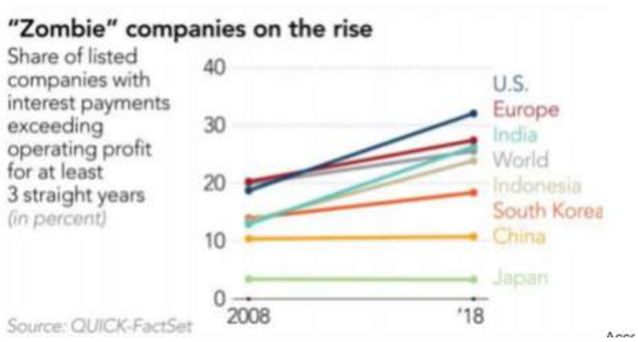
Zombie companies are corporate underachievers overdosed on cheap credit.

- Nikkei Asian

The number of zombies has gone up since 2007, after the 2007-08 financial crisis. The collapse of Lehman Brothers and the financial contagion led to a fall in the interest rates, easy availability of credit and thus making cheap loans more accessible. The main reasons why zombie companies are prevalent, and the number seems to be growing, explains itself on the negligence of the governments around the world that they do not let these companies go insolvent by bailing them out from time to time and keeping them on an edge. On an average the zombie companies have piled up $2 trillion in debt in the United States itself.



The Boeing Company

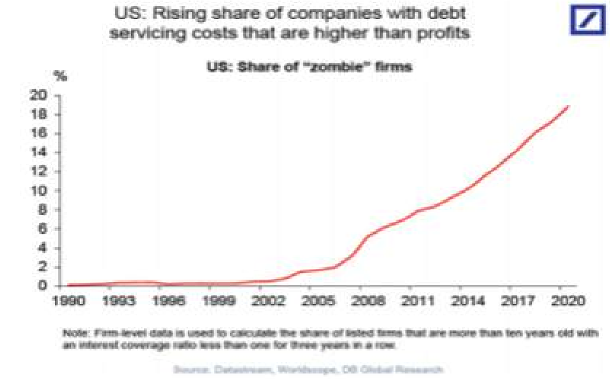
Boeing is an American multinational corporation that designs, manufactures, and sells aircraft. The Boeing Company was one of the blue-chip multinationals that America could have. However, the rigidity and instability of the airline industry and a series of events led to its collapse and, falling under the category of a zombie company. Designing Boeing 737 max did not happen in a single day. It was a long process with recurring revisions in the designing and modeling. All this led the company to overshoot its budget by around $32 billion. James McNerney, the then CEO and the board decided to finance this through debt financing. The crash of Boeing 737 Max was catastrophic for the company as it led to a fall in the consumer sentiments in the company and a rising number of lawsuits by the SEC and the families of those who had lost their loved ones. After continued scrutiny by the authorities, the CEO had to step down and a new CEO was appointed. While all this was happening, the company’s operations took a major hit and in no time the company found itself in a cash crunch and burdened under huge debt that it could not repay.

Zombie Companies in India

Zombies have been prevalent in India for as long as they came into the corporate scenario. The number has gone up ever since. In 2018, India accounted for almost 618 zombie companies. The main reason behind zombie companies seeping into the financial world is the lack of RBI policies and approaches towards these companies. In an attempt to eradicate this, the RBI introduced the Indian Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code to reduce the number of stressed loans and ease the insolvency process. However, this did not fall through as planned. Lack of confidence in the authorities set up by the RBI and the supreme court’s order to abolish the February 12 bill stating that RBI was exercising more power further added to bad policy implementation. All this along with the availability of cheap credit led to a rise in the number of zombie companies. The pandemic now has worsened the situation, compelling the RBI to slash down the interest rates and pump money into the economy to achieve their motive of cheap credit. However, zombie companies used this cheap credit to keep themselves alive.

Conclusion

Economies have been neglecting the rising number of zombies which calls for concern on these types of companies. Apart from weighing on the credit system they also hamper the overall economic growth. In 2018, 26% of the listed companies in India were zombie companies. They are "uncompetitive survivors" and add to bring down productivity in the economy. The strengthening of India’s insolvency system led to a small



improvement in zombie reporting. However, zombie companies have once again seen a rise in the number and have proliferated during the COVID-19 pandemic, which led the RBI to give loan moratoriums to borrowers, improved credit conditions, easy availability of funding, and direct government intervention. After easing the pandemic and RBI lifting off its moratorium many businesses have not been able to recover and repay their interest obligations. Faced with a mixture of economic and social demands, many analysts have suggested a range of policy proposals for zombies including the exclusion of zombies from government support, direct government support to workers instead of companies, grants instead of loans, recapitalization plans and insolvency regimes. Now the question stands whether the government and the central banks should continue bailing out these companies or let the ship sink?

STOCK MARKET: PARALLEL WORLD OR PERFECT YARDSTICK?

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India is a growing economy and is affected by many factors. Also, there are many indicators that show the health of the economy, like GDP, per capita income, etc. But in a generic sense, many people consider the stock market as an indicator as well. They can not be considered completely wrong per se but the concept of the movement of the stock market does not exactly work on the concept of economic health. So, the economic health of a country like India is related to the stock market but not directly. The economic health of a country can be judged on the difference between the income of the rich and the poor and the living conditions of the poor.

Firstly, coming to the concept of demand and supply. The stock market is an enclosed cycle of dealings that works only on demand and supply, the prices of the stocks are only changed due to this effect. The demand to purchase a particular stock will be fulfilled by the supply of that particular stock by some seller, the excess of that demand will force the buyers to quote a higher price on that stock which will push up the price subsequently. Similarly, if more people are trying to sell a particular stock, the excess supply will push the suppliers to sell their commodities at a lower price to a relatively lower number of buyers, thus pushing down the price. This clearly shows that the economic factors of a country do not directly play with the prices of the stocks. So basically, what affects the demand and supply of the stocks are public sentiments and future expectations. There are many scenarios in our country that clearly prove our point that economic health does not affect the prices of stocks. For instance, in 1992 Harshad Mehta scam the stock market crashed but there was no true impact of it on the economy of the country.

COVID 2019, played huge havoc on the global economy. Each and every state is affected by this pandemic and huge trade losses occurred to most of the industries.

BUT if we see the growth in the Indian stock market during this pandemic period, it completely contradicts the economic scenario. Initially, the market took a deep plunge. But due to certain reasons, it took such a steep spike that it broke its all-time highs. During this period only Sensex achieved its 50K milestone and reached higher than 52K points. Similarly, NIFTY 50 went higher than 1500 points (Here we are considering these two indexes as a true measuring parameter for the stock market). Now compare this to the economic health of India in the past year (taking GDP as a true measurement here), India's GDP is falling continuously each year from 2016 with a plunge of almost 2% in 2019 alone. Along with this, there is a further expected fall of 7.7% in the financial year 2020-2021. As per our observations, this difference is caused by the rising number of investors in the stock market in expectations of making profits in their free time due to lockdown.

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The concept of the movement of the stock market does not exactly work on the concept of economic health.

Also, this year recorded a record high amount of FII's and FDI's which further acted as an injection in the stock market. This rise in the capital being injected into the stock market is pushing up the stock market but the investors are pulling their capitals from other assets and investing them into the market, which thus does not have any sum total effect on the economy as capital is being pulled out of one place and reinvested in another place, instead of increasing. The increasing foreign investments are good for the economy but they are relatively low as compared to the in-country investors. Also, the measurement of the hike in the stock market is not completely reliable. The market indexes i.e., SENSEX and NIFTY are just an accumulation of top stocks that are considered as the market drivers. The actual real picture cannot be measured though. For example, if Maruti Suzuki takes a steep hike it will drive the whole index up but it is possible that the remaining market is not performing that well as it is being projected. This creates false expectations in people's minds that the market is going well where it may not be the case.

2020 was a great year for the Indian stock market with so many IPOs' launchings in the year which were welcomed by the investors with open arms. But these factors cannot be considered as a true indicator of the economic condition of the country as they show the increase in interest of people in investing in the stock market, rather than the economy.

Clearly, the stock market works on the sentiments of people where they are looking at a smaller picture of increasing stock prices of few stocks which thus induces a further hike. For instance, Adani's power has increased almost 6 times in the past 2 years, seeing such stocks increase so drastically induces the people to buy more thus increasing the price even further. Although this creates a bubble in the market which when burst may even create a freefall in the market. Such a bubble was the reason for The Great Recession of 2007-2008 which was caused by a bubble created by banks due to housing finances. There also, there was a play with the sentiments of people who were believing the economy is growing in leaps and bounds but the Bigger Picture was the contrary. Such a bubble is being created in our economy as well, wherein spite of the falling economy the stock market is rising.

Similarly, the profits being reported by the big corporations add to this bubble, which shows the profits the big firms are generating due to the situations of work from home and downsizing. It is costing a lot to the economy due to increasing unemployment and cutting down the salaries of people. This does not have a good impact on the economy as the gap between rich and the poor is being widened but the inflated profits add to the fantasy of growth in the economy. Here we can even see that the GDP or the per capita income of a country can also wrongfully present the economic situation of a country, thus there is no one true measure by which we can note the economic situation of a country.

The government policies and the union budget also have an impact on the stock market, although the effect on the economy comes in quite later. The Union Budget 2021 can clarify the picture quite nicely here, in the union budget 2021 the government announced many changes like initiatives to promote in house production and reduction of imports that would affect the Indian economy quite positively in the future, BUT the effect on the prices did not happen in real-time rather it happened as soon as the budget was declared. These changes will surely benefit the markets in the long run but the effect is coming in at such a premature stage which clearly shows how fickle the prices of stocks are. The volatility of the market even depends on the stability of the government. When elections happened in 2019, it was quite certain that the Modi government was to be reinstated again, the effect of this was low volatility of the market. Had there been steep competition in the elections the market would have gone haywire. The electing of a government body does not have any impact on the economic situation of any country.

Similarly, the effect of the announcement of the budget does not have any real-time impact on the economy. This difference in the real-time effect and the virtual effect is the main reason why we cannot take into account the stock market as a parameter for economic growth.
Therefore, we can clearly infer that the market sentiments and future expectations are the real market drivers and not the economy. We have discussed n number of reasons and circumstances where the economy is going to the dogs but the stock market is projecting otherwise. It does not mean that it works on a complimentary basis but what it actually means is that they both work on completely different platforms and cannot be related here.

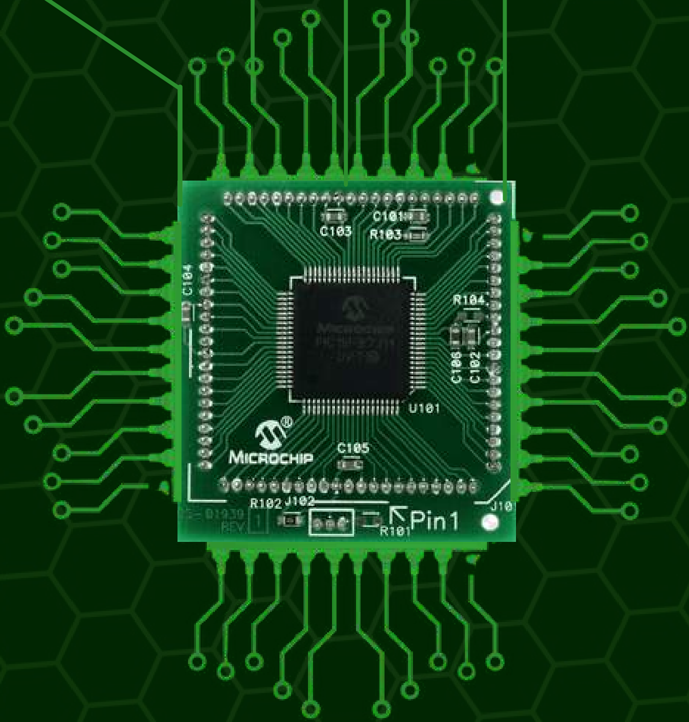
If the economy of a country grows it surely will have a positive impact on the stock market as well, but the time difference is the real issue here. Due to people being anxious about the forthcoming effect, the effect takes place prematurely which may or may not actually take place in the future. To conclude we can say that the stock market is not a good parameter to measure the economic health of a country.

FINTECH

THE ODYSSEY TO COME

WHAT'S INSIDE

Fact:
Chip shortage is expected to cost the auto industry $110 billion in revenue in 2021.



A semiconductor chip is an electric circuit with many components such as transistors and wiring formed on a semiconductor wafer.

Why is there shortage of semi-conductor chips?

Supply disruption due to Covid-19 Pandemic
US-China trade tensions
Sharp rise in demand for electronic goods
lack of investment in chip building capacities
Drought in Taiwan

THE EMERGING WORLD OF NFTS

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All of us have heard of the growing popularity of cryptocurrencies and digital money. However, one thing that has also been gaining a lot of attention is non-fungible tokens.

Non-fungible tokens or NFTs are a new kind of collectible to spend money on, or potentially earn lots of money. But unlike something like pokemon cards, comic books or traditional pieces of artwork like paintings, everything is entirely digital. But there is nothing shady here, they use blockchains to digitally record transactions and allow for certificates of authenticity for these digital assets.

Facts:

1. NFTs are not cryptocurrencies

It is easy to confuse NFTs with cryptocurrency. In the realm of digital transactions though, NFTs are not cryptocurrencies. There're very many differences between the two.

Cryptocurrencies are virtual currencies that use cryptography to secure and verify transactions. Additionally, there're programs in place to manage and control the creation of new currency units. On the other hand, NFTs are a digital or physical asset that has been associated with a unique cryptographic token and exists on a specific blockchain network. Their values also vary but are based on different factors. Cryptocurrency value depends on market fluctuations. However, since NFTs are actual items everything is based on the value of that actual item.

2. Very Volatile

Even though the NFTs are different from cryptocurrencies, they are just as volatile. It takes a special kind of a person to be able to cash in on the hype trains of NFTs. Even though the values of NFTs are based on the actual value of an actual item that doesn't mean that the values can't change. In actuality, they fluctuate all the time, sometimes to extreme levels.

3. Ownership of the NFT
One concept that exists with NFTs is the fact that just because you own an NFT you don't own the asset. The whole idea of the program is the challenge of ownership. Digital files can be reproduced infinitely and you usually don't buy the copyright or the license. Ex. One of the most expensive memes ever sold was the Nyan cat meme. It went for $ 590,000. The person who bought the token owns them but not the meme. That still belongs to the creator who held onto intellectual and creative rights. The owner of the token bought a record and a hash code showing ownership of the unique token associated with that particular asset.

> **People may download the same meme and use it on social media if they want, but they won't own the token associated with it, which means they can't sell it as the owner can.**

4. A Huge Variety
There's a huge variety of NFTs to choose from. There's a rule about NFTs: If it's digital then it can become an NFT, which has given rise to an incredible number and variety of digital items to become available on the various NFT platforms.
The band King Of Leons sold NFTs of their newest album and made over 2 million dollars. Luckily for all of us who aren't insanely rich, you don't have to jump right into bidding six figures, there are multiple NFT marketplaces out there. One of the biggest NFT marketplaces is Openza.

5. The First Tweet
The first tweet ever was sold for 2.9 million dollars. The tweet was sold to the CEO of Bridge Oracle, Sina Estavi, who believed it's just as important as buying the Mona Lisa. He went on to sell it again on a platform called Valuables, which is an online auction platform.

6. Digital Art
Digital art is a huge thing in the world of NFTs. Buyers are usually tech-savvy people who understand the concept of wanting to purchase a digital item. Jason Lau, COO of the crypto exchange platform OKCoin's aid in an email that specifically for art-related NFTs, there is a huge surge in demand due to their novelty and creativity for early artists. Whether it is a physical work with an attached NFT or entirely digital work, this new medium is opening new ways for collectors and artists to explore their relationship with the artwork itself. It rings true when you realize that some digital art has sold for tens of millions of dollars.

7. Its Viability
Anyone can create an NFT but it may not be worth it in the long run. In the free market of crypto, anyone can create anything they want and sell it as an NFT. Creating and selling an NFT is a difficult process, it is risky and it can be very expensive. First, the hidden fee can be prohibitively astronomical with sites charging a gas fee for every sale. This is the price for the energy it takes to complete a transaction. Then there comes the conversion fee and fluctuations in price depending on the time of day. But different sites have different fees attached which is the next tricky part, as there are so many of them and if you happen to choose the wrong one, you may end up being charged more in fees than you make from a sale.

8. Most expensive NFT
The most expensive piece of art sold as an NFT was $ 69.3 million. The artwork is named "Everydays: the First 5000 Days." This artwork was a compilation of the first 5000 digital arts of Beeple and it went up for auction at the world-renowned auction house Christie's. The bidding started at 100 dollars but it soon started to go higher and higher. Ultimately it got sold at a jaw-dropping price of 69.3 million dollars. Beeple has been an artist since May 2007 but was not very well known before 2021. Vignesh Sundaresan, also known as MetaKovan is the buyer of this NFT.

9. NFTs are used by financial platforms
NFTs are commonly used by financial platforms too. There's a massive market for PancakeSwap's NFTs which are artistic and convertible into cryptocurrency. People can speculate on the future price of the cashable amount as a result of this unique combination.

10."Just a bubble"
Many people think that this entire thing is just a bubble. Before his record-breaking auction, Beeple, whose real name is Mike Winkelmann, interviewed with the BBC .

AGE OF ULTRON?

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Ever since the turn of the century, "technological facilities" have seen an unprecedented rise. We have been constantly looking to upgrade and develop new technologies, to make our lives easier. The latest such invention in this field is "Artificial Intelligence" (AI). You'll be surprised to know that the first AI was developed in 1955, called the "Logical Theorist". However, the AI Revolution' really came in the 2000s. After that, every major company tried to incorporate AI in its products and today it will be impossible to imagine a world without AI.

In the last half a decade, AI has been implemented in risk management by many financial institutions. AI can drive operational and cost efficiencies, as well as strategic business transformation programs, including better and more tailored customer engagement. But that is just a bunch of financial jargon. The way AI can help in risk management is by identifying the risks efficiently and effectively.

While all this might sound great but we need to look at the downside as well because it is an extremely slippery slope from here to AI taking over humankind!

After the financial crisis of 2008, many Financial Service (FS) firms tried to explore different avenues to improve their appeal, provide better services and maintain competitiveness. One of these avenues was the inclusion of AI in their processes. However, there are still many obstacles that they need to overcome for AI to be successful.

First of all, AI works well only if large amounts of data are available. This is one of the major differences between the traditional system and AI. The traditional system can only perform those tasks that are 'predefined'. Whereas, AI is programmed in such a way that it learns from every task it performs and improves simultaneously.

This is why the quality and quantity of data are extremely important for AI to be successfully implemented. This is when Big Data Analytics comes into play. It is a complex process of examining large amounts of data to uncover information -- such as hidden patterns, correlations, market trends, and customer preferences -- that can help organizations make informed business decisions.

Now, big data may look like a solution however it is easier said than done. In an age when 'information is considered to be the biggest asset, it is extremely difficult to collect the amount of quality data necessary for an AI to work. The abundance of 'legacy systems' (outdated systems that serve their purpose but are unable to interact with new technology, thus, hampering the flow of data) and 'organizational silos' (divisions that operate independently and either avoid or can't share information due to system limitations) makes it even more difficult for FS firms to implement AI.

> **With the rise in the importance of information, there was an underlying need for transparency.**

Now, the fact that AI learns from its actions with time may be a major plus point but it also poses a big problem. With the rise in the importance of information, there was an underlying need for transparency. As AI learns with time, it generates many layers within itself. This might hamper the transparency of decision-making as it gets hard to determine what factors were taken into consideration before reaching the outcome. The speed at which an AI learns from itself is extremely quick. So, if it learns something wrong or takes into account something which it shouldn't, then that mistake will spread like a wildfire

In light of recent events regarding privacy violations, many rules have been passed to act as a safeguard against a future occurrence of the same. The 'General Data Protection Regulation' (GDPR) which has been passed in the European Union (EU), requires firms to explain to their customers how their data is being used. With the advent of AI, it might get difficult to explain to customers the reasoning behind a decision.

Although AI brings numerous benefits to the table, we can't look past the many problems it poses. The undeniable fact is that AI is the future in risk management and sooner or later we will switch to AI for better efficiency. It can augment human intelligence with the help of analytics and pattern prediction capabilities to improve the process of fraud and risk detection at a larger scale. They can significantly help in accelerating the compliance procedures while reducing costs. Until that happens, the financial service firms in coordination with the fintech sector need to overcome the hurdles that are posed by AI.

In the words of Thomas Edison, "There's a way to do it better- find it." Safeguards need to be put in place before going forward with AI, after all, we can't be too safe to avoid an "I, Robot" situation. I am pretty sure that Will Smith has better things to do with his time than save the world again.

CYBER INSURANCE:
A PRAGMATIC SOLUTION TO AN IMMINENT THREAT

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Cybercrimes and data breaches are escalating in this growing world with technological innovation, enhancement, and advancement. The confidential, sensitive, and protective information is exposed to unauthorized sources without any permission. From individuals to top leading corporations or governments, all are at risk of data breaches. Contemplating the issue of cybercrimes IRDA (Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India) recommended the introduction of a cyber insurance policy in India as it is rightly said, "They want what you've got. Don't give it to them".

What is a cyber insurance policy?

Cyber insurance is used to guard businesses against internet-based risks and risks in IT infrastructure, information privacy, and activities. Cyber insurance is a type of property and liability insurance.

It not only applies to technology-related companies, however, everybody is exposed to cyber liability to some extent. "One single vulnerability is all an attacker needs", one of the eg. Proposed by Daniel Kasper (who specializes in cyber risk and cyber insurance) in his interview was of an antique shop getting hacked or may have an error, leaks its customer database or other personally sensitive information Basically, according to him even non-technical businesses, as well as medium-sized firms, also have exposure towards cyber. In India, Companies like HDFC ERGO, TATA AIG, BAJAJ ALLIANZ, ICICI LOMBARD offer cyber insurance to protect from the risk of cyberattacks. Cyber insurance policy providers face numerous challenges as the cyber world is very dynamic with individuals evolving several new ways and techniques to attempt cyber crimes. It’s really hard for policy provider companies to be able to cope with rapid changes.

Coverage by the cyber insurance policy

Now the question arises: what does cyber insurance policy cover and not cover? So cyber insurance covers all the expenses incurred by first-party damage and the claims made by third parties. First party liability includes e-theft loss as a consequence of funds or property transfer, E-communication loss, E-Vandalism loss even caused by an employee, E-business interruption (extra expenses included). The cost covered also includes expenses on - investigation, remediation, call management, data subject notifications, legal costs, court attendance, and regulatory fines.

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They want what you've got. Don't give it to them.

Third-party liability includes Disclosure liability, Content. Liability includes claims for intellectual property, Reputational liability includes claims alleging disparagement of products or services, Defense costs, and Conduit liability i.e. claims arising from system security failures. The cyber insurance policy also covers cyber extortion i.e. the threat of data breaches, email spoofing i.e. manipulating email headers so that recipients understand that email is from the actual source and phishing i.e. sending fraud emails to induce individual or reputed companies to reveal personal information such as passwords or credit cards. Companies Taking cyber insurance should make sure that it covers all the damages and losses along with ransomware. Cyber insurance policy does not cover bodily injury, property damages, terrorism, utility failure, contractual liability, and protection from reputational risk, etc.

Cyber insurance: in India

Cyber insurance is still in its nascent stage in the Indian market. India was ranked 3rd among the top 20 countries as a victim of cyber-attacks according to the Internet Crime Report 2019. People are not serious unless and until it happens to them or dear ones. There is a lack of awareness and an abundance of invincibility thinking that it can't happen to us. Yes, indeed the government came up with various advertisements and television programs to create awareness about cybercrimes, however, the focus on the cyber insurance policy is still negligible. ICICI Lombard General Insurance launched a retail cyber liability policy to guard against digital fraud. During Covid-19 in June 2020, India faced 40,300 cyberattacks from China aiming at hijacking internet protocols and phishing. There was a spike in ransomware attacks which increased by 400% to 500% in 2020.

According to the Indian Computers, Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) over 3,13,000 cybersecurity incidents were reported in 2019, and approx. 375 cyber-attacks happen per day in India. Denmark is the most cyber-secure country and Tajikistan being the least cyber secure country in the world.

Personal cyber insurance in India:

As digital streaming and internet surfing becomes pervasive, personal cyber insurance will debut in India in 2017. HDFC ERGO and BAJAJ ALLIANZ are the only providers of personal cyber insurance policies in India. An individual aged 18 years and above who uses the internet on computers and other digital devices are eligible for the policy. The typical sum assured for the policy is somewhere between INR 50,000 (USD 703) to INR 10 crore (USD 1.4 Mn).

POLICY COMPARISON

FEATURES	HDFC ERGO E@SECURE	BAJAJ ALLIANZ CYBER SAFE
1. Eligibility & Sum assured	18+ yrs INR 50,0000 - INR 1,00,00,000	18+ yrs INR 1,00,000 - INR 1,00,00,000
2. Premium	INR 1,140 - INR 14,273	INR 662 - INR 8,993
3. Incidents covered (SPECIFIED EVENTS)	• Unauthorized online transactions • Phishing & email spoofing • Damage to e-reputation • Identity theft • Cyber bullying • E- extortion	• Cyber extortion • Social media cover • Cyber stalking • IT theft • Malware attack • Identity theft cover • Phishing and email spoofing • Privacy and data breach by third party

The international mechanism on cybersecurity

Cybersecurity is a worldwide necessity with progressive developments and innovations. On a global level, there are organizations and treaties to address the issue of cyber crimes and promote cybersecurity. Budapest Convention is an international treaty that came into force on 1st July 2004 that seeks to address internet-based crimes by improving investigation techniques, harmonizing national laws, and increased cooperation among the nations. India is not part of this convention.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is a specialized agency within the United Nations that performs a vital role in the development and standardization of telecommunications and cybersecurity issues. Internet Governance Forum brings together all the stakeholders on internet governance debates.

Worldwide Cyber insurance market

The Cyber Insurance market is growing gradually with the rising digitization of business and the adoption of new technologies. Corporates have identified the cyber threats. According to the data of DSCI (Data Security Council of India), 350 cyber insurance policies were bought in 2018 and 250 in 2017, there was a growth of 40%. The global cyber insurance market was projected with 21% growth in 2021, reaching $9.5 B. As per the cyber insurance market report, the value is expected 21.4B in the year 2025 of large and small medium-sized enterprises as shown in fig.

DECLUTTERING THE STIRRING: WORLD OF CRYPTOCURRENCY AND BLOCKCHAIN

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2009: The Beginning

In 2009, the first decentralized cryptocurrency, Bitcoin, was created by a developer with the pseudonym Satoshi Nakamoto. They used the SHA-256, a cryptographic hash function, in their proof-of-work mechanism. Unlike fiat currencies, Bitcoin is created, distributed, traded, and stored using a decentralized ledger system called Blockchain.

Satoshi Nakamoto

Satoshi Nakamoto is the name used by the person or a group of persons who developed bitcoin, authored the white paper, and created and deployed bitcoin's original reference implementation. The identity of the person or group of persons still remains a mystery to this day. Despite several efforts to uncover his identity, Nakamoto has remained anonymous. Several individuals have claimed but none of them have been proven to be Satoshi Nakamoto.

The secret behind Bitcoin's popularity

Bitcoin was developed to challenge the traditional fiat currency that is controlled by the central bank of a country. The technology introduced a decentralized financial infrastructure to facilitate peer-to-peer electronic payments. The idea came from observing the effects of over-centralization. The network facilitates users to get rid of the government watchdogs and complicated formalities. Bitcoin wasn't priced until July 2010 when it first started trading at $0.0008 to $0.08 per coin. The intriguing new blockchain technology is what drove its popularity back in the day. Today, Bitcoin is seen as a lucrative investment option owing to its high volatility and exponential growth in recent years. More than 4,000 cryptocurrencies have since been developed but bitcoin retains its position as the most popular and valuable cryptocurrency in the market. Despite facing backlash from economists for being too volatile to be a currency, bitcoin reached its peak price of $64,000 in April 2021 and a market valuation of over $1 trillion. Often dubbed as 'digital gold' bitcoin has yet to firmly establish itself as a widely accepted currency and store of value.

Bitcoin vs Gold

From ancient times, humans have greatly valued gold. From ancient Egypt, where it served in temples and tomb rituals to the current jewelry industry, gold has always had value. For bitcoin to be considered as digital gold it needs to satisfy some criteria:

1. Medium of exchange: Both gold and bitcoin are mediums of exchange because they can be traded for goods & services.
2. Unit of account: We can divide gold into half ounces or quarter ounces, and we can also divide bitcoin down to 1 satoshi, which equals 1/100,000,000 bitcoin.

The one criteria which are most debated upon is bitcoin as a 'store of value'. Unlike gold which derives its intrinsic value from its tangibility and social acceptance, bitcoin arguably has been believed to have zero intrinsic value. Whether the latter is true or not is debatable and we might have an answer only in the next couple of years.

> **"Bitcoin's developments in 2021 have ensured one thing: The future of money will be digital, but it won't necessarily resemble a geek utopia. People's power will bow to the power of the sovereign.**

What is Blockchain Technology?

Let's say you are sending money from your bank account to your family and friends. Log in to online banking and use your account number to send money to others. When a transaction is made, the bank updates the transaction record. It sounds very easy. There is a fundamental problem that most of us overlook.

This type of transaction can be readily tampered with. People who know this fact are often reluctant to use this type of transaction, which has led to an increase in third-party payment applications in recent years. But this flaw is the reason why blockchain technology was created.

Blockchain is a distributed ledger for all transactions on a peer-to-peer network. This technology allows participants to confirm transactions without the need for a central clearinghouse. Potential applications include remittances, transaction mediation, voting, and more. Most people think that blockchain and Bitcoin can be used interchangeably, but that's not the case. While blockchain is a technology that can support many different applications related to many industries such as finance, supply chain and manufacturing, Bitcoin is a currency that relies on blockchain technology for security. Blockchain is a new technology with many benefits in the ever-changing digital world:

Highly Secure

Digital signatures are used to make transactions non-fraudulent and prevent other users from corrupting or altering personal data without a specific digital signature.

Decentralized System

Traditionally, transactions required the approval of regulators such as governments and banks. However, with Blockchain, transactions are made based on consensus between users, resulting in more fluid, secure, and faster transactions.

Automation Capability

It is programmable and can automatically generate systematic actions, events and payments when the trigger criteria are met.

Future of Cryptocurrencies: What lies ahead

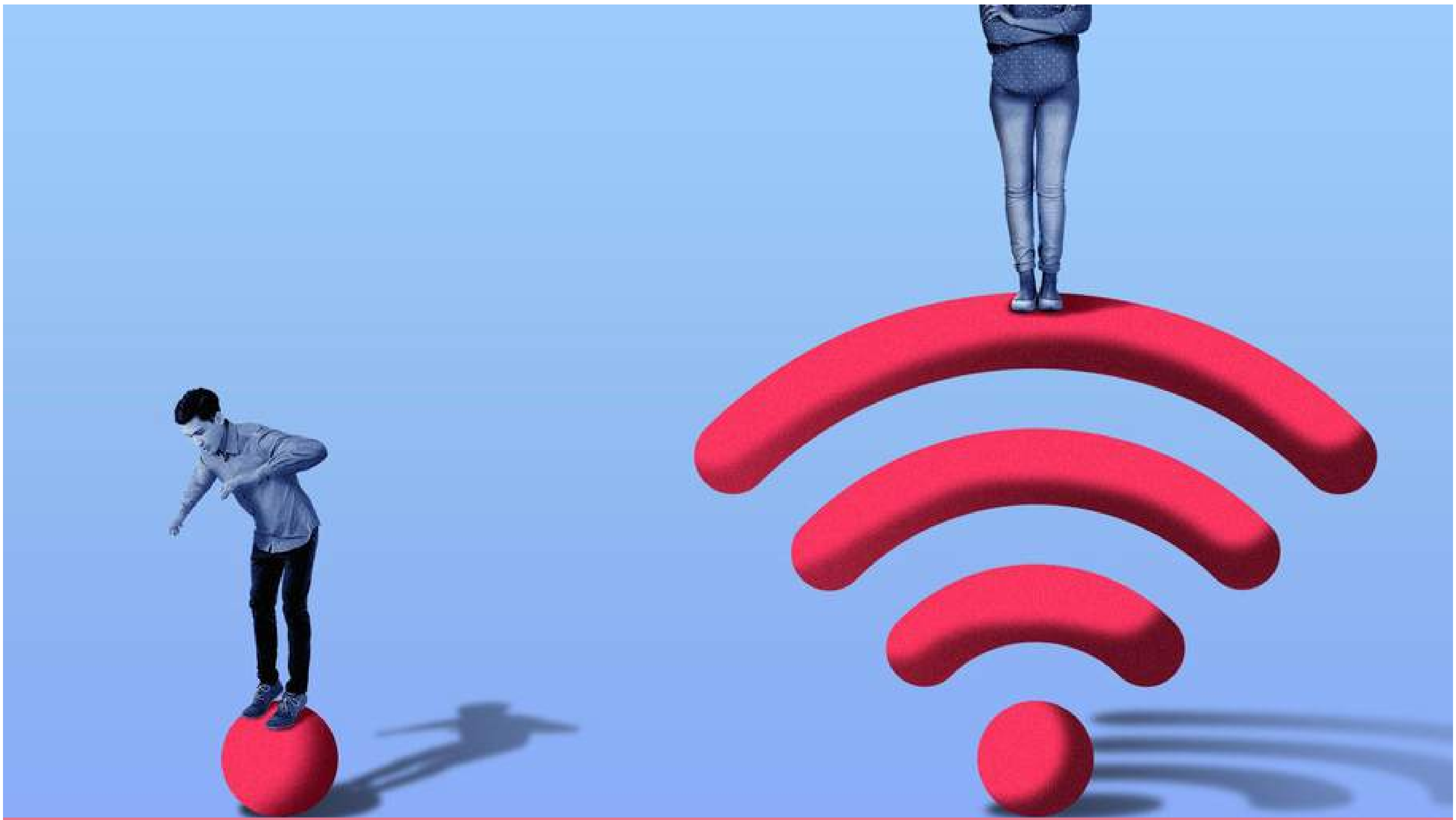
In the last six months, globally, we have witnessed significant developments, achievements and the biggest market crash the world of crypto has experienced. However, a big achievement is the development of cryptocurrencies and their wide acceptance. Investors, financial institutions, organizations, etc. are making new amendments with respect to cryptocurrency trading with new changes in cryptocurrency holdings. Goldman Sachs currently offers Bitcoin funds to numerous high-end customers. Paypal allows users to leverage their cryptocurrencies to pay online merchants around the world. This clearly shows that cryptocurrency will definitely affect business operations in the future.

The President of El Salvador, Nayib Bukele, has announced that a new law on Bitcoin will come into force on September 7.

Following this example, Paraguay may also legalize Bitcoin. The Paraguayan pro-bitcoin lawmaker has said he will submit a Bitcoin bill to Congress next month to make Paraguay a hub for crypto investors around the world. The world is currently witnessing Bitcoin being associated with more institutional investors.

Most financial institutions are considering converting their cash reserves into Bitcoin as a precautionary measure against a financial crisis.
Digital currency, once viewed as a mystery by many, is now exploding both in value and popularity.

Bitcoin's developments in 2021 have ensured one thing: The future of money will be digital, but it won't necessarily resemble a geek utopia. People's power will bow to the power of the sovereign.



DIGITAL WALL: THE DIVIDED WORLD

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Today, one simply can not imagine his/her day without accessing several social media platforms or the internet in general. We have simply become dependent on the internet for all our activities which we used to perform manually or physically in the past, and this is something which is increasing day by day as more and more functions are being performed digitally. But there is one question that comes to our minds when we talk about the digital world. Do all of us have access to the internet? Do all people enjoy the privileges and benefits that this digital and modern world has to offer? Is it available to everyone at the same cost? Unfortunately, the answer to these questions is NO and this is what leads to the problem of the Digital Divide.

The term 'Digital Divide' simply divides the world into two halves. One which has easy access to the internet and other digital services such as mobile phones, computers, or television sets, and one which doesn't or with very limited or restricted access.

It basically creates a gap between people, societies, regions, or even nations. A digital divide generally exists between the educated and uneducated, those who live in urban areas and rural areas, developed nations and relatively underdeveloped or developing nations.

Ever since the inception of the internet and the revolution in technology, there has been a certain section of society that has failed to understand and operate these gadgets and software. This is for several reasons. Firstly, basic education and literacy play a key role in the operation of technology. As a result, it is the illiterate population that constitutes a major proportion of those who become technologically challenged. The second major factor in the existence of this massive digital divide is the income inequalities that exist. The rich have always dominated when it comes to being digitally proficient and effective, whereas the poor with low-income levels have had very few to almost zero opportunities to be a part of the digital world and still have to face a lot of difficulties and challenges in performing some of the basic activities that can be done digitally with ease. Another prevalent cause is the generation gap, as a significant portion of the population above forty find it difficult to operate the internet or mobile phones and rely heavily on the younger members of the family to get their stuff done. Gender-gap also exists when it comes to the digital divide, as most of the software is prepared by men, so they are designed in a way that is relatively more receptive to men than women. In rural areas of countries like India, due to the patriarchal nature of society, women are denied even basic rights, so it is practically impossible for them to access technology and become a part of the modern world. The racial gap is there as well since whites have more access to the internet than any other race. Other reasons include political agendas, communal gaps, and disability gaps.

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Digital divide creates a gap between people, societies, regions or even nations.

If we look at the statistics, the student-computer ratio in 1997 was 24:1. According to a study by John B Horrigan, nearly 70 million people are not digitally ready for heavy online usage which is twice the number of people who have no access to the internet. In the US 24% of adults with an income level below $30,000 do not own a smartphone. About 43% do not have connections to internet broadband. In sharp contrast, out of Americans with an income level of more than $100,000, 63% own a smartphone, have internet broadband, and own other gadgets. According to a survey of the International Telecommunications Union, in 2019 only 53.6% of the total world population was using the internet actively. 86.6% of the population of developed countries was using the internet as compared to only 47% in developing countries. If we look at region-wise users, Europeans and Americans are leading by 82.5% and 77.2% respectively and Africans being the lowest with only 21.8% as of 2019. Talking about India specifically, half of India's population still lacks access to the internet regularly. Approximately 80% of students in India weren't able to attend online classes last year due to inaccessibility to the internet.

According to government data, only 20% of the population knows how to use digital services.

Thus, it can be said that the digital divide is something that is still very much prevalent and poses a grave danger and has the potential of hampering the growth and economy of nations. Steps need to be taken at the earliest to bridge this gap and various other gaps which still exist in today's world and are directly or indirectly responsible for the global digital divide. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, our dependence on the internet and digital services has increased nearly three folds with almost every activity being carried out online. Most of the organizations have shifted their online mode while some are working with a blend of online and offline. All the teachings have been done digitally in the last 15 months and are likely to continue in the same manner for the foreseeable future.

Some of the steps which can be carried out to ensure access to digital services and digital literacy include setting up broadband services in remote areas and supplementing them with customer support centers. Governments can play a major role in making the population digitally aware by spending a considerable section of the taxes collected on the growth of this sector. Regular camps can be set up wherein people of all age groups and income levels are welcomed to learn how to use the internet and other relevant devices. The infrastructure in schools and colleges needs to be updated constantly so that there is a computer laboratory in every institute with an adequate number of units. Subsidies can be granted to promote the sales of laptops and mobile phones in backward areas so that every citizen gets an opportunity to connect with the world.

In these fast-moving times, one simply cannot survive without the internet yet a major chunk of the population faces the challenges of inaccessibility to digital services. The situation has improved a lot in recent years but still has a long way to go as the gap has to be eradicated totally and completely.

FINANCE AND TECHNOLOGY: THE PERFECT BONHOMIE

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The world is a constantly evolving place that has seen lucrative & lopsided changes from when man was strolling on the land with just water, trees, and rocks to a time when humans are undetachable from technology. As the world is evolving, so are the workplaces and the skills required to form and run a successful business.

Finance has always been among the top 3 key focus areas on which the mere survival of a business is dependent. If you've ever used financial services (like ATM, Credit cards, Debit cards, Net-Banking or dealt with stocks on an online server via stock anticipating institutions), then inadvertently, in the background, you've used countless hardware and software pertaining to Financial Technology services: interesting isn't it?

In the 21st century, one of the most trending terms related to finance has been 'Fintech,' a portmanteau of the terms 'Finance' & 'Technology.'

The term fintech includes a broad spectrum of products, technologies, and business models relating to the finance industry including cashless payments, crowdlending platforms, virtual assistant advisors, and virtual currency. Fintech has been in practice since the use of the first handheld calculator and the installation of the first ATM by Barclays bank, which embarked on the modern period of Fintech in the year 1967. Imagine how an economy would have worked before the arrival of Fintech services, people standing in long queues in the bank to withdraw, deposit, or transfer money to a far-reaching place or the industrial producers making their production decisions solely based on how the customers might react after the product is launched with an uncertainty of the product's success, well, that was the past but now the success of a product can be assessed even before its launch in the market using the readily available statistical data of related products and services for deriving the most accurate results.

As a result of Advances in the Fintech Sector, there is now no need to stand in long lines outside banks for even the most complex transactions!

The year 2020 swept in like a big blow for businesses, and now after the tornado, when the dust is still settling, it is all clear that some fared more than the others. Specifically, the Fintech industry has noted an enormous rise of more than 18% as gains. The movement towards a digital, cashless economy due to the fear of getting in contact with the virus and the numerous incentives provided by the government, gave people more reason to use various cashless,no-contact services by the Fintech industry.

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Necessity is the mother of all inventions.

For a more precise understanding of what Fintech is about, let's imagine that you're a manager, and selling FMCGs (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) as a big part of your business. You want to focus on the core operation and customer satisfaction rather than manual entries of product invoices or pricing and product issues, or options ranging from paying in cash, cheque to money orders to the dealers or customers. Therefore, to solve this problem of managing and dealing in cash, you adopt the EFT (Electronic Fund Transfer) payment system: you can make and receive payments using Financial -technology with a click of a button. Fintech is the modern way of handling the vital core and non-core activities of all industries. The Fintech sector in India is currently staked at about USD 31 Billion and shows an estimated worth of about USD 84 Billion by 2025 at a CAGR of 25%.

It is widely known and accepted that any organization is subject to refashioning but being from a species that does not accept changes immediately and is usually reluctant, the workforce in the industries tends to act lethargic in the beginning. However, as soon as the shift tends to give a competitive edge to the market rivals, the need for skilled employees rises in the market because it is supported by the most modern emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, blockchain, smart contracts, and machine learning.
Fintech growth prospects are without a doubt- 'scalable', but the momentum of growth is delivering dual-edged consequences – modernizing the financial architecture,market behavior and catalyzing consumers while pulverizing incumbent service models, employers, and the regulatory structures.

Every new technology in the market comes with its pros and cons, and so is the case with Fintech, such as-

- **Regulatory and compliance laws**: The law frame of every country is different, and many regulations inevitably contribute towards the disruption in the working of the Fintech industry. There is an extensive list of formalities and laws which the Fintech industry has to follow.

Some examples include the primary anti-money laundering programs which governs entities offering financial products in India, such as the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 ("PMLA"), the Prevention of Money Laundering (Maintenance of Records) Rules, 2005 ("PML"), and the RBI's Master Directions on Know Your Customer dated February 25, 2017 (as amended from time to time) (" KYC Master Directions"). (Source)

- **Trust in cash**: A considerable part of the 136.64 Cr people in India (Census 2019) is still reliant on the cash-based system of exchange which narrows the business market to operate for the Fintech industry.

- **Cyberthreats:** With digitalization and digitization of the economy, the concern of data safety heightens as the country's data is shared more and more with the Fintech industries.

- **Unbanked and Underbanked population:** There is a possibility that Fintech might show staggering growth in the short run because of poor infrastructures like low internet penetration and financial literacy levels in some developing countries.

There might be many infrastructural issues that Fintech industries have to deal with in the short run. Still, in the long run, these industries will be highly profitable and data-driven. The work will be based on critical data analysis and machine learning tools to provide the customers the most effortless way of doing transactions.
As rightly said: "Necessity is the mother of all inventions."

The adoption rate of Fintech services has shown a significant rise in recent years. According to a survey in 2019, money transfer and specific payment services were the most widely adopted services by the people. While the adoption of Fintech services was picking its own pace, the fastest-growing segment in the Fintech services were Insurance services that projected the consumer adoption rate to be 40%. Financial technology will only rise in the future, making it an essential skill.

THE CRYPTO COIN: WILL THE WORLD REPLACE IT AS THE GLOBAL RESERVE?

Vasu Golyan
Integrated Programme
in Management
IIM Indore

"I just think for Fed policy, it's going to be a dollar economy as far as the eye can see" "Bitcoin does not present a serious threat to U.S. dollar's status as the world's reserve currency"
The US Federal Reserve President, James Bullard, made these statements with strong conviction. However, the rest of the world does not seem to share the same enthusiasm for the US Dollar as him.

How did we get here?
Summer, 1944. The world was in chaos. The Bretton Woods' Mount Washington Hotel was abuzz with over 700 delegates from 44 nations as they deliberated over a new financial-world order - The Bretton Woods System. The system made sense, at least at the time-- pegging the US dollar as the global reserve currency, fixing it to gold at a sweet 35 dollar/ounce. Things changed in 1971 when the conversion of the dollar to its equivalent gold value was suspended, supposedly temporarily.

Post that, the exorbitant American privilege, as the French like to put it, has repeatedly come into problems. Be it something as old as the Vietnam War, or something as magnanimous as the Great Financial Crisis, or even something as fresh as China's challenge to US Hegemony.

One thing is clear, the Dollar's term as the global reserve currency might be nearing its end. What, however, is not so clear is whether bitcoin or any decentralized currency, for that matter, is going to be taking its place?

The US Dollar Global Reserve Hegemony through dominance has increasingly new & strengthened competitors from other global currencies. [Source: Statista]

Why the hype?
The global crisis of '08 was followed by innovation in the domain of value currencies, both from foreign

powers as well as 'cypherpunks'. While the motives of foreign powers like Russia were to induce a global shift in power, the cypherpunks-programmers merely wanted to get rid of fiat currency from the control of a constantly changing government. That's where the disruptive idea of cryptocurrency germinated and gained traction.

The whole issue discussed here emerges from the grassroots of the FinTech revolution, where the necessity of centralized authority in deciding the value of a citizen's private money came into question. In a world where hyper-adaptability is the feature that every entity is eyeing, cryptocurrency provides a dynamic process in a relatively static industry. Lastly, and probably most importantly, in this context, cryptocurrency helps make money less intimidating & serious, and more acceptable for the ordinary citizen. It assures its users of privacy and protection against prying eyes, be it from delinquents or the elected government.

"Bitcoin does not present a serious threat to U.S. dollar's status as the world's reserve currency.

Public Acceptance of Bitcoin drives its Global Value. It is a currency of the people, by the people, free of any government oversight. [Source: MarketWatch/WSJ]

What is the Coin?

Cryptocurrency essentially is decentralized digital money, with no single individual/organization/country having any control over it. They are based on a technology called Blockchain. There are currently over 6,700 cryptocurrencies globally, with Bitcoin and Ethereum being the most popular ones. The total market cap of all cryptocurrencies combined today is about $ 1.7 Trillion, out of which Bitcoin alone has a market cap of $1 Billion. In comparison, China's Foreign Exchange Reserves alone are $3.15 Trillion. When we talk about the possibility of cryptocurrency becoming a reserve currency globally, we primarily refer to Bitcoin, as it's the most widely accepted and traded cryptocurrency. The post-pandemic times have seen Bitcoin prices soar to record heights and have reignited the debate about its legitimacy as a financial instrument.

Who is Accepting the Coin?

What was initiated as a mere peer-to-peer cross-payment platform, used by a small niche of internet users from the dark corners of the web, today has peeked the interests of buyers, institutional investors, and corporate giants.

We have Elon Musk publicly researching bitcoins and then purchasing large chunks of the same. PayPal, the payment giant, allowing bitcoin payments signalled the world's acceptability of the coin. Even the Fed itself has rubber-stamped its digital bank's holding of crypto. Moves by macro-investors like Bill Miller & Paul Tudor Jones and institutions like MassMutual & MicroStrategy Incorporated towards crypto-investment have only reinforced the market sentiments towards decentralized value currencies.

Is the Coin, Inconvenient?

A very institutional and repeated argument against cryptocurrency and, in general, concerning the dollar's replacement as the reserve currency has been that the public desires consistency. When one stands in a long queue at the start of the day for their first coffee, they are faced with an overwhelming choice of options there. On top of that, they do not want to decide between paying with Bitcoins, or Dogecoins, or Ethereum, or whatever new currency a self-taught cypherpunk has created in their basement. The dollar makes things simple, and people argue that simplicity is something that need not and cannot be replaced. The Coin Market Explosion; with more than 2000 cryptocurrencies in circulation, it becomes difficult to distinguish & hence find credibility in them.
[Source: Coinmarket/VisualCapitalist]

While this argument may sound compelling at first glance, and the non-uniformity of currency might come off as real displeasure, we can't ignore the fact that we already live amidst an intense currency competition. It's not some intricately engineered phenomenon but the simple working of markets. Investors desire a safe haven, a currency that offers them consistent and stable value. The currency that the masses think offers them these features in the most accessible format trumps all others. In such a context, we see a two-sided argument unfold. On the one hand, it might be difficult for any other government-controlled currency to out-bid the Dollar in terms of stability and literal 'value-for-money, which proves that the Dollar indeed is the best candidate for being a global reserve currency. But on the other hand, the very fact that cryptocurrencies do not have a centralized authority overlooking them shower them with this assurance of independence from governmental interventions and manipulations.
Hence, the very argument that strengthened the Dollar's case for being the global reserve amongst all other fiat currencies is the one that diminishes its case against bitcoins.

What are the Problems for the Coin?

Amongst the many problems that cryptocurrencies face in displacing the dollar as the reserve currency of the world, the most pressing ones are as follows:

A Lack of Uniformity

As stated earlier, with over 6,700 different types of cryptocurrencies available and each one having different dollar values, it is impossible to reach a mandate so as to which country adopts which cryptocurrency.

This non-uniformity is one of the prime reasons why it cannot become the uniform reserve currency of the world.

Inadequate Size and volatility

With a combined market cap of $ 1.7 Trillion, it comes nowhere close to the combined foreign exchange reserves of all the countries. The only way this vast gap will be bridged would be by a further appreciation of the already heated prices of many cryptocurrencies. All of this points towards a price bubble being formed right before our eyes. The past volatility in these assets' prices is all the more reason why countries and central banks worldwide will shy away from making it a reserve currency, which, by definition, stands for reliability and stability.

Safety Concerns

Despite the high levels of technology and safety checks built into these cryptocurrencies, theft of digital currencies is a regular occurrence. In 2018, a total of $1.1 Billion worth of cryptocurrency was stolen in the first six months itself. Such incidents have continued, and as technology gets more and more sophisticated, so will the ransomware designed to dupe it. This threat of theft will keep central banks, the most conservative of financial institutions, from adopting cryptocurrencies as a reserve currency for decades to come.

In the end, the plain argument of the current reserve currency of the US Dollar, being visible, tangible, and backed by the most powerful country in the world, will always hold power over the potential challenger - cryptocurrencies, which are digital assets, vulnerable to cybercrime, data-corruption, volatility, and are devoid of any ethos, essentially being distributed over thousands of private computers across multiple countries.

So, is there a New World Order in the making?

However, much we strengthen the case for the coin, we can't objectively deny the level of dominance that the US Dollar has over all other forms of currency, even, rather, especially cryptocurrencies. This is best displayed by the fact that the prices of Bitcoin even today are reflected in USD terms, but seldom is the USD quoted in terms of Bitcoin. And there are more than just mathematical factors at play here. A decade of breakneck technological change and one twitter-ready entrepreneur cannot change nearly two centuries of global trade and economic inertia that the USD commands. In the end, we must ask ourselves this question: "Is it the Coin that is increasing in value against the Global Reserve Currency, or is it that the Dollar is plummeting against the coin?". While the apparent cyclicity of this question might trivialize its essence, we must note that the real value of Bitcoin is unknown. For the US dollar, we have consumption baskets and inflation-accounting measures in place. For Bitcoin, we have no such benchmark in place.

However, this doesn't mean that crypto value is a mere speculative value. The recent unfolding of events in the United States, both at the federal and civil front, has highlighted the uncertainty associated even with the gold-like dollar. Continued geopolitical unrest and building debt crises might plunge the world into a scenario where the dollar becomes the volatile store and bitcoin, the stable one. In the end, we must take inspiration from Elon Musk's quote:

"You know, what is money? Money is an entry in a database."

and, this database is innovating. The exponential curve of technology has plunged the currency-marked innovation into overdrive, and quite possibly, we might be staring down the face of a new Bretton Woods system--one that doesn't involve economists and governments of the world, but a bunch of programmers and cryptographers, 'mining' from the comfort of their homes.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Financing a Better Future
- A Quarantined Consumer
- The Mind, Monetized
- The Gold Mine
- The Natural Cost of Development
- Money and Equality: Incorporating Gender in Budgeting

WHY IS TIDE GOING TO SPACE?

Tide has partnered with NASA to develop a detergent specifically for the use of astronauts in space.

For Mars's three-year campaign, that would be about 500 pounds [500 kg] of clothing in space if not washed

Traditional detergents render the water toxic & non-recyclable after use. So, Tide has developed a biodegradable detergent, which would decay and vanish naturally over time. They will send this detergent to space for testing in December.

FINANCING A BETTER FUTURE

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On an average women live longer by 6 to 8 years as compared to their male counterparts. Generally, they inherit the wealth possessed by their deceased husbands. However, according to a survey, 70 % of women switch financial advisors within a year of their husband's death. But, Why?

Although there can be many answers to this often neglected question, but, one of the main reasons women tend to do this is the lack of importance and respect given to them when financial decisions are concerned. It is a widely accepted fact that the patriarch is given more importance and attention in conversations that involve discussions about money, finance, automobiles, politics and other subjects which are socially considered 'manly'. A study by BCG about women’s experiences with wealth management providers found that many women believe their gender is the key factor for the disrespect and condescension they often experience from the financial services industry. But, how do we avoid neglecting women when finance is concerned?

Financial Equality can be achieved through Gender Lens Investing.

Gender Lens Investing, a term coined around 2009 focuses on improving women's representation in finance by increasing investment in firms led by women. In 2021, Gender Lens Investment isn't just women-centric, instead, it focuses on and includes all genders (Be it women, men or the LGBTQIA+ community).

Still Confused? Let's look at an example.

Catherine is a corporate employee turned entrepreneur who set up her own cosmetics brand. However, being a woman, she is facing funding issues. This is because of several reasons. Firstly, during her corporate career, she earned less as compared to her male counterparts. Also, Catherine hasn't received any financial support from her parents as her family's ancestral wealth has been passed onto her brother. Furthermore, patriarchal social norms have created an image of women being submissive, indecisive, unstable and less efficient leaders which has created a hindrance in receiving funding from outsiders as people prefer investing in businesses led by men.

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Many women believe their gender is the key factor for the disrespect and condescension they often experience from the financial services industry.

However, this scenario isn't limited to Catherine, instead, it is the story of millions of women and genderqueer people out there who wish to set up their businesses. Most of the problems being faced by Catherine can be solved by Gender Lens Investing, which, in simpler words means investing in businesses that promote Gender Equality. But, can Catherine achieve this alone? **No.**

To promote Gender Equity, we need to ensure two things.

The first being, a complete mental revolution at an individual level. I believe that until and unless people do not change their thinking patterns and try bashing stereotypes at the individual level, we cannot make a global impact. Secondly, We need to promote investment decisions in ways that address gender barriers and promote equal opportunities.

Now, How do we promote Gender Lens Investing?
There are 3 key areas that we need to focus on.

1. Investing in Women-Led Businesses (WLB's)
According to a study, Women-Led Startups received just 2.3% of VC funding in 2020. Investing in Women-Led Businesses will reduce the investment barriers which affect women.

2. Investing in enterprises that promote Gender Equity
Reports published in 2020 suggest that only 11% of leadership roles were held by women. Investing in organizations that maintain a good gender ratio in top positions and ensure equal pay will help create gender equity.

3. **Investing in organizations that sell products and services that promote women's welfare.**
Investment in organizations that sell products and services related to the well-being of women in terms of health, wealth, access to education and scholarships, employment, financial independence, etc., can create a wave of equality and help in improving the financial position of many women. Wondering how you as an individual can promote Gender Lens Investing? Let me explain!

As an intelligent investor, you can focus on any of the above-mentioned key areas and invest your money. By regularly checking your portfolio and aligning it to match your gender lens focus, you can make sure that you play an active role in achieving gender equity. Choosing your region and sector of investment is equally important. Investments made in different regions give varied results, depending on the factors that influence the investment. Once you choose your region/ sector of investment, try looking out for new and emerging women-led businesses. Investing in such businesses would not only help promote equality but also guarantee a better future. If direct investment in Equity isn't your cup of tea, you can invest in Mutual Funds with companies that invest in women-owned businesses, thus ensuring your role in promoting Gender Lens Investing. You can also ask your fund manager to invest with a Gender Lens. After all, it is you who influences where your investment goes! But Why invest with a Gender Lens?

 # More for Less
A study conducted by Yahoo Finance revealed that Women entrepreneurs are outperforming their male counterparts with less capital available to them. This fact was further supported by a study conducted by Kauffman Foundation which revealed that women-led private tech companies see 35% more in ROI and a 12% increase in revenue with 33% less capital.

 # Scope of Outperformance
Research conducted by the Pearson Institute for International Economics (PIIE) found that firms that go from no women in leadership roles to a 30% female share, see a 15 percent increase in profitability.
Also, Countries where more women work see a dramatic boost to national growth.

 # National Betterment
Gender Lens Investing would not only help end inequalities which women like Catherine face but will also unlock over 160 trillion US dollars in the global market, thus ensuring overall economic growth and new and increased employment opportunities for all. GLI isn't limited to gender equality but is an opportunity to unlock economic power, expect greater financial returns and drive market development which would ultimately lead to a better future.

So, the next time you take a step to advance your portfolio, do take your 'Gender Lens' and invest for a better tomorrow.

A QUARANTINED CONSUMER

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The COVID-19 or the Novel coronavirus disease began on December 19 and by March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared the disease as Pandemic. Since then it has escalated into a global health concern and an unprecedented economic crisis. Both the public and private sectors have struggled to manage the impact of Covid-19 on trade both at home and on a global scale.

Many organizations such as tech, auto and transportation saw the ripple effect of Supply Chain disruption on day-to-day operations and earnings while many organizations of retail and banking responded quickly by pivoting with digital channels to maintain their contact with their consumers. Regardless of industry and category, the profound effect of the pandemic on consumers could be felt. This has left organizations & co-operations across geographies wondering how to respond to the shifting consumer sentiment & whether this behaviour is transitory or the new normal. Hence, understanding this behavioural shift has become all too important for businesses which can only be resolved through understanding the new behaviour, mindset and listening to the consumers' conservations before making any changes in their strategies or developments.

You may have heard of the popular saying “Never let a crisis go to waste”.

The interesting truth about the crisis is that it propels us to examine the social fabric of our society, reveal structural weaknesses in our systems & can rip apart the definition of normalcy. Businesses now need to observe the new normal, the behavioural shift of consumers.

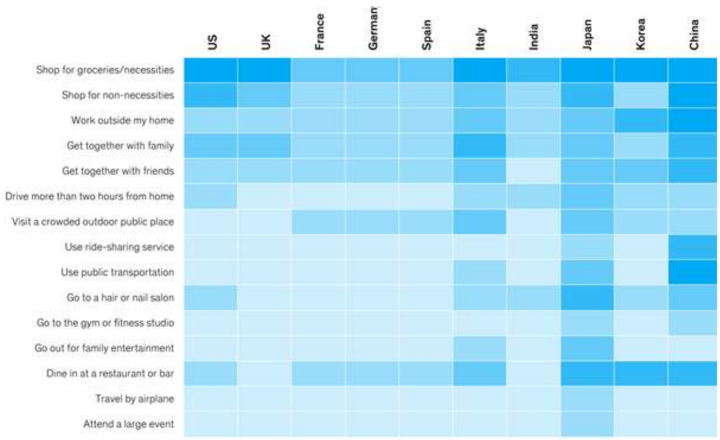
Here are 5 key behaviours that happened in these Covid times.

1. **SEEKING TRUST, SAFETY & ASSURANCE**

The reduced consumer confidence indicates that people are seeking more transparency and assurance from their brands on their quality, delivery hygiene. Safety is a top priority implies that consumers are willing to pay more for products that promise safety and the desired value that they are paying for. Hence the producers need to build their products and services in a more transparent way to show the benefits that a consumer will get from its consumption.

2.**HUMANISING DIGITAL EXPERIENCE**

There is an obvious increase in the propensity towards accepting digital for ease of use, convenience and desire of contactless interactions. Also, in the lockdowns there has been an increased usage of people on digital platforms, social media to connect with their relatives and friends. No doubt, these digital experiences that incorporate human touch will be desired in the future. The increment in the number of online shoppers shows the change in consumers' way of purchasing in a significant manner. The below data shows the number of changes in consumers from conventional purchasing to online shopping.



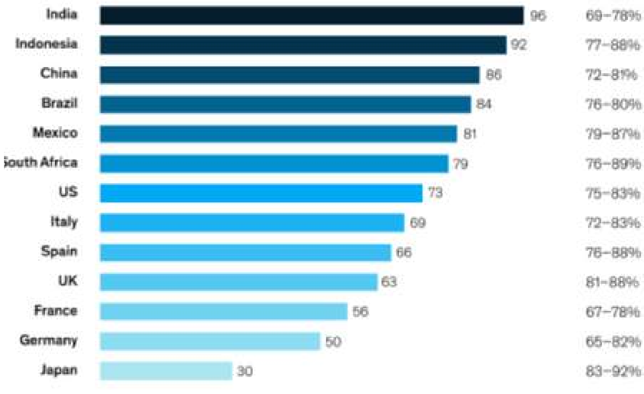
time people spend in the lockdown. It is not surprising that consumers now seek more optimism, empathy, to address concerns and be assured of safety from their brands. Consumers expect brands to be more sensitive in their tone, compassionate towards the hardship the world is facing. The companies who seek to resolve their customers' problems need to prioritize their customer care services.

4. **HIGH VALUE FOR MONEY**

The increased expectations of hygiene and safety coupled with product availability in the market are leading to a willingness to pay more. At the same time a reduction in income due to an economic downturn, significantly diminishing the purchasing power. This all led producers to make their products more premium with taking consideration of its cost. The graph below shows the % change in the number of consumers who seek value-driven products.

5. **INNOVATIVE THINKING**

Due to restrictions on mobility and access to various products/services, people across the world have found ingenious ways to make things work. From making their masks, building novel contactless devices/approaches to finding new ways to improve their efficiency, to getting back their productivity at their pre-pandemic levels. During the crisis, people have not only started practicing to solve problems through innovations but also to develop strategies before this kind of crisis again.



The shift from brick-mortar to online platforms in the past couple of years and the Covid-19 pandemic have proven that humanity needs to evolve with its dynamics or they'll be the servant of the evolving automation.

From the above given key behaviours in the consumer mindset, we can say that the long-term expected behaviour of the consumer is to give priority to routine expenditures and to a brand that promises safety, at the same time seeking high value out of products/services they spend on. This new normal not only poses a challenge for the producers to meet the change of consumer demand but also to hone themselves in such a way to create and adapt to new kinds of tech-savvy software and products to improve their efficiencies.

The pandemic has proven that the one who doesn't evolve is the one who doesn't survive for long. Taking this line into consideration, not only the producers but also as a consumer should be aware of our dynamic surroundings which keep on evolving with new software and technologies but we are just using the same conventional methods which are being taught to us by our peers, which is now outdated. If an individual wants advancement and innovation not for him/herself but also for the betterment of society then he/she needs to adapt to changing technology.

THE MIND, MONETIZED

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WHO defines Mental health as a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his her abilities, works efficiently, manages stresses of life, and contributes to society. A healthy mental sphere is crucial to the well-being of individuals, countries, and society as a whole.
Mental health disorders pose a threat to society, and neglecting them can prove to be disastrous. The economic impact of mental disorders is difficult to record and it cannot always be quantified.

In 2017, 14·3% of India's population (197.3 million people)were suffering from mental disorders, keeping with a study by Lancet. With 9000 psychiatrists in total and 700 psychiatrists graduating every year, it works out to be 0.75 psychiatrists per 100,000 people in India, which is often far below the recommended level of a minimum of three psychiatrists per 100,000 people.

The Constitution of India promises all its citizens a much better quality of life, a life that's lived with dignity and respect, a life that's healthier and richer, free from suffering, chronic disability, and premature death. Hence, investing in a mental state is additionally a constitutional obligation. India launched its first National Mental Health Policy in 2014 and a revised Mental Healthcare Act in 2017, intending to provide affordable, equitable and just, and universal access to condition care, recognizing the importance of mental health in reducing the disease burden.

The two main reasons for this neglect towards mental health are the stigmas attached to it, one that people have apprehensions about being perceived as crazy or weak. Moreover, too many people refuse to acknowledge the signs of illness because of this reason. The second reason is money. Most people cannot afford condition treatments or visits to professionals.

The median amount spent monthly for the care and treatment of various disorders is approximately ₹2250 for Alcohol Use Disorders, ₹1000 for Schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, and ₹1500 for affective disorders as per a report by NMHS.

Many mental illnesses are left untreated because of the amount of money that it costs to seek medical help and the way that society resentfully views people with mental illnesses.

As such, no social group is immune to mental disorders. The likelihood of people suffering from mental illnesses depends upon factors such as poverty, employment, education, isolation, violence, neglect, abuse, and awareness levels. Migrants, refugees, children, abused women, and neglected elders are among the most vulnerable sections. However, these socio-economic factors are more evident in developing and underdeveloped nations. Also, mental illnesses themselves contribute to those socio-economic factors.

A healthy social environment is essential for all children to thrive and grow to their full potential. Stunted social and academic success due to childhood mental troubles have far-reaching economic consequences in adult life. The well-being of children is one of the foremost investments any society can make. Women and kids bear a greater burden and price because of mental illnesses, specifically in developing countries. Most mental disorders have their onsets during childhood and thus, early-onsets pose a tremendous challenge.

As per the National Mental Health Survey 2015-16, conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru, it had been revealed that 9.8 million teenagers within the cohort 13-17 years suffer depression and other status disorders and require active intervention. The burden is gigantic. According to WHO, Worldwide nearly 450 million people suffer from mental, emotional, and behavioural illnesses; per annum and, 1 million people die.

The burden of relations (time, effort, and resources spent within the care of the sick), lost productivity at the extent of the individual, family, or society, the results of illness like harm to others, the impact of comorbidities, the emotional weight isn't accounted for. Depression intrinsically is also a risk factor for cardiovascular disorders, diabetes, and cancer. Behaviours like smoking are linked to cardiovascular disorders, carcinomas, and HIV/AIDS.

Financial, social, family, and health-related problems, accident proneness, high risk behaviour, intimate partner violence, homicidal, suicidal risk, and problems to the criminal justice system are all documented. The burden of alcohol use disorders is higher among low-income countries. Hazardous and harmful drinking patterns like binge drinking, drinking to intoxication are on the rise in India/world especially among young men and within the lower socio-economic strata.

Health care costs alone don't account for the entire economic costs of mental illnesses. The direct costs include costs of care like clinic visits (fees), hospitalization, medication, community services, rehabilitation, diagnostic services, residential care, and non-medical costs like transportation for treatment and care. These are the price of resources utilized during the treatment of disease. Globally untreated mental illnesses cost quiet $1 trillion a year in lost productivity, in line with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). Local hospitals and clinics must pander to associated chronic physical diseases. Schools must open more education classes. Courts and jails handle many individuals that suffer from untreated mental illnesses.

Indirect costs arise when illness causes the value of assets to fall. Indirect costs include costs because of reduced supply of labour (unemployment), reduced educational attainment, expenses for social supports, costs associated with consequences of chronic disability, homelessness, crime, suicide, homicide, caregiver burden, the price of family caregiver's time, medical complications of mental illnesses, early mortality, substance use and other unquantifiable costs like an emotional burden on family, etc. Other costs include those for health awareness campaigning, etc.

Illness would result in decreased productivity and absenteeism from work. Poor conditions are negatively associated with wages. Additionally, to the loss of productivity due to absenteeism (100% loss), there are additional losses at the workplace. According to a report issued by NAMI, the unemployment rate among people receiving public condition services in the USA is approximately 80%. For example, employees go to work yet, there's is a loss of productivity due to low performance (described as " presenteeism"). This can often be a more "hidden" cost.

Low stress and frustration tolerance, sleeplessness, poor concentration, and communication skills at work put both them and others in danger. The caregivers suffer economic loss when they are off work. For these people, this can mean loss of wages and for society an outsized loss of productivity. Patients and relations may resort to substance use compounding the malaise. Unemployment/ loss of job by itself could also be a risk factor for mental state. Hence, the success of the labour market appears to be related to the mental state of its workforce. WHO also estimates that, in India, the economic loss, because of status conditions, between 2012-2030, amounts to $1.03 trillion (2010 dollars).

Multiple economic and social factors cause a high number of untreated mental illnesses worldwide. Many mental illnesses are left untreated because of the amount of money that it costs to seek medical help and the way that society

resentfully views people with mental illnesses. Although there have been improvements through the years, there is still loads of labour to be done in the future. There's still hope for the long term, albeit it's taking an incredible while.

THE GOLD MINE

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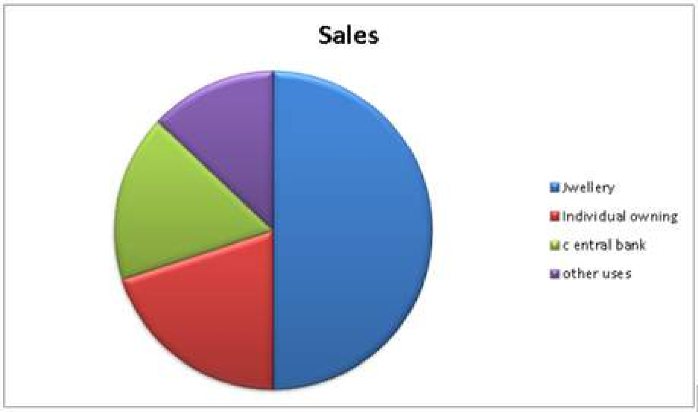
The desire for gold is the most universal and deeply rooted commercial instinct of the human race. History also reveals how money in this world was also pegged to gold. This all shows why gold is the most precious.

Now is an investment in gold really profitable and safe or is it just a myth? From a return perspective gold delivered annual returns of 9.6% over the last 40 years. And from a risk perspective gold shows lower volatility as compared to equities. Hence with such handsome returns and a useful hedge against inflation and equities gold is one of the safest and profitable avenues to invest in.

Fig.1: Graph representing Gold prices in last 30 years

Never depend on a single income, Make investment to create a second one" - said one of the most eminent personalities Warren Buffet. In this era of stiff competition where inflation is at its peak, it is extremely important for a person to invest their extra income, in such a way that they get sky-high returns quickly and without the risk of losing the principal amount. But as we initialize our investment a major question arouses i.e. Where to invest money safely? Now experts say that to make your investment more and more profitable we should diversify the portfolios. Now being an investor there are several options like Mutual Funds, stocks, PPF, Gold, etc.

Being a young or a new investor an individual will think of investing in either Mutual Funds or stocks. But



why should one invest in gold? Investment in Gold is one of the most interesting investment avenues. As per the estimate at present 1,90,000 tons of gold is present on earth. Individually a person consumes gold in the format of coins, bars, ETFs etc. whereas in other gold is used in smart phones, chips, medicines and dentistry. The distribution of gold is shown in the pie chart.

HOW TO INVEST IN GOLD?

An individual can buy gold either in physical format or electronic format. Talking about physical gold, it comes up with several disadvantages like fear of theft, quality tampering and losses during the making. Moreover physical gold also comes up with recurring payment of personal storage lockers.

Electronic Gold is a great innovation that makes gold affordable for a lot more people. Unlike physical gold electronic gold poses no minimum denomination of buying and this makes the user base of electronic gold buying vast. An individual can invest in electronic gold in many ways i.e. digital gold, Gold Mutual Funds, Gold ETFs and sovereign gold bonds.

Digital gold is an electronic form of money that is backed by gold reserves held in vaults by private agencies and can be bought through several applications. Moreover, it is not regulated by any centralized body like SEBI or RBI.

Gold ETFs are backed by real gold because ETFs directly invest in gold or gold mining.

Gold Mutual Funds can be said as the basket of gold ETFs. Because gold MF invests in gold ETFs. Moreover, both Gold mutual funds and ETFs are regulated by SEBI.

Sovereign gold bonds are issued by RBI which works as a derivative gold fund that promises to pay interest and principal amount after a period of time.

Investment in gold comes up with several options, which make the investment more and more secure as well as profitable. Being an investor a person should prefer electronic gold because of its safety and purity assurance.

GOLD PRICE TREND IN 2021:

The covid-19 pandemic has resulted in turbulence in the world economy. The year 2020 has led to a falling price of almost all financial markets. But during this time, even when demand was slumped down, gold reached its all-time high price in India. The reason behind it was the unstable condition of the economy, and it is evident that in such hard times people have shown their faith in gold to earn satisfactory returns.

But with the beginning of 2021, the price of gold was in control and it was fluctuating in the range of 46000-47000. Moreover, with the introduction of the budget 2021, the price of gold was expected to fall because the base custom duty on gold and silver has been cut from 12.5 percent to 7.5 percent.

> **If you don't trust gold, do you trust the logic of taking a beautiful pine tree, worth about $4,000-$5,000, cutting it up, turning it into a pulp and then paper, putting some ink on it and then calling it one billion dollars?**

Gold Prices in INR/Kg in 2021.

The graph clearly represents how the price of gold declined in the month of March. The reasons that backed the falling price are as follows:

- According to WGC Global gold demand declined by 23% to 815.7 tons in January-March 2021.
- During the quarter there was a strong outflow from gold ETFs because conditions of Covid-19 were improving and markets were opening with the news of the vaccine.
- A sharp rise in US interest rates and a stronger dollar have weighed on gold in the quarter.

But as the second wave of covid-19 came the gold prices took a great jump and were trying to reach the peak price. Now the reasons behind rising in the gold price during April and May were as follows:

· Internationally Gold is dominated by the US dollar; any weakness in the dollar pushes up gold prices and vice versa. As per experts ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has left a drastic impact on the US economy and has increased the USD money supply which keeps the USD weaker than other currencies.

Recently cryptocurrency saw a massive 37% correction in May. Earlier many people invested in crypto and after chasing higher returns and enduring big swings over the last few months, investors had to bear losses and seem to be now reversing from cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin to gold as investors appreciate the reliability and stability of this yellow precious metal.

· American government 10-year Treasury yield slashed down by 1.6% which led to a shift in investment in safest avenue gold and led to a rise in the price of gold.

· Moreover, higher inflation coupled with the Fed's dovish stance (this means that they are in favour of maintaining low-interest rates in an effort to stimulate the economy) helped gold regain its footing.

If you don’t trust gold, do you trust the logic of taking a beautiful pine tree, worth about $4,000-$5,000, cutting it up, turning it into a pulp and then paper, putting some ink on it and then calling it one billion dollars?” is a famous quote by Kenneth J. Gerbino. The quote clearly signifies the worth of gold. In this era of modernization where the US dollar was unable to cope with the pressure of recession, gold stood up as a saviour to the economy and investors. Moreover, as per research, it is expected that gold prices are going to surge in the coming years. According to Jim Rickards gold is one of the best avenues to invest in presently. According to his calculation, gold prices may surge up by 10 times.

The great merit of gold is precisely that it is scarce; that its quantity is limited by nature; that it is costly to discover, to mine and to process; and that it cannot be created by political fiat or caprice. Hence investment in gold in any format is always going to assist the investor because it is widely observed that when the economy breaks down gold emerges as a saviour to it. Hence gold is an important asset to have in one's portfolio on account of its steady returns, inflation hedge & weak correlation to equities.

THE NATURAL COST OF DEVELOPMENT

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India is one of the biggest biodiversity hotspots in the world. From western ghats to north-eastern India, it has an abundance of flora and fauna. India is home to the world's biggest cats and is the epitome of conservation for the world. From Project Tiger to conservation of animals like one-horned rhinos, red panda, alligators, blackbucks, etc. it has never failed to protect its wildlife and preserve its forests. But everything is not that fascinating as it appears to be on paper. Indians are still fighting every day with authorities in their movement of wildlife conservation.

The colonial era marks the begging of the loss of biodiversity heritage in India and it is prominent till date. Deforestation started at a volatile scale for railways, industrialization, agriculture, etc. The British government established the Imperial Forest Department in 1864 and introduced laws that provided 100% control of the government over forests. Forests were constantly exploited for coal and gold mines and they were made revenue sources. Moreover, this period observed the highest hunting and poaching of eminent wildlife creatures. There is enough evidence to the fact that once the majority of the Indian subcontinent was covered with dense forests. Human settlements in forests started during the Muslim invasion and exploded in the colonial period. Today, India has just 23% of land under forest.

Forests are as important to humans as water and air. Forests are responsible for maintaining the earth's temperature and overall ecological balance. The intake of carbon dioxide and harmful radiation from space enables life on earth. They also supply humans with essentials of life like shelter, food, medicines, etc. Due to rampant deforestation in the past two centuries, we have observed a huge climate change phenomenon on the entire planet. Air pollution in cities can also be attributed to the same. Even though humans are more or less aware of the above facts, our actions aren't in accordance with our wisdom. Forest conservation is still considered a barrier to the economic growth of a country. European nations have by far realized the havoc they have created by rapid deforestation. But developing countries like India still seem unaware of the consequences of deforestation. Mining projects, transportation projects, etc. are prioritized over forest conservation in India.

The pre-liberalization period saw a significant effort from policymakers to conserve India's forests and biodiversity with the establishment of nationwide national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. But as India moved towards a capitalistic economy after 1991, we observed the commercialization of forests by private players for so-called 'development projects that will bring prosperity to people.

"When we talk about humanity, we should broaden its definition to preserving nature and wildlife.

In recent years, we have witnessed many clashes between environmentalists and the government when the government granted permission to companies for mining or building transportation. The most recent instance can be the Buxwaha forest of Madhya Pradesh where the state government has permitted a diamond mine which will result in clearing 364 hectares of forest. This will account for a loss of 2 lakh trees and habitat loss of rich wildlife of Buxwaha forest including tigers. Hence, this is the basic question in front of us. Do we want diamonds and coal or do we want forests? Which natural resource is more essential to us?

There are so many alternatives to natural diamond and coal but there is none for forests, wildlife and the ecosystem in which we live. Policymakers claim to plant twice the amount of trees cut in such projects. There comes a lack of education amongst us. People tend to think of forests and woodlands as one and the same thing but it isn't. Forests have much dense vegetation and are home to plenty of flora and fauna which collectively frame an ecosystem. Recently, Lakshadweep Island is being commercialized for private companies. This move is opposed by all the inhabitants of Lakshadweep but the government has become deaf to such resistance. This will result in a huge loss of land and marine biodiversity on the island because the governor of Lakshadweep wants to make the place look like The Maldives where people can experience exotic vacations in private luxury resorts. This will cover a huge proportion of the island.

According to the report by Global Forest Watch, India lost nearly 38.5 thousand hectares (Kha) of tropical forest between 2019 and 2020 making up nearly 14 percent loss of its tree cover. Meanwhile, the total tropical forest area in India fell by 0.38 percent. In the last decade, there is a 16% loss in forest cover, specifically tropical forests have been lost to several human activities, primarily deforestation. These forests provide havens for a range of endangered species, including the Bengal tiger, Asiatic elephants and species of deers. India's dense tropical forests are home to the most wild tigers in the world— nearly 3,000. GFW estimates 125,000 hectares of humid primary forest were lost within tiger conservation landscapes between 2010 and 2019.

India has also witnessed a surge in forest fires in the past two years. According to Global Forest Watch, India's deforestation is attributed to the needs of development projects of the country. This is further attributed to the constant rise in the population of the country.

There can't be more delays in putting forest conservation as our priority if we want to sustain life on earth for humans and other species. Development projects are necessary to every country but they can't be executed at the stake of forest and biodiversity loss. From central policymakers to local administration, there needs to be a huge shift in policy-making for development projects like irrigation(dams), roads, railways, etc. There should be a permanent halt to the construction of roads and railways in forest areas, especially with dense vegetation. Moreover, when the entire world is heading towards renewable energies and artificial diamonds etc. there seems to be no point in clearing forests for mines. Mining after clearing forests can never bring prosperity to humans. Development projects in India should involve more sustainable goals and should be focused on long-run prosperity for everyone.

At an individual level, our priority should be education. When all citizens will understand that forests and their resources are of utmost importance for life on earth then the trend of deforestation will definitely start reversing back. Active involvement of citizens against deforestation by authorities is the demand of the country today. It's salient that we snub the short-term gains from mining and irrigation projects and prioritized preservation and sustainable development.

When we talk about humanity, we should broaden its definition to preserving nature and wildlife. Humanity can never be restricted to humans because a man isn't to destroy but to preserve nature.

MONEY AND EQUALITY
INCORPORATING GENDER IN BUDGETING

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Given that the budget process is the entry point for resource allocation as well as a significant driver of the norms and characteristics of public policy development, it is only natural that the budget is examined for its potential influence on gender-responsive public governance.

Gender budgeting refers to-
"A gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures to promote gender equality" (Council of Europe, 2009).

Gender-based budgeting is the process of developing, planning, authorizing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and auditing budgets in a gender-sensitive manner. It entails a comparison of real expenditure on women and girls against men and boys, taking into account their varied needs and priorities.

It is a technique for successful policy implementation that may be used to determine if allocations are by policy commitments. The gender-sensitive budget analysis goes beyond the balance sheets to investigate whether men and women fare differently under existing expenditure patterns. It is an important tool for looking at the budget through a gender lens to ensure that the public's requirements are evenly allocated and that people receive an equal share of the public budget

The reason for gender budgeting stems from the realization that national budgets affect men and women differently due to the pattern of resource allocation. Women make up 48 percent of the Indian population, yet women trail behind males in numerous social variables such as health, education, economic prospects, and so on. As a result of their vulnerability and lack of resources, they require special attention. The allocation of resources in government budgets can change gender disparities.

In light of this, Gender Budgeting has been promoted as a strategy for attaining gender mainstreaming.

Gender-responsive budget analysis, in conjunction with legislation and other practical policy initiatives, can alleviate gender prejudice and discrimination. It is a step not only towards accountability for women's rights, but also toward better public transparency, and it has the potential to influence economic policies, resulting in gains across countries.

The Five-Step Framework for Gender Budgeting

Step 1-Identifying: An examination of the situation for women, men, girls, and boys (as well as the many sub-groups) in a specific sector, to determine expenditure priorities.

Step 2-Assessment: A determination of how well the sector's policy handles the gender concerns and gaps identified in the first stage.

Step 3- Implementation: An analysis of the sufficiency of funding resources for implementing the gender-sensitive policies and programs specified in step 2.

Step 4- Monitoring: Monitoring to see if the funds were spent as intended, what was provided, and to whom.

Step 5- Evaluation: An evaluation of the policy's impact and the extent to which the scenario outlined in step 1 has altered.

Gender Budgeting in India

In India, gender budgeting initiatives have been divided into four stages: (i) knowledge development and networking, (ii) institutionalizing the process, (iii) capacity building, and (iv) increasing accountability. Gender budgeting efforts are notable across the world because they have affected not just expenditure but also revenue strategies (such as differential rates for men and women in property tax rates and rethinking of income tax structure) and have spread to state government levels. Furthermore, all Ministries/Departments have been obliged to establish Gender Budgeting Cells (GBC) as an institutional framework.

A successful example of gender budgeting is from the energy infrastructure sector: UJWALLA Yojana has shown the immense impact on the health and social status of BPL women by providing them with cooking gas connections.

In efforts to integrate GRB in India’s budgeting process, the Government of India (GoI) introduced the Gender Budget Statement (GBS) in the Union Budget in 2005-06. This GB Statement comprises two parts–

- **Part A** reflects **Women Specific Schemes**, i.e. those which have 100% allocation for women.
- **Part B** reflects **Pro Women Schemes**, i.e. those where at least 30% of the allocation is for women.

An examination of India's budgeting exercises reveals that GBS has limits that result in suboptimal results. Since its debut, the GBS has also been plagued by methodological flaws. For example, many programs described in section A of the statement are not specifically aimed at women or have women constituting 100 percent of the beneficiaries.

“ The reason for gender budgeting stems from the realization that national budgets affect men and women differently due to the pattern of resource allocation.

Despite some of its shortcomings, GBS is still an institutionalized tool that has allowed policymakers to assess how much the government spends on women’s empowerment, and is a reflection of India’s efforts towards achieving its gender equality objectives.

An examination of gender-sensitive budgeting in India finds a conflicting picture. Several beneficial advances have occurred, including modifications to specific planning and budgeting procedures and the establishment of gender budget cells. However, GB's limited reach and static or even falling gender agenda funds are roadblocks. Adoption of the GB should be followed by multidimensional and interconnected changes to budgets in general, as well as budget gender sensitivity. There must be a transition from mere "reporting" of gender allocations to "purposeful planning" with greater female engagement.

EXPERTS SPEAK

- Abhir Bhalla, Youth Environmentalist
- Anurag Jain, Co-Founder of Milkbasket
- Ravi Gadepalli, Consultant at World Bank and UITP
- Javed Hassan, Chairman, NAVTTC
- Sharun Arumugam , Aerospace Engineer
- Pushpesh Singh, Vice President (Sales) at ZEE5
- Pankaj Dubey, CEO & MD at Power. Global
- Sreerama Suprath, Regional Sales Head-South at ZEE5
- Ambika Vishwanath, Director at Kubernein Initiative
- Shankar Nath, Vice President at ETMoney
- Nikhil Kaushik, Co-founder and CEO, Graviky Labs
- Vineet & Hans, Entrepreneurs
- Manik M. Jolly, Founder and CEO, GRID
- Syed Ali, Advisor to Ambassador of Costa Rica in India
- Sumit Gupta, Investor
- Ravi Gadepalli, Consultant at World Bank and UITP

Rewiring Global Strategy for Environment

We have a very important event lined up for the end of this year, COP26. India too would be participating. What role do you hope and expect India to play at the summit to make it a success?

When we talk about India and COP26, what is perhaps disappointing is that India is amongst those few countries which has never sent a youth delegation to COP26. My fundamental belief is that young people are intrinsically tied to the Climate Crisis because generations before ours have been exploiting the resources mercilessly and it's the same set of people who are sitting in the parliament. The policymakers who are sitting in the parliament today will not be there for 20-40 years from now when we will be seeing the adverse impacts of Climate Change. Hence, it is important that the very minimum young people have a say and should ideally be included in the decision-making process. Expectations from COPs have always been high but the decision making and outcome have been disappointing. We are still going down the same plane where there are a lot of talks and not so much walking the talk. The fundamental problem is the fact that COP has become this event which looks like the one-stop kind of solution for the climate crisis but this is not true. This is because we have other specific bodies within the COP who meet regularly but it is the main COP, COP26 this year which gets all the attention. The President of COP26, Mr Alok Sharma declared that there would be 5 themes for this year's 2 week COP but if you look at the scope of the themes, they are so vast that it gets difficult to extract results out of them. The biggest challenge is COP being put on a pedestal every year and that there is a lot of hype and talks but outcomes are very minimal.

Is raising our target for cutting down emissions towards net-zero by 2050 a feasible step?

I recently had a very interesting conversation with Ms Sunita Narain, one of India's most known Environmentalists and my views regarding Net Zero emissions changed after my conversation with her. India has been criticised a lot for not making a Net Zero Emission commitment but why are we obsessing over this Net Zero target because 2050 is 29 years away and if there is anything this pandemic has taught us then it's the fact that we don't know what's coming next. It is important to live by the day since you cannot plan for things 3 decades ahead of you with so much uncertainty. One needs to be aware of the fact that we don't know what kind of technology, situation and crisis there will be 10-20 years from now. Rather than obsessing over Net Zero, we should focus on smaller and realistic commitments where you know that in the next 10 years, where you can reach. This is exactly what the US did in the conference on the climate which they hosted early this year where they pledged halving their emissions by 2030. So we can follow the US' move to make smaller commitments for the immediate future. Hence, smaller and realistic commitments is the way forward.

Do you believe that world leaders would be able to deliver a pragmatic approach towards solving the challenges we are facing? What can they do better?

The simple answer would be no and the reason for that is very simple. Why do they need to meet for something substantial to happen, why does COP have to happen for them to take any action? Talking has been happening for the last 2-4 decades since the NASA scientist brought the existence of Climate Change to the US Senate but we are at a tipping point where if we don't take corrective action then we will be too late, if it is not too late already. We do not need to meet, we need to act and if meeting is a necessary precursor for acting then meeting even 10 times a year but make sure you are adopting, implementing and enforcing the resolutions that come up.

Abhir Bhalla

Youth Environmentalist

It is a drastic comparison, but if you look at the UNSC, one reason why it is so 'Productive' as compared to other UN bodies is the fact that they have the Veto rule and they don't compromise on that. If the UN decides to agree on something then it can be revolutionary but then if it's having a lot of handshaking and a lot of talks, it is not going to be very useful. The UN is a macro-perspective but we also need to look at this from the other side. It is ultimately the politicians, whether elected or not, who go to the UN. So, we need our politicians to know that Environment is an issue which the people care about. The reality is that Politicians are not likely to care nor act until something has electorally motivated them. Why can't Climate Change be something they can talk about in their rallies? The simple way to do that is to make sure that politicians know that we care about this issue. That is where Individual Action comes in. Even if 1000s of us take some action, it becomes Societal Action and Societal Action speaks to the government which further translates into an electoral issue. Take for example firecrackers, both the NGT and SC have banned them during the Diwali season yet firecrackers continue to be sold. We can not expect the police to take action on thousands of violations in one night, so the action needs to come from us which would have shown the politicians that we care. So individual action translates into electoral issues and electoral issues translate into governmental actions and finally governmental action translates into policymaking at the UN. Our politicians need to have a pragmatic approach because the approach they currently have lacks action. We need to hold our government accountable for their work and make them aware that we need more credible action.

E-Waste has emerged as a great problem for us, it is polluting our groundwater, air, and toxicating our food. How can we individually and collectively treat e-wastes in a better way?

The electronics we use in our daily lives like motherboards, batteries, cell phones etc. have a kind of technology that has reached economies of scale. We should compare consumer electronics to plastic because when plastic was invented, the reason it caught on and is still as much of a mean is that it solves so many problems at such a low cost. There are ways to recycle but we don't talk about repurposing plastic. The Problem with repurposing plastic is that it's too expensive. It's the same with e-waste. There are many ways the chemicals and materials which are there in these products can be reused, recycled, and repurposed, but right now it's just too expensive, and that is simply because there are not enough people responsible for disposing of their e-waste. You know there are innovative ways you can use your e-waste. People make all these art installations out to CDs etc. There are ways to creatively use e-waste and similarly for batteries, even those batteries which are not rechargeable, can actually be reused but again the process will be too expensive. A simple solution is that people need to become aware that e-waste is actually a thing, and secondly, we need to dispose of waste properly. We need to ensure separating e-waste from your normal waste like wet-dry and plastic is happening, and then we need to ensure the fourth kind of dustbin is popularized as an e-waste dustbin. If e-waste is given to organizations, they will invest in the technology and will repurpose and reuse these electronics. Otherwise, these all are just going to the landfill.

We all are surrounded by plastic goods, from a simple wrapping to a pen. What can be a proper solution to treat these kinds of daily plastic wastes?

The first thing to understand when it comes to plastic waste is that you are not perfect. Everyone in their lifestyle is forced to use plastic. What we need to do is to reduce our consumption. Instead of buying a plastic water bottle, if we can afford a glass water-bottle then we should use that instead. Talking about the daily use of plastic, toothbrushes can easily be replaced like switching to bamboo toothbrushes. Also, forget your plastic straws. Similarly, people are now forgetting cutlery, there is now an all in one cutlery thing. Stop buying shampoo from the supermarket, stop ordering groceries from amazon as far as possible because literally, every stage of the supply chain is going to sort of increase the layer of packaging that goes around it. Just Reduce whatever is possible. I think that's only the solution.

What was the impact of COVID-19 on the environment?

It was good. The lockdowns were good for the environment, at least statistically. There was an article, which said that air pollution in Delhi fell by 79% in the last lockdown. I am sure that there was a similar study conducted even this year. Air pollution in Delhi fell by 79%, showing the positive impact of lockdowns on the environment. However, we can't stay in a lockdown in a perpetual state. That's just not viable for the economy nor for anyone's mental health. But why did the pollution fall by 79%? The answer to that is our vehicles. People say that the primary cause of air pollution is stubble burning and industrial emissions. But no, the number one contributor to air pollution is vehicular emissions. So we need to increase emphasis on public transport, increase emphasis on electric vehicles and that's the solution. So the simple answer is that the impact of COVID-19 and of the lockdowns were good for the environment because people were not driving about as much.

What can individuals and government institutions across the world do to offset the negative environmental impact of the crypto network, which is the reason for massive Carbon Dioxide emissions?

There's no doubt that the emissions are bad for the environment but what I believe is that the fundamental problem with cryptocurrencies is the fact that it's energy consumption is going up. That's really at the heart of the problem. However, it is the same problem with your emails as well. There was a report which showed that 80% of emails around the world are spam emails and that 80% of spam emails are consuming 33 billion kilowatt-hours, which roughly equals to the power consumption of 2.5 million homes in the US. Zooming into the micro-level, people switch off their lights and fans but they overcharge their laptops. Switching off your laptop and switching on again is better than leaving it on overnight because if you're charging your laptop for 10 extra minutes, it's just as equally comparable to greater energy consumption while mining cryptocurrency. So the solution isn't saying that cryptocurrency is bad. The solution is that we need to minimize and be more responsible with our use of digital technology. The government needs to build awareness about just how much electricity and energy is wasted. The only solution is greater awareness and then acting on it.

Do you think that there exists a trade-off between the financial return and the environmental impact of an investment?

If I was to ask a common person who is doing a fair amount of trading in stocks and investing in mutual funds, he will most likely not know about ESG funds. The most common understanding that people have of ESG funds is that you're getting a return on investment while being socially responsible. If people are investing in ESG stocks, thinking that they're doing their bit for the environment, that is not correct. A lot of these ESG funds govern bonds, stocks and mutual funds, where there is a lot of greenwashing. We need to make people aware of the fact that company X may be saying that they are sustainable, but you need to verify that claim. That's the responsibility of an investor. You need to do proper research before ESG investing. As far as the return on investment goes, if you look at anything under the domain of sustainable development, initially it seems very expensive. 5-6 years ago, solar panels were fairly expensive, but now the investors have recovered their investment and they are making money back from the grid. Yes, Sustainable Investment is expensive, but if you make that initial investment for 5-7 years, your return on investment will be worth it.

Journey of an Indian Startup: From One Day to Day One

How and why did you think of quitting your corporate job and starting a startup which is riskier? What gave you the motivation to do so? Also, considering your experience in the corporate world where the risk wasn't much, what advice do you have for the youth who are very impatient with their startups and focussed more on the outcome rather than the process?

Life is a bundle of risks. It is also that basic principle you follow in life is what is your risk-taking ability and how much risk you can take. It will vary from individual to individual. So some people might be very ok with taking risks but some people might not be so versed with taking risks. So I think it's a person's perception. However, when I say that yes I have taken risks and I've jumped from corporate to doing a startup and even before that I was in Indian Arm forces. So coming from army to corporate to startup, all these are different sets of lifestyle basically and it sometimes becomes difficult to manage and sort of getting into that crowd to ensure that you can contribute positively into the situation. So basically all you need to do is to have that positive brain of mind and know what you are getting into. So when you say that youngsters are impatient for startups, I think the major problem over there is they are youngsters and that they don't have that much experience and everything needs time and devotion. So if you want to succeed in a startup, you should have the passion for it and you need to devote time to it. If you can do that then I don't think there is any reason for a failure.

I saw in an interview that you failed in your economics exam in the ninth class. Also, that was just a start and there must have been many failures and hardships in your life till date. So how do you tackle and overcome them?

Failures are stepping stones. They lay the foundation for your success. So I think failures teach you a lot, something that not even success can teach you. So that's how I used to take it and it should not be like oh! I have failed and now there is nothing ahead. So, you know life doesn't stop and you just have to use that as an opportunity to improve yourself and always think of yourself as a competitor like no one else. If you are competing with yourself, I think you will become better and that's how you will improve.

Presently our country is facing a severe climate crisis. Delivery work also leads to high levels of plastic usage. What can be a more sustainable way to deliver the products, rather than how the major companies are selling it currently i.e. in plastic?

Individual sellers, as well as corporate sellers are becoming more and more aware of the nuisance of using plastics and they are trying to avoid as much as possible. So there are startups also coming which helps them to get rid of the disposal of plastic. Milkbasket is also reducing the use of plastic a lot and we are moving ahead with a sustainable environment solution as well as lined up with such things to ensure that we don't come up as a corporation that doesn't care about the environment.

Anurag Jain

Co-Founder of Milkbasket

Sir, you are the co-founder of a successful venture, that is Milk Basket. It is indeed not easy to set up a business and to consistently work towards making it sustain and grow. It is a challenge many startups are facing. Sir, through your own personal experience, the story that you have gone through in setting up the milkbasket, what message would you like to share with other startups who are trying to make a mark for themselves to make their journey a tad easier?

See, Milkbasket has been successful over some time. It's been 6 years of existence. For a startup having a journey for 6 years is remarkable, so there will be ups and down. It's not going to be smooth for anyone. Every startup has its challenges. All you need to do is sort of be prepared for those challenges and come out of the eventualities where you need to have the focus and passion to drive through. So if you can be consistent and be persistent in your approach, I think that will go a long way in ensuring that you can get to the other end of the spectrum. I think the approach and way of decision-making process because every decision have its pros and cons, most of the time it's not a binary decision like you can choose one of the two but there will be impacts and you have to analyze those impacts and take up call what you need to think is more suitable to the organization. So think positively and define the journey yourself.

Sir, you have been at the helm of many corporations, both multinational and indigenously developed. You have been through and in, in all the corporate circuits. How do you find the environment in India, legally, politically, and socially, towards corporate?

So I think the setting up of a company or a startup in India as time is passing things are getting easier. There are a lot of government initiatives to help you through. But yes it's a time-consuming process and it definitely involves technical legalities which you need to figure out with experts. Definitely, it's not like pressing a button and you can launch your startup. You need to understand the nuances and you need to to ensure that all the compliances are met. It's a time consuming process but I think it's worth it because then all your further day-to-day compliances base is all also taken care of once you are done with company registration and various legalities of it. So if we talk about corporate, I think the company which is already well established won't have so much in terms of legal structure but at the same time if things like tax reforms, GST system I think day by day things are becoming even better for them as well because any company want to focus on the core business rather than filing tax returns or various forms. So that's where I think the growth is and there are also a lot of startups as well which are also trying this kind of rope challenge where companies can actually focus on the core business and these sort of activities can be outsourced. I think there are ways and means to get things sorted. But in my opinion, one has to follow the government procedure to ensure that the startup is in good shape.

There are a number of companies that are delivering the essentials, and also many companies have come up with this to maintain the records feature. But your company has maintained both, also the holiday feature in your app is of great convenience. Where do you get this unique idea from? Also, what are the other features of the milk basket that make it different from its competitors?

So I think Milkbasket in 2015 started with a thought process and with an identification of a cap in the grocery delivery service and we wanted to create something more valuable to the customers. They also feel happy they also feel satisfied by the kind of service that they are getting so that's why there were few USPs that were incorporated from the very beginning. Like, you can order till midnight and get that delivery before 7 AM. This was something which did not exist in India before Milkbasket started along with that. We also came with that no check feature. It was a prepaid wallet kind of system and all you had to do was keep the wallet topped up and you could place an order any time. So it was monthly you had to press one button and there was the flexibility to change or delete the order. On top of it Milbasket is also selling milk so the consumption pattern for all these groceries are different for different households and one of the cases is that you are not going to stay at home other than covId times generally you will be going out for holiday. Definitely, the holiday feature was one of the necessities and you should be able to switch on and off whenever you want to. All the features that Milkbasket is developing are intervening together to ensure the customer delight so that the grocery order is a mundane task and no one wants to spend much time on selecting a product and making a long checklist. So Milkbasket gives you that flexibility of ordering at any time. That flexibility should be there that other platforms do not provide.

Respected sir you have served in the Indian army, which makes us all feel proud, moreover you have also pinnacled in the fields of corporate jobs. You have experienced many challenges in your journey. What message would you like to give, through your life experiences in a diversified field, from one of the army majors to founder of the greatest ecommerce to the young student of the generation?

I think the first and foremost advice I would give you is that you need to be passionate about whatever you choose to do. Just don't dive into the startup for the sake of it thinking that everyone is doing well so it will also work for me. So take your decision wisely, take your time and follow your passion. If you are passionate about it then do it but do it properly with proper allocation of resources and time, and then it works out fine and if it doesn't then you need to have a fallback option. It should not happen that you are blindly following one path and then you get distressed when things don't work out. The success story that you hear is the 3-5 % of the total startup that comes up and the rest of them get failed so it's high risk and high gain kind of a thing but initial stages are very critical where validation of the idea, ream right resources. All those things matter a lot. And having that understanding that this is a genuine problem that needs to be solved. Think through the entire process and ideate. Spend time validating ideas, getting feedback. Focus on the execution part. And be open to failures. Don't think that you have tried something and it has to succeed. It might be a very good idea but it can be way ahead of its time. So think through it, understand the nuances and then get into it.

Your company delivers essential commodities, the demand of which remains the same throughout the year irrespective of the situation. So, how did the pandemic affect your company? Has it had only an adverse impact throughout, or something positive had also churned out from it?

See, because we were in the essential services one day and when the pandemic was announced, that day only we were not able to deliver goods and services to the customers in our entire journey because the processes were not laid out. However, since then we had been delivering the services to the customers and during the pandemic, because people were not able to step out so ordering on an online platform has increased and gross industries. We also saw 1.7x to 2x the jump in daily orders. So I think from that perspective that yes people have become more used to online ordering and that's where people are much more comfortable.

Public Transport: The Pandemic and The Plan

In the wake of Covid-19, the public transportation system of India was completely shut. Several daily commuters, totally dependent on public transport, were brutally hit. What can be the perfect model for our public transport system in these situations, so that the rush in public transport can be controlled and also work effectively? Also, what has been your learning, from the pandemic, regarding the public transit system?

Shutting down public transport during Covid-19 has indeed had a significant impact on the millions of users across India that depend on them. Many of the essential workers, people accessing hospitals, those working in all the medical shops, grocery stores, takeaway restaurants and other activities allowed even during the lockdown, depended heavily on public transport. Government should have learnt from International examples like London, Melbourne, Singapore and many others where public transport service levels were maintained even during lockdowns with the idea that high service levels even during low demand times would automatically ensure less crowding and hence social distancing. There's enough evidence globally that adequate sanitization and ventilation would ensure that public transport is as safe as any public place. However, our policymakers haven't considered data during decision making but instead went with their beliefs-which eventually led to shutting down the systems and the adverse effects it caused. It re-established the absolute necessity of public transport for so many users who demand its reopening as early as possible. It also established the vulnerability of public transport agencies that don't receive consistent funding support from Governments and hence are reeling from financial losses incurred during the pandemic. We should treat public transport also as an essential service and fund it adequately to ensure high volume and quality in services.

We have seen how several government institutions are being privatised, moreover, several railway stations and train lines are slated for privatisation. According to you, if there is complete privatisation of public transportation, how will it impact the system? Is it a welcome step?

Complete privatization of public transport isn't a welcome step. The United Kingdom has already tried it for decades and is now shifting its National railways and urban bus services back into the public fold. Even in India, many cities which don't have formal public transport services already have completely private systems like shared-auto rickshaws, minibuses, private buses etc. The issue with complete privatization is that the private sector is primarily motivated by revenue generation which results in them predominantly operating profit-making services and neglecting loss-making routes. Even the fares aren't subsidized. However, in a public transport system, the service standards are set by the Government that ensures operations even in low demand areas to provide access to mobility for everyone. Even the fares are subsidized to make them affordable for all in addition to the concessional passes offered to groups like students and the elderly. However, the private sector still has a role to play. The Government should set the service standards and set aside the funding needs of the sector. The actual service delivery may be carried out by the private sector which gets paid for the service offered. This attracts private capital into the sector and therefore, helps in rapid scale-up.

Ravi Gadepalli

Consultant at World Bank and UITP

Our present government is doing its best to come up with a zero-emission vehicle system in India. India is a massive hub of public transportation. Hence, to evolve our public transport system into a zero-emission system we need finances, so how can the government try to source these funds? What do you think about IPOs for public transport systems, on a large scale, to raise funds for this change?

The government of India, State Governments and City Governments are already spending large amounts of money on transportation. It's just that the majority of it is focused on road building and not public transport investment. The limited public transport investment is focused on building metro rail systems that only serve a minority of the population and not the bus services which serve the masses. India already has the second-highest road density globally and doesn't need many new roads. We should divert these funds instead to build high-quality public transport systems and make them zero emission as well. IPOs are good for private enterprises that promise users big profits. However, public transport by definition is a loss making proposition because it has service obligations like providing services during off-peak hours, setting fares affordably, serving low demand areas etc. Therefore, Government investments will still be the primary driver of public transport funds. These can be augmented by International Financing Institutions (IFIs) like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, German Development Bank (KfW) etc. and also through private investment in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects. In addition to Government funding, public transport should also be funded by private vehicles. Cities like London, Singapore and many European cities use the polluter pays principle to charge additional fees on private vehicles through parking, congestion fees, annual road tax and other means to generate funds which are later used to improve public transport.

As a public transport policy strategist, what policies do you propose to ensure that benefits of public transport are being accessed equally by all sections of society in developing countries?

The key policy that needs to be adopted is the 'Public Transport Service Obligation' adopted by the European Union already. A PTSO defines the service levels (like frequency, punctuality etc.) and fares of the service and provides the necessary funding and financing to meet these obligations and cover for revenue shortfall from fares. The adoption of this policy along with supporting funding commitment for urban, rural and intercity bus services is crucial for the nationwide development of high-quality public transport services to be accessed by all sections of society-both rich and poor.

Considering the tight fiscal space of a majority of developing nations, what is the financial as well as technological feasibility of ensuring that alternate sources of energy are being used to fuel public transport?

As mentioned above India already spends significant money on road and metro building activities. We also spend a significant amount of money on incentivizing automobile manufacturers. We have already established that investing in public transport will provide access to many more users and also provide more employment compared to other transport sector investments. Considering these facts, we need to cut down on non-emergency and wasteful expenditure among road and new metro building projects and instead divert funds to existing public transport agencies to recover from the Covid-losses. The transition to electricity will happen quite rapidly once the battery technology improves to reduce costs and increase range. Therefore, ensuring overall sustainability in public transport funding is more crucial. The transition to electricity will happen on its own as the technology reaches cost parity.

Sir, you are a graduate from IIT Delhi and have done PhD in Transportation Planning and Modelling. What made you go in this line of expertise and how has your journey been in this field? What is the one thing you love about your job?

The reason for me to pick my current line of expertise and the thing I love about my job is the same thing: To make a positive difference in so many lives. At the time of my M. Tech graduation in 2008, highway planning, design and execution were a booming sector, as it continues to be even today. However, I chose urban transport as my area of work since cities are where the problems are accentuated due to high population density which needs mobility within the limited area available for transport. I gradually understood the importance of public transport in addressing our urban development challenges and at the same time in meeting the travel needs of the poor, children and elders affordably. Given the limited expertise in planning and operations of public transport, I picked that area of specialisation for my PhD. Post PhD, I became an independent consultant working solely on public transport and informal paratransit issues. It gives me immense satisfaction that just over the past 4 years, I contributed to many new bus funding projects at the National and State levels, the introduction of new methods of efficiency improvements in existing bus systems and developed frameworks for improving paratransit services like shared auto-rickshaws which together impact the mobility of millions across India.

China and Imran Khan: Is Pakistani Economy Ready to Rise?

Sir, you have been at the helm of many important national and international organisations. How has your life journey been, and what was your motivation behind the monumental journey?

I have over 30 years of experience in leadership roles both internationally and in Pakistan. I am currently Chairman of the National Vocational & Technical Training Commission. Before this, I was the CEO and Advisor for The Hunar Foundation, a leading private sector Vocational training organization in the country. Before that, I was CEO of the Institute of Financial Markets, where I developed international standard certifications courses that are now mandatory for professionals in the capital markets in Pakistan. I have also had extensive experience in Investment Banking and Insurance. I was CEO at both IGI investment Bank and IGI Insurance in Pakistan. In Hong Kong, I was head of Insurance research and was a lead analyst for international IPOs of several Chinese Insurance companies. I have over ten years of working experience in London as an investment banker and management consultant. I took on the current role because of the youthful population of Pakistan, our greatest asset. If provided quality training and skills to be economically engaged they will significantly boost the national economy. I trained as a Civil Engineer at Imperial College London where I also did master's in transportation. I am an MBA from London Business School.

How will CPEC, the pet project of the China-Pakistan relationship, impact Pakistan and the sub-continent?

China Pakistan Economic Corridor is a 'game-changer' with the potential to transform the economy of Pakistan into a regional manufacturing hub. CPEC-related projects involve enhancing transportation, infrastructure, energy, development of Gwadar port, and industrial cooperation. More importantly, the revival of manufacturing activities will be accentuated with the development of special economic zones, as proposed by the plan.

These special economic zones can be the backbone of economic progress in Pakistan, particularly if they are well linked with regional and global value chains. CPEC will contribute to the rising debt burden of Pakistan, but it can become a major source for much needed foreign exchange with the right mix of game-changing investment and trade strategies. Groundbreaking has been performed for an Industrial City in Faisalabad. Rashakai Economic Zone and Dhabeji Special Economic Zone groundbreaking is scheduled for 2021. CPEC's success hinges on the degree of industrial cooperation between Pakistan and China. It can transform Pakistan's ability to participate in international trading activities and upgrade its status as a major regional trading centre. The China-Pakistan relationship extends beyond the free trade agreement, which entered into force in 2007 and was amended in 2019 to further expand trade between the two countries. China exported \$2.5 trillion worth of goods in 2019, which is approximately 13 percent of global trade. The second-largest exporter in the world, the United States exported \$1.65 trillion. China is not only the largest exporter in the world but exports more than 150% of the value of the next largest exporter, signifying its dominance in global trade. Even with all the trade restrictions imposed on imports from China by the United States, the US remains the largest export destination market for China, even with all the threats of a trade war. This indicates the importance of China as a global manufacturing hub and proclaims the potential for Pakistan to enter the global value chains created by China.

China is emerging as a major friend of Pakistan and has assisted Pakistan in many instances by providing several monetary help. What are your views on the China-Pakistan friendship? How will it change the power dynamics of the sub-continent?

Pakistan and China enjoy excellent relations in various fields. China is the closest friend which has always stood by Pakistan at difficult times. Pakistan highly values its ties with China that has extended consistent support to Pakistan on all core issues of national interest.

Javed Hassan

Chairman, NAVTTC

China has contributed to the social and economic uplift of the country. Relations between the friendly nations get further consolidated with the launch of China Pakistan Economic Corridor. CPEC is a transformational project having strategic and economic significance for both countries. The project will enhance connectivity not only between the two all-weather friends but also among countries of the region, particularly Afghanistan and Central Asia countries. Several infrastructure and energy projects, under CPEC, have been completed that will usher in a new era of economic prosperity.

Recently there has been a lot of talk about how Pakistan is looking forward to 'Geoeconomics' rather than 'Geostrategic'. How will this Geoeconomic aspect pan out?

The economic growth of nation-states is linked to their ability to exploit interdependencies within strong regional blocks. Various forums such as the EU, ASEAN, USMCA, as well as regional treaties, are successful examples of how connectivity and trade liberalization considerably boost overall regional economic activity. Pakistan needs to take advantage of its unique geostrategic edge to see the maximum benefits of globalization. Its location allows it opportunities to facilitate trade between its surrounding countries by acting as a trade hub. It is particularly well suited to facilitate trade between Central Asia, which has a surplus of oil and gas, and China, which requires a constantly increasing supply of energy. China's, Central Asia and Afghanistan's importance to Pakistan's international economic engagement matrix cannot be overemphasized. While the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has helped build an already strong strategic relationship between 'Iron Brothers', the enormous potential for economic development with the Central Asian region remains to be explored. These economies are undergoing an economic transformation. Pakistani firms and companies can partner with Central Asian efforts by investing in new ventures in the region's countries, and by helping them develop new export markets. As trade flows and traffic grows on these transit routes, new jobs in the logistics sector in areas such as warehousing, trucking and packaging would also be created in the Afghan economy. Besides direct employment from the transit economy, small-scale manufacturing and agro-based industries can potentially develop in Afghanistan given the accessibility to Southern Asian and Central Asian markets. Access to cheap energy resources and relatively cheap labour would result in the development of labour-intensive export-oriented manufacturing, geared towards western and other markets. Such an export-oriented strategy has the potential to take off and creates a large number of jobs. Within the protective walls of regional economies, both countries can achieve specialization in various sub-sectors of their economies. Moreover, the strengthening of bilateral/regional trade will also cushion the economies of both countries from global financial or stock-market shocks.

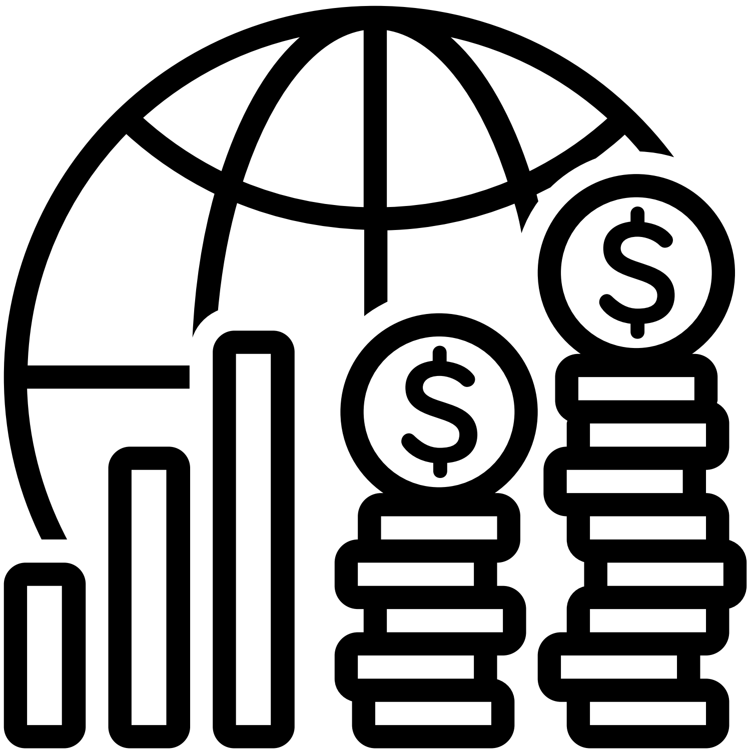
How has the current Government of Pakistan dealt with the dwindling Economic situation of the country?

When COVID-19 broke out, it threatened to reverse incipient growth and the hard-won improvements on the fiscal account. However, there are early signs of a V-shaped economic recovery resulting in double than expected growth (3.94 per cent) for the outgoing fiscal year. The latest budget proposals are trying to reduce the cost of doing business, improve ease of doing business and the trust deficit between the people and the tax collectors. Reduced cost and improved ease of doing business will help in the revival of the economy that should, in turn, result in additional revenue collection, a rationale for the historic high revenue target in the budget. The good news is that the budget has something positive for almost all walks of life. The industry and corporate sectors seem satisfied with the different measures that would improve their profitability and productivity. Agriculture is a provincial subject, and I am expecting the provincial governments to allocate money for agriculture. However, the federal government has allocated money for some vital interventions in the agriculture sector. The duties on silos and warehouses are reduced to enable the farmers to store their produce and avoid exploitation by middlemen. The provision of collateral-free loans for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) will help SMEs to continue providing jobs in the informal sector. Reduction of duties and taxes on small vehicles will help some to graduate from motorbikes to cars. Likewise, record allocation for different initiatives of the Ehsaas Programme, for afforestation, water security, the Covid-19 vaccine, power infrastructure, reducing regional disparities, and climate change, are all steps in the right direction. To improve the purchasing power of the people, the minimum wage has been increased to Rs20,000 per month. The total shortfall for the above-mentioned programmes is Rs3927 billion.

The government is expecting some proceeds from privatization and some provincial surplus but would have to borrow at least Rs3200-3500 billion if it gets some additional revenue from the above-mentioned heads. This calculation is valid if the government sticks to the budgeted fiscal deficit. Any unforeseen expense or slippage in revenue and the need for borrowing would increase. The government has resisted the IMF's demand to increase the component of petroleum levy in the budget, yet the way petroleum prices are increasing in the international market, it will soon be impossible for the government to keep subsidizing the oil process. Commodity prices in the international market are also increasing. This will influence the domestic prices of edible oil, pulses, and other imported items. If these trends continue, the government will have to borrow more or pass on the impact to consumers.

Currently, the majority of Pakistan's export is centred around textiles and related industries, with a lack of high-tech industries' contribution. What led to this, and how can it be changed?

Pakistan has been primarily in low value and low-tech products, while better performing countries have added more complex high-value products. Pakistan has to rely on its existing endowment of capabilities to produce a broader, increasingly more complex, set of goods and services by removing bottlenecks that have stagnated its global market share in textile exports. It must also in parallel explore new pathways for moving into high-productivity, technology and knowledge-based activities. Enhancing the sophistication of the existing exports' basket, policy efforts are being taken to incentivize structural transformation by encouraging competition, innovation, foreign investment and the creation of a digitally advanced economy. Investment in the building blocks for a more sophisticated economy by stakeholders across sectors will not only boost economic growth and welfare but also over time help Pakistan make headway in convergence with developed countries.



Is AI Poised to Take over Humanity?

India is a nation which is facing regular traffic on roads and crowds in public places. In this tough time of Covid where social distancing was the only mantra to curb it, how can AI assist us? We would be highly obliged if you can suggest a proper plan to overcome the traffic and crowding problem in India through AI.

Regulating social distancing norms and making sure everyone following them becomes a challenging one in traffic and crowds. Few ways might help, adding AI-based social distance alarming features in pre-installed government apps or other apps that have more users. This feature alarms the user when he/she/them is within six feet distance from another user. Another way is to add AI in CCTV cameras to frequently monitor people in crowded places like assisting the officials to easily identify people who are not wearing masks and check the social distance between them, this feature can also be added to traffic signal CCTV cameras to control the traffic. Additional features such as thermal scanners can be added to measure the body temperature.

Environmental pollution is one of the emerging problems in this world, yet several inhumane people are cutting trees and are polluting the environment. Can AI and robotics assist us to curb the environmental problems and how can the system be used to protect wildlife and forests from fire, poachers, etc?

Night-vision cameras and thermal cameras already exist to protect the wildlife, trees and detecting forest fires. But still, people are cutting down trees from restricted areas and poaching animals without being detected by the cameras. To completely control these inhuman activities, AI-enabled Drones can be used to monitor the wildlife and protect the trees and also detect forest fire location, AI-powered satellite imaging can also be used to monitor forest lands. AI Robots inform of rovers that can be used to monitor where the aerial view is difficult. These rovers can also be used to study the habitat of the animals and their routine activities.

2000 years ago Plato wrote, "All learning has an emotional base". What are your views on Artificial Emotional Intelligence, how it works and used across different industries?

AI machines interpret the emotional state of humans and adapt their behaviour to give appropriate responses to those emotions. It analyses our facial expressions, voice tone, etc., it can be a boon for mental health in various industries. Every organization can implement this technology to ensure their employee's state of mind and assist them. This Artificial Emotional Intelligence can be efficiently used in times like pandemics and lockdown mainly for people who live alone to assist their mental health and prevent them from stress and depression. More effective the technology can also prevent suicide.

AI is the future of Earth. How can we see the future economy with AI? What according to you are the pros and cons of AI on the economy?

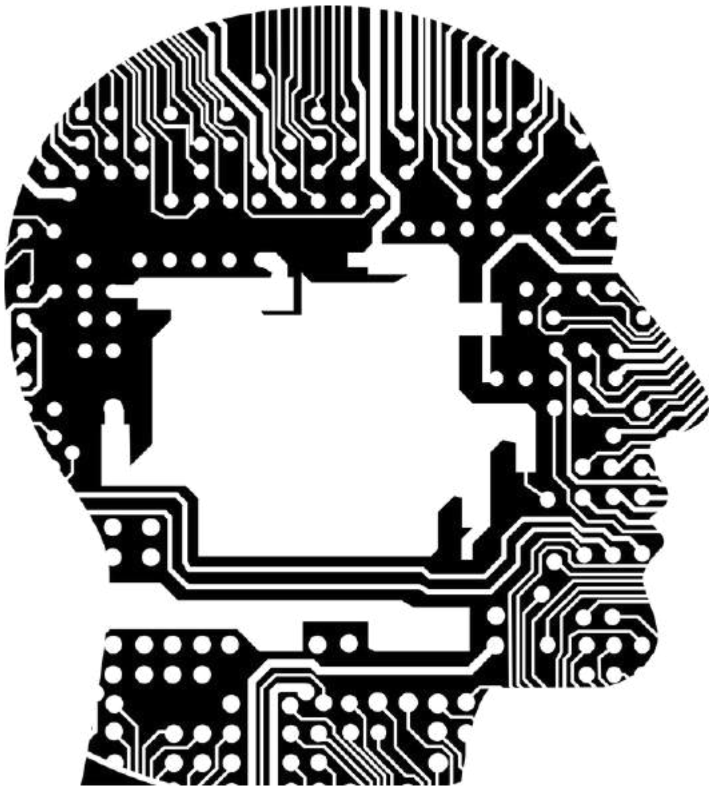
AI has both a major positive and negative impact on the economy, AI can both increase the economy and also make many people jobless. AI can increase the Global economy by 16-18% and can boost the Global GDP by 26-30%, AI has made businesses much easier and accessible. E-commerce businesses and online banking have made a good fortune using AI. Meanwhile, AI does all the difficult jobs and makes people jobless. Physical stores have started to face a reduction in customers as everyone started to do online shopping. Still, AI can provide much security and stable growth in the future economy. AI can also be used to predict the economy and keep track of it.

Sharun Arumugam

Aerospace Engineer

We all are observing how development in technology and robotics led to overcoming man power in several areas. Will intelligent robots replace humans in all difficult, cumbersome jobs and professions as part of the progress of civilization? What are your views on this?

Development in technology obviously replaced jobs, but some jobs where things can be done easier and with precision can save a lot of money for the companies. Massive development in AI systems not only replaced the jobs of the people but also the work of existing robots. Because from an organisation point of view, management tends to choose robots over humans to do jobs more effectively and these robots can be costless and which makes the company save money. There are many jobs where robotic intelligence is not efficient and it can only be done by humans. Comparison between AI robots and humans over jobs can be a major debate, still, the world will move forward with technology and it will grow day by day. The only solution is to update ourselves with the current technologies and move forward with it like the saying survival of the fittest.



Entertainment at a Click: OTT Platforms and India

Sir you have had an exceptional journey both in your career and academics. How has your journey been? What were your challenges and what were your motivations?

The Journey has been fast n furious but I enjoyed it and I realized that today's era is of Speed but with direction which means velocity, many people are just running, they have speed but they lack direction. I believe it's the responsibility of people who have reached a certain level to help and guide the youngsters and show them the right direction.

My Biggest challenges were Poverty, Lack of Exposure and lack of risk taking ability. I am from a very humble beginning and it took a lot of time and effort for me to cross that barrier and compete in the corporate world. The other big challenge was exposure as I was from a small town and information back then used to reach small towns quite late. The good thing in today's world of high internet penetration is that tier 2 and Tier 3 cities are not too behind in terms of information broadcasting.

The third challenge was internal which was the toughest to overcome the lack of risk taking ability, I think until and unless you have the courage to leave the ground you can never fly it took many failures and many years for me to realise that to grow you need to take intelligent risks, you need to leave something known for an extraordinary unknown.

My biggest motivation was my mission to become a better person than who I was yesterday.

How do you plan to compete with global OTT platforms like Netflix?

Firstly, even though platforms like ZEE5 and Netflix are all OTTs, in reality, we all are swimming in different blue waters. Netflix model is completely different where they do not show ads and don't make advertising revenue and for the audience, they offer good content only in the Subscription model and the kind of content and the Target audience are very different.

Netflix appeals to the Metropolitan millennials whereas a platform like ZEE5 appeals to Family audiences, including a lot of female audiences not just in Tier 1 cities but in tier 2 and tier 3 cities as well.

How much of a role content plays in today's world and what do they all look at while buying the rights for a movie/ show?

In today's Digital world there are just two things which are the King- Content & Data

Digital has made this world very flat and it's no more just about big banners but it's about the quality of content, whether or not it appeals to the audience.

There are 3 things that OTT's look for while buying the rights for a movie /show :

1) **Quality of Content:** The Quality and the appeal of movie or show content plays a major role in deciding whether to buy the rights for it or not.

2) **Fitment with the platform**: OTT's also have to see the fitment with the platform. For example, a cricketing show will have more fitment with Hotstar and SonyLiv rather than with ZEE5 or Voot.

3) **Budget**: Cost plays a major role in deciding which show/movie to go after as when the OTT takes rights to a movie the producer gets the money upfront and then OTT has to recover the cost via SVOD subscription and advertisements.

Pushpesh Singh

Vice President-Sales at ZEE5

From 2020 onwards, OTT platforms have become more liked by the audience. So what is your take in terms of sales and general perception towards OTT platforms in India? What would be the future of OTT after the pandemic?

We are already in the future of OTT. The future of OTT has arrived and it will only grow from here by leaps and bounds even after the pandemic. As per ZAPR, an independent analytics company, 21% of OTT users are now Cord cutters which means they don't watch television at all and around 36% are cord shavers which means very light TV viewers.
According to a recent PwC report, India is currently the world's fastest growing OTT market, set to become the sixth largest around the globe by 2024. The market in India is expected to grow at a CAGR of 28.6% over the next four years, touching $2.9 billion in revenues.
I also believe when Netflix arrived in India, initially, OTT was only a SEC-A phenomenon, not everyone was ready to pay for such digital video content.
However, now with increasing Internet penetration and to some extent Covid it has changed the consumer's mindset to go for such content which is available at the comfort of your time, medium and choice. Also, in Covid shutting all Cinema halls and theatres people were left with no choice but OTT which now has become a habit by choice.

Sir, you have been at the helm of many diverse corporations throughout your career. What has been your major learning from these organisations, and how has this experience helped in shaping your current personality?

I have learned multiple things from different companies and cultures and those learning have made me transform into a much better professional as compared to what I was before. However, the one thing which I will keep at the top in terms of my key learnings is whether you are a company or individual your ultimate objective should be "Problem Solving" .
If you are just making and selling products without caring about solving client's problems and pain areas, then soon you as well as the company you represent will become obsolete. We need to realize that all products are made to solve problems, a fan gives you air, a car makes you travel without getting tired and so on.
Also, In case you are a Manager or a leader then your responsibility of Problem-Solving increases as you will have to solve Problems not just for your company and clients but also for your team.
Therefore, the ultimate idea is to become a Problem Solver and be a part of the solution not part of the problem.

Sir, you have had extensive experience in the corporate world of India. If you would have been given an option to change one thing in the corporate world of India what would it be?

If I get an option to change one thing in the corporate world it would be "Greater flexibility around working hours "
With changing times, the pattern and ways of functioning in an organisation should change. With Internet & mobile phones making communication seamless, employees are today on call or zoom 24/7 be it a Saturday or Sunday.
Therefore, a greater flexibility should be extended to them. The strict login timings can be taken away in favour of flexible timings, and the employees can be allowed a few days of work from home to provide them a more comfortable and accommodating environment.
This is crucial to retain good and experienced employees, especially women who may need greater professional flexibility to meet the responsibilities of motherhood.
Moreover, a recent survey on workplace flexibility by HR service provider Randstad revealed that as many as 53 per cent of Indian respondents prefer telecommuting while at work.

What's that one thing you will advise every student to do and one thing you will strictly advise against? Also according to you, what are a few necessary skills everyone should try to master despite career differences?

I will advise every student to find his "WHY", you must know why you are doing whatever you are doing.. Are you loving what you are doing or are you doing just because you feel you don't have an option. So, find out the "WHY" of your existence.
One thing I would strictly suggest not to do is to Stop Comparing yourself with others, each one is at a different milestone of life, don't compare your first milestone with someone's 10th.
Few necessary skills everyone should try to master despite career differences according to me are as follows :

- **Relating**: Ability to collaborate with others
- **Inventing**: Ability to create something which was never done before
- **Visioning**: Ability to know where you are going and why
- **Sensemaking**: Making sense out of the environment you are in

The Impending Electronic Revolution in India

India is the hub of the vehicle Market, moreover, vehicular emission is one of the greatest problems in India. As India is in dire need of an e-vehicle system, when can we expect an E-vehicle chain in India at an affordable price?

Electric vehicles in India have been existing for more than 15-20 years. Unfortunately, it didn't succeed so far due to a lack of charging infrastructure and low technology being used. Customers aren't willing to accept such low-quality products. The demand for lower costs put the companies under the pressure of manufacturing low quality products.

Also, the cost of an EV vehicle is more than that of ICE fuel-based vehicles. All these challenges together thwart the establishment of a solid EV market in India.

However, since the last few years, the Indian government has been making good efforts to increase the EV industry and as a result, the industry has responded positively.

I foresee a big change in demand for EV vehicles in the next 3-5 years. If I go to any meeting or forums today, I hardly find anybody owning an electric vehicle. However, there is a high probability that in the next 5 years, when I will go to similar meetings, most of the people will have bought electric vehicles.

One major roadblock in EV has been the non-availability of the right technology.

I'll give an example. India is the largest 2 and 3 wheeler market in the world. India is the largest motorcycle market in the world, however, a few decades back India was seen as a scooter market and we could see very few motorcycles. Gradually, It started changing. This switch happened because of the technological breakthrough of high fuel savings on motorcycles over scooters.

Today, the problem with electric vehicles is that there are very few customers who see value in them. Customers would only see value when there is a technological shift and it is advantageous to them.

I can foresee a similar technological breakthrough in the next few years. It will be visible to everybody and as a result, I foresee increased demand for EV's and hence a green environment. Fuel-based vehicles could gradually fade out and give way to more green vehicles. I can proudly say that my company, Power Global, will also contribute to bringing a technological change that will act as a catalyst in the EV market.

India is a country with the second-largest population, and to facilitate it India has one of the largest public transportation systems. Do you think for environmental purposes the Indian government should upgrade the public transportation system to electronic vehicles?

There are intentions of the government and they want to buy E Vehicles. And I think the government should move to EV. However, there are few challenges, the infrastructure for charging is not available easily, the range of EV vehicles is an issue, and the absence of good quality Lithium-ion battery manufacturing is also an issue.

So, both infrastructure and a sufficient number of E-vehicles are necessary. The government upgrading to EV will help a lot in this regard.

Sir business-wise, do you see any benefit in Work From Home. How do you keep motivated in these times?

There are a lot of advantages of working from home. Anything that you enjoy and is at the same time challenging, keeps you motivated to do more. I will advise one to accept a challenge in the field of interest, something you enjoy and then you will be motivated. Also keeping a goal with fixed timelines will keep one motivated. Also if you work in the area of interest, then you will be motivated to give your best output.

Pankaj Dubey

CEO & MD at Power. Global

E-waste is one of the major problems in India. If the E-vehicle system would come to India how can we sustainably dispose of those batteries? Moreover, which type of startups can be started in India to develop more and more e-vehicle systems.

So this is extremely important, instead of NOx, and particulate matter containing sulphurous compounds, carbon di-oxide & carbon monoxide you have e-waste and battery cells for which we need a solution to dispose of. There are few companies and consultants who specialise in this field and there are few consultants in India who can help. However, at Power Global, our plan is to use the battery cells in multiple applications so the cells will be used for many years.. Like at x efficiency batteries will be used in the vehicle, then the same battery cell goes into other applications like stationary energy storage, into telecom areas, providing electricity to homes. I know for sure there is a company in Canada that specialises in cell disposal, So, over a period of time, I think there will be companies coming up which will be separate big businesses just to handle this e-waste.
Startups are needed for good and high technology components like motor, battery, controllers, cells, etc. Also, we need good integration startups as EV is the convergence of IT, Telecom, mechanical, and electronics. We also need startups in charging infrastructure.

Electric cars have been introduced worldwide with the idea that there will be some decrease in carbon footprints along with a decrease in air pollution. Do you think that electric vehicles will solve climate change-associated problems?

Electric vehicles would leave a positive impact on the environment. However, there are many other factors such as deforestation, urbanization, and global warming that contribute to climate change. Definitely, vehicles are one of the major factors. With electrification, it would become much better than it is now.
We have seen North India's pollution levels during winters. It gets so bad that people develop breathing issues. However, we need to take other measures too, such as reforestation. There is a direct correlation between rain and forest cover area. Humans and plants have always coexisted and are interdependent. The survival of humans is dependent on the survival of plants and the entire ecosystem. We need to bring the ecological system in balance. We must take inspiration from the Middle East, where countries have started working to improve forest cover even in the desert.
Abu Dhabi experienced more rain after huge reforestation was done. Hence, the electrification of vehicles is one solution to this global problem of climate change but more efforts are needed in increasing forest cover to increase the green world and bring more rainfall.

We have to charge electric vehicles on a regular basis. From where that energy will come is a big question. Do you think it will pose a problem and pressure on our environment and do we have such a mega-scale energy production to cater the needs of electric vehicles?

Currently, the best source of energy is lithium-ion batteries for Electric vehicles and other applications as well. We need to charge these batteries and we require electric power or other sources of energy including solar. We are planning to contribute to eradicating the energy deficit in the country. Lithium-ion batteries will in fact reduce pressure on energy needs. The government has taken many initiatives in the last few years in electrification, there is good progress on the amount of energy we get. Using alternative sources of energy will surely benefit the overall infrastructure and energy requirement of the country.
I don't see any pressure on the environment due to the charging requirement of EV or the need to increase already existing energy production plans in the country due to electric vehicles.

Sir in your long academic and corporate journey. You must have faced many challenges. How did you tackle them? What was your motivation? What message would you like to share with the youth of the nation?

I have taken all the challenges head-on. I try to find the root cause of issues and then solve them. I have done it multiple times. At Intex, I established and improved the brand image of the company, diversified the company into Telecom and it became 1B+ USD from a 120+ crore revenue company. In Yamaha, I joined the company when just a few weeks before there was an article in Economic Times "Yamaha may be looking to shutting operations in India". I accepted the challenge and did a complete change in strategies and executed " Yes Yamaha" and " Yamaha Bike Station" besides many other bold steps that lead to the turnaround of the company in India. I accepted a challenge to do a startup of fortune 500 company Polaris Inc, when there was almost no industry for the products in India. Made many innovative strategies like Polaris Experience Zone that was later followed Internationally in other markets. Made entry of Polaris products in Defence and made the company profitable in 5-6 years of its operation in India.
However, no one can be successful every time, failures are an integral part of success.
A well-known fact is that the kind of learning you get after failing is something you can't get after success. I have faced many challenges in my life. I faced many difficult situations, however, I always looked at finding a way out to succeed. The most powerful tool I want to give to youth is to "Dream Big" and always make timelines of achieving your Dreams. Never underestimate yourself and your capabilities. I know it isn't easy to stay positive at all times. However, just learn to be passionate and energetic even if you fail, and never blame yourself. Just identify your mistakes, learn from them and correct them. This will definitely lead to your success.

Beyond the Glamour: Streaming Services in India

Sir, your journey from Myntra, OYO to ZEE5 is a success. How do you think this journey has been and how have you managed to do so well for yourself?

I believe success is subjective and perceived by people differently and is a long journey. In my opinion, learning, self-reflection, adversities and failures play an important role in the evolution of one's self and career. When I moved from Myntra – where I had spent 5 years in various leadership roles – I wanted to take on a role that would help me work on my weaker areas. My work at Oyo helped me evolve as a business leader and set me up for my position now with ZEE5. However, throughout this journey what has played a critical role in my development is my entrepreneurial experience prior to joining Myntra, great bosses, a bias for action and a relentless study of my strengths and weaknesses.

Sir, the Covid-19 situation has changed the landscape of the OTT industry. How do you think it has affected the whole perspective of things? Do you think OTT platforms will be able to replace cinema halls in the long run?

It is easy to say that the pandemic played an important role in the growth of OTT in India today. It is true that the OTT industry has moved ahead at least 2 years during this COVID time, but I opine the primary factors have been deeper Internet penetration, access to affordable smartphones, an increase of dependence on social media and the rising success of various video content platforms in India.

Platforms such as ZEE5 have worked hard to bring quality content to its viewers and that helped build customer engagement and keep customers connected. As we move from one COVID wave to another, we need to understand our customers and keep in mind the changing dynamics of customer preferences, viewer fatigue, competition from short video platforms and other competing mediums. Our key to success will be to capture the next 200 million viewers and cater to vernacular markets.

I believe that both cinema halls and OTT platforms can co-exist, but increasingly viewers will be keen on catching up with content at the comfort of homes along with friends and family.

Sir, the next era of information revolution has begun. Each day we get news headlines regarding the leaps and bounds by which technologies are growing. There is a race among global corporations to corporate new technologies such as AI, Machine learning, Internet of things etc. into their business plans. How do you see these technologies impacting the Indian market, and most specifically in the domains you have worked in?

Innovation is the key to business success where data and tech are the key enablers.

The increasing cost of customer acquisition due to competition, changing business scenarios, government interventions, etc. have pushed companies to optimize their P&Ls and focus on research and development.

Data and Tech are helping businesses understand the customer life cycles, customer behavioural cohorts, interests and buying patterns.

Sreerama Suprath

Regional Sales Head-South at ZEE5

They are then able to use AI & ML to project and build sustainable models before go-to-market – thus able to optimize marketing costs. The more streamlined this journey, the better impact on P&Ls especially in an era where an integrated offline + online business model is the new normal.
As an example, automation is already in our homes – from washing dishes, clothes to innovations in cooking devices that would replace cooks.
Oyo has been experimenting with customer check-in automation at the hotel receptions – this is to remove the dependence of people and make the user journey obstacle free. By implementing check-in automation, Oyo would be able to not only bring down their operational costs, but also deliver customer delight!
Another example is e-com companies delivering products to their customers at the shortest possible time frame. Companies like Myntra use Data and Tech to first understand where their orders will come from – i.e customer segments, pin codes, etc. and try to optimize not only their projections of inventory in their own warehouse, but also partner with local retailers to maximize reach – i.e. get the product as close to the customer as possible. This not only helps bring down delivery costs, but also minimizes the chances of product returns, thus having a positive impact on the company's P&L. All of this made possible with a great understanding of data and building efficient models with the use of ML.

Sir, India has a huge proportion of young people in its population. The youth of this nation are active, energetic and make informed decisions. How does a big corporation such as yours incorporate the needs and demands into their Business strategy?

ZEE takes pride in investing in technology and other resources that help us develop a better understanding of our customer segments. Our decisions on content, marketing and other investments are an outcome of thorough market research and studying internal data models. We also keep a close watch on competition, latest trends and tend to plan at least a year in advance – even for contingencies. We have re-aligned ourselves as an organization to be an agile company where everyone is empowered, thus helping informed decision making more adept.

Presently, the Indian government came up with new IT rules under which a strict watch is being kept on the content of OTT platforms. How do you think these new rules will impact the content moreover don't you think it is against the publisher's right to speech?

Our decisions on content are an outcome of customer's voice – which comes from an intense study of the market (both online and offline), social listening, customer requirements, competition and other business environments. Our data and AI models help us customize content per user and thus we are able to keep them well engaged. We believe in compliance with Government policies and thus plan our content accordingly.

I believe it is necessary to have a governing body in order to filter out inappropriate content – like the internet, smart phones and thus content in general is available to all age groups. The better the governance, the better we are able to deliver content for the right users.

At present, more than 40 OTT platforms are active in India which clearly represents the neck cut competition in this domain. How do you think ZEE5 can overcome all these competition and which platform do you think is your real competitor?

With users spoilt for choices, it becomes imperative for organizations such as ourselves to understand our customers better. Data and tech help us determine who users are, what type of content they like to watch, when and where they like to consume this content. The models we develop through this information help us optimize user engagement and retention on the platform. These models help us develop the right marketing campaigns to attract users and build stickiness.
The biggest competition for a platform like ours is TV viewing. However, the OTT industry is still nascent and there is a lot of room for growth, competition and innovation in this space. If we continue to make informed investment decisions and learn from our mistakes, we will continue to stay relevant for our users.

Sir you have had an illustrious journey, in corporate as well as academics. What would be the one message you would like to share, from your own life experience.

The one message that I would like to share from my experience is that it is important to "Keep the Learning on"! No matter what your goal, learning keeps us updated, keeps us motivated, keeps us on track and pushes us to analyse our own strengths & weaknesses. One must keep the ego aside, keep an open mind, absorb from the environment, build a professional network and read books of all subjects!

Reassessing India's Threat and Security in a Dynamic World

You have had an illustrious journey. Can you please share your life journey and what made you enter this field?

I don't have any particular moment that made me enter into this field. I went to Washington College, US, to study Journalism and English Writing but over there I took a couple of classes, in Political Science. I enjoyed that class, so I switched my major to Political Science. I also had a couple of professors over there who were encouraging. A lot of what I do today I would attribute to my professors in my bachelor's degree. I also went to Turkey to do some research for my professor and studied there as well. I was in the US when 9/11 happened, so there was a lot of change that happened in the US and I lived through that change. So the experience of staying in the US during the 9/11 period, and then travelling in Turkey and the Middle East, put me on this path. I then studied Comparative Politics, in my masters in Egypt. The reason I went to Egypt was to understand Middle East politics from the region itself, and not study Middle East's politics from somewhere else. When I started working in the Middle East, one of the areas I was looking into was water, as a means of cooperation, because for many years before that people have been looking into water and conflict. So that is how I started on that path of being a water specialist, which is now what I have been doing for the last 16 years. There are a few of us who looked at it from both a science and political perspective. I stumbled on a lot of things but that's where I am today. I, a couple of years ago, with a partner, started Kubernein Initiative, which is our policy consulting firm, based out of Bombay, and we are one of the few female-headed policy firms in India. We thought it was important to have more women in that space, in India and that is something that we are pushing for as another project.

What are the causes of significant gender imbalances in the foreign policy domain in India? Is the government taking any steps to address it?

Feminist Foreign Policy is a whole movement that is active in 6 countries. This policy aims to make foreign policies more inclusive. Normally people think of keeping inclusiveness on the grounds of religion or caste, but inclusiveness at the gender level will make the department more effective at the top level. In MEA itself more than 40% of staff is women. However, only 3 foreign secretaries have been women and 18-19 mission heads are women. It has been observed that foreign and security policies are mainly male-dominated but the 6 countries i.e. Sweden, Canada, Mexico, Spain, Luxembourg have started following Feminist Foreign Policy. Libya has just announced to do so. These countries are trying to maintain a balance. Women being a part of the structure offers the country different perspectives so that they can make better-informed decisions. India provides several facilities to women. In the overseas gender development assistance program, the government invests a lot in women empowerment education and other women assistance programs. In Afghanistan, for example, our mission is working a lot towards gender mainstreaming, which is one of the components of the entire way we look at foreign and security policy. It's one step towards having that larger feminist foreign policy goal, but we need to be more proactive rather than being reactive.

Given the various gender indices of our country, shouldn't the concept of implementing Feminist policies at the domestic level be more of a priority right now, rather than implementing them in the foreign policy domain?

It's an argument that is being made by many people. I don't think that's a valid or invalid argument. It's an important configuration that has to be brought into your larger policy-making space. Now for a country like India, it's very important.

Ambika Vishwanath

Director at Kubernein Initiative

We can't go around the world saying our foreign policy is pro-feminist when our internal issues are so desperate. I don't see why we couldn't do these two things together. Look what's happening in Argentina, it has a lot of disparities when it comes to gender balance within the country. However, they decided to embark on this path of feminist foreign policy, since they have been very encouraged by Mexico. They put in gender departments in every single ministry, across their policymaking that will look at this subject. Now, they are going to look at their internal and external imbalances, but they are also going to look at it within each ministry. It's a very interesting approach that they have taken. So I feel like it shouldn't be one or the other. You start on the path that makes more sense for you. Also, the leaders probably start on a path that makes sense for them in terms of implementation. Canada is looking at it from a trade perspective because they believe this is a way they can get started with this. So every country needs to find its path and framework. India also has a framework that could contribute to the global conversation. This is not a conversation where we have to find one framework that fits all because that is not possible. I think it's important to understand that the internal balance is different for every country and they have to find that balance and how they go about it and what is the path then they have to take.

India has recently increased its partnership with 'non-traditional' partners, such as Portugal, Italy and Greece. What is the reason for this renewed interest?

The biggest reason will be India's global ambitions. India has reached a certain stage in its journey. We have a certain economic, regional and international standing, and to maintain it and stay in line with our ambitions, we look to forge new relationships. This is very important for a country's developmental policies. There are four sets of countries for every nation to build relations. One is the regional neighbourhood, then it is the countries with which we have economic, strategic and trade interests, and then there is the set of third level countries where our citizens work and travel often, for commercial and educational purposes. Then there lies the fourth circle of countries with which it is also important to keep relations to maintain the country's clout. Concerning the non-traditional European countries like Spain, Italy etc, our interests lie somewhere between the third and fourth circle and slowly moving into the second circle. It is also a part of the current government's policy ambition to build new relations around the world and strengthen the existing ones. Our expanding relations with Spain, Italy, Scandinavian countries, African countries and South-East Asian countries are the result of the same. To some extent, these are related to countering China but not entirely. The majority of them have a trade and economic perspective. These new relations will gradually become deeper in future. If we talk about Spain, we have a large number of Indians setting business there. So, in the next 5-7 years, I see a very strong business relationship with Spain covering food supply, trade etc. We will always move to deepen relations with countries whenever we see the value of business, military etc.

Do you believe we have strategically lost Africa to China? How can we generally deal with Africa in a better way?

Africa is not just a single country. It offers a variety of opportunities and options. The way India has conducted its policy with Africa, for the most part, has been good and very well received. We exercise a lot of soft power and we have provided them with a lot of governmental, technical, and women empowerment expertise. I feel like we shouldn't lose that part of our policymaking when it comes to Africa. I understand that we need to ramp that up in the area of hard and traditional security, but in doing that, and in looking at everything from a China lens, we are losing out a little bit of some of the good stuff that we have done, and that might be detrimental to us. The way we have conducted our policy with key African nations, in their development journey has been pretty good. However, we need to look at more new partners, similar to what we have done in Europe. We need more African experts in India, people who understand the continents for their vastness, like a Southern Africa expert, a Saharan region expert, someone who understands may be very core countries like Egypt, Senegal, Sudan etc. Not just an African Expert, because what's happening in let's say, West Africa and South Africa, is very different from what is happening in Egypt, and Kenya. It would be useful for India to improve its relationship with African countries while not losing sight of that journey of soft power relationships that we have built in Africa.

Why do you think water is such an important part of security assessment? And, other than water, what kind of non-traditional threat does India and the world face?

So you have traditional security challenges like border, nuclear, and hard security, and then we have non-traditional security issues that might arise out of refugees and migrants, water, and changes in the environment because they don't look at borders. All of this was once upon a time considered non-traditional, especially in the 80s and 90s. Unfortunately, they are still being considered non-traditional. But, along with core security and foreign policymaking, you also have to bring in the concept of where water lies with your foreign policy decisions because it is just as important as securing your borders. After all, India shares its rivers and water bodies with countries that we don't have the best relationship with. So we can no longer think of water as a challenge that is meant to be looked at under social studies or the sciences. We need to bring water into the hard security decision-making space because when you look at the rivers we share with Pakistan or with China, it becomes a hard security issue. Then how do you make a foreign policy decision vis-a-vis China, or Pakistan, without considering all your different areas? So while you consider cross border terrorism, borders, and military, you will have to look at water also.

So bring in more experts from this space, into that larger space and vice versa, so then more people who understand science, water, and policymaking, can look at it from that larger umbrella. If you look at some of the regions where countries have these tenuous relationships, water often becomes an unfortunate byproduct of other challenges. So when India and China have some sort of border issue, China stops sharing data during the monsoon season. The issues were not about water, but the water became this byproduct. We have seen it in South Asia, in the Middle East, and on African basins. We have to ensure that water doesn't become a byproduct of other problems. I would say in South Asia, water, climate change, natural events, disaster management also need to be given that importance, because what happens in Nepal, and Bhutan is going to affect India. All these things are interconnected and need to be given that elevated status.

How do you see the Water Challenge panning out in South Asia and the rest of the world, in the coming days?

Even though it looks bleak, in the last 50 years, there still have been more instances of cooperation over water, than there had not been cooperation. That's promising to people like me, who work in this space. That does not mean conflict will not happen. If you'll see, internally in India and within the region, there have been a lot of conflicts. But, at this stage, are China and India going to go for an all-out water war? I don't think that's going to happen. Is water going to become a byproduct of a whole host of other issues? Yes, and that's even scarier because a war could lead to several different trajectories, but the minute you make it a byproduct of other issues, it means that it can then take on a much larger and scarier life of its own. We need more understanding, research, and more people who are working on this issue so that we can ensure that it's safeguarded. They're not enough people trying to solve the water stress issues. I think we need to concentrate our energies in this direction as well. Not just across borders, but even within India. We have very little understanding of our rivers, especially our shared rivers in the North East. We require more understanding and more data over there. Then more cross border conversation is required between countries across this region, who share rivers. I think a better understanding will help the issue. 15 years ago when I was working in the Nile region, people said that there's going to be an all-out war, but it hasn't happened yet. Then they said there was going to be an all-out war in the 60s/70s, with the Senegal River. However, they went ahead and cooperated and created one of the better cooperation mechanisms in the region. So cooperation is possible. It requires understanding and a lot of political will. Nowadays, I think there is a certain amount of will, in this region, it's just that one is unsure as to how to bring it all together.

What should the government do to fix the climate crisis?

The union government needs to realize that climate change is embedded in many areas of our life. When we talk about water, forests, ecological balance, cities, regional and natural occurrences, they are all related directly or indirectly to changes in climate. We need to study this more deeply in India. We are studying weather patterns and it shows us huge changes. For instance, the west coast of India faced severe cyclones in the past 2 years which are not common and experts are saying that in future we will see more cyclones in the west. We need to observe this with the vision of its impact in future. How will all this affect the future of cities and housing development, drainage systems etc? The government needs to focus on these things. State governments also have a responsibility since all states have different demographic and regional challenges. Initiatives need to be taken for changes in education to incorporate these areas of study in curriculums. So far, there are only a few universities having departments of Climate change in India. There should be a Climate Change expert in the government department to formulate the policies better, and this is crucial for dealing with climate change.

₹ 10 Crores of Wealth in 30 Years! How?

Sir, still in many parts of the country, there is kind of a stigma attached to finances. Discussions of finance are shunned away, and investment is discouraged and equated to speculation and even something as bad as gambling. How can we build a positive environment towards finance and investment within our families and at a larger level?

On the face of it, most people prefer more money to less money - so this is not a genetic or cultural problem. In my view, hushed discussions around money are the product of our environment - a) knowledge of finance not being imparted in formal education and b) children are not given opportunities to 'earn' money as it happens in developed countries where kids help with household chores in exchange for pocket money. If the everyday environment can be framed to recognize essentials like budgeting and financial responsibility, I believe that future generations will have a much better relationship with money. The point you raised on speculation and gambling is also interesting. This relates more to the stock market and I see it more as a framing problem. People generally say 'stocks are a gamble'. But is it? Stock is nothing but a piece of ownership in a company that comes at a price that continues to change by the minute. And think of the stock market as a bazaar, with traders buying and selling this piece of ownership by striking price deals between each other. It's a lot like what you might have studied in your Commerce books. So, in my view, stocks are not speculation and on the contrary, it is a very intelligent and calculative activity like any other business activity.

In today's time, many platforms are specializing in imparting financial literacy. The topic has been discussed and debated a lot of times. Yet, we see a lack of general financial awareness among the youth, with a very small portion of them being aware of what is happening around them. Where do you think the problem lies, and how can it be solved? Is including practical financial literacy into the school and college curriculum a feasible idea?

Our country's education system provides all the tools one needs for financial literacy. After all, we all have learnt addition, subtraction, interest, averages etc. But what's lacking is the knowledge on how to apply these in everyday finance like budgeting, calculating the yield of a bond, return on investment, compounding etc. For most people, awareness that a mutual fund offers a lot more returns than a fixed deposit comes when they are in their late 20s and early 30s, which is a decade too late. Instead, the college curriculum can use real-life situations to explain multiple financial instruments and the concept of compounding. That's where we have to start and knowledge of finance should be available at the grassroots. Another much-needed advantage of starting early and starting right is that it reduces people falling to scams like double-your-money-in6-months investment opportunities or the many internet frauds we hear about every day.

Diversification of investment portfolio is one of the main pieces of advice given by advisors. As a young investor, should an individual invest in cryptocurrency?

In one of your previous questions, I referred to what constitutes investing. Good investing is a) non-speculative and b) intelligent. And in my opinion, cryptocurrency does not satisfy either rule. Consequently, I feel young investors should not put money in it and here are some thoughts on

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that. Unlike assets like stocks, bonds, property etc. that earn a return on investment, cryptocurrency has no learnability. This makes it more of a collectable like baseball cards, which means any price movements are on account of factors like perceptions, demand-and-supply (maybe), tweets and the emergence of a greater fool who will be ready to pay a higher price. To put it differently, I'd probably define cryptocurrency as the world's most expensive software. A second reason for my disapproval is the dodgy acceptance of cryptocurrencies from major economies like India, China, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Turkey that have banned or are threatening to ban them. As policies become more restrictive, there is likely to be a negative price impact on these instruments which makes investment in them riskier.

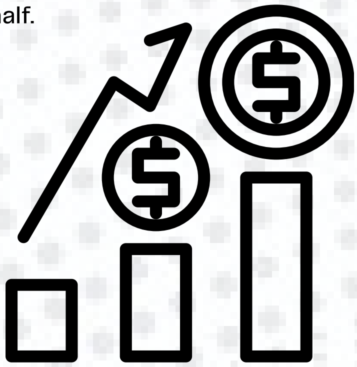
As an 18-year-old my parents have enrolled me in an MIS scheme of the Post Office which gives us a rate of interest of 6.7% p.a. Sir, what would be your suggestion for an 18-year-old child on how to start investing? Are either risk tolerance and risk aversion a "better" approach?

I have four pieces of advice here for an 18-year-old - 1. Start early. Mathematically, a 7.2% annual return doubles your money in 10 years. If you invest at age 18, the money invested today will grow to 16 times (2 raised to the power 4) by the time you retire at 58. However, if you had started at 28, your money would have grown to only 8 times. Ergo, the more time you give, the more money you make.

2. Invest via equity mutual funds. Equities are a volatile asset class but they compensate investors with extra returns. The younger you are, the more likely you are to withstand portfolio volatility.

3. Use systematic investment plans (SIP) to invest. Here's an interesting thumb rule to keep you excited. It's called the 15-15-30 rule which says if you invest 15,000 rupees every month for the next 30 years and earn 15% annual returns on it, you will end up with 10 crores of wealth in 30 years.

4. Don't take more risk than required. When you invest in something that you don't understand (like cryptocurrency), you are taking more risk. The same is the case with options, futures, intraday, short selling etc. My advice - invest in what you understand or leave it to professionals like mutual fund managers to invest on your behalf.



As per RBI reports a bubble is formed in the stock market due to multiple reasons. This bubble has led to a skyrocketing stock market index. What are your views on it and how it's going to impact the Indian economy? Moreover, what would be its impact on a micro level and how can we as individuals take steps to ensure a safeguard in future.

The bubble is too strong a word but there is no denying that the stock markets are in the expensive territory and in my opinion, a correction is imminent. More than the stock prices, what is worrying for the RBI is the swarm of investors in their 20s opening up demat accounts and putting money in stocks with little or no knowledge. However, for long term investors, this should not come as any botheration. Here are some firm principles all long-term investors abide with:

1. Never invest in speculative assets and in products one does not understand
2. Discipline your investing with systematic investment plans (SIPs)
3. Mind your asset allocation such that it improves your risk-adjusted returns
4. Track, review and rebalance your portfolio once a year
5. Never use leverage of any kind i.e. don't use borrowed money for investing.

In the budget of 2021, we have seen a great amendment in the insurance sector of India. From the introduction of LIC IPO to raising the limit of FDI in the Insurance sector. How will this impact the insurance sector of India in the coming future?

The budget did a fine job of addressing the three major problems faced by the Indian insurance sector:
1) dearth of capital,
2) poor insurance density and
3) dominance of public sector insurers.
By raising the FDI to 74% with adequate safeguards, the government expects to invite more capital to the insurance industry. This is important as insurance is a capital-intensive sector and the lack of sufficient capital has inhibited the growth of the sector. Better access to capital is also expected to increase the uptake of insurance products especially amongst the low-income and rural parts of the country. In my view, the government is expected to announce more insurance schemes for the underserved population although it remains to be seen how these schemes are devised and implemented. The LIC IPO and the proposed privatization of a general insurance company are aimed at changing the face and growth trajectory of the insurance industry.

There can be different methods for asset allocation which assist the diversification in process of the same. However, with each method, there comes some challenges that could not be avoided and thus may not lead to smart investing. What are your views regarding these methods? Is diversification always desirable or should diversification also be limited?

Over time, I have come to embrace diversification especially when it comes to investments. Here we have two areas worth noting - diversifying across assets and diversifying within a stock portfolio. Let's discuss both. Diversifying across assets is also called asset allocation and in my opinion, most investors get it wrong. They think it is merely spreading money across different assets when in fact, asset allocation is defined by two outputs -

a) achieving a better risk-adjusted return and

b) diversifying with asset classes that are not correlated to each other in terms of performance. So, as an example, if you have a large-cap heavy portfolio, then your asset allocation is better-off if you diversify with gold rather than investing in midcap funds. And while the proportion of assets depends on your risk profile, generally a 60:40 ratio between equities and debt does well to achieve an individual's return and risk objectives. With regards to stocks, one should be careful never to over diversify. So if you are invested in 50 or 60 stocks, then it's over-diversification and you are probably better off buying an index rather than managing such a higher proportion of stocks. In my experience, 15 to 20 stocks are the ideal diversification one should aim for. It keeps your portfolio manageable and absorbs any particular company or sector shocks.

A trend of investing in index funds over actively managed funds can be seen over the last few years. What are the reasons for this, in your opinion, and what advice would you give to someone who has just started investing, given the risk component included in both funds?

The entire premise of investing via actively managed funds is that professional fund managers can beat the benchmark performance i.e. Nifty or Sensex returns. Now, the last 5 years data shows that 65% of all actively managed large-cap centred funds in India have failed to beat the benchmark. This means, the selection risk for the average investor is 1:2, which is another way of saying that if I were to pick 3 actively managed funds, only 1 of these 3 funds will beat the benchmark. This flawed performance is the first reason for growing warmth towards index funds. A second reason why index funds will start seeing a higher growth trajectory is the emergence of factor-based indexing. In simple terms, what this means is that index funds are now looking beyond the simple market capitalization (size of the company) and are also using other factors like value, earnings yield, volatility, momentum etc. to select stocks that then form a part of a new factor index. This is very popular in developed countries and will be a dominant form of indexing in this decade. For people who are new to investing, the ideal approach to investing is to use a combination of index funds plus asset allocation. For example - say I want to create an all-equity index portfolio with these asset classes - 40% large-cap, 20% mid-cap, 15% small-cap and 25% international equity. Now, I don't need to search amongst the thousands of actively managed funds. Instead, I can choose any of the many Nifty 50 index funds, a Midcap 150 index fund, a Smallcap 250 index fund and a Nasdaq 100 or S&P 500 index fund to complete an all-index asset-allocated portfolio. Of course, don't forget to use SIPs to invest, don't forget to rebalance once a year and do trust the process for the next 5-10 years.

Battling Air Pollution: One Innovation at a Time

What fueled your decision to start Graviky, when you could have easily chosen the safer route considering your educational qualifications?

Yes, I am a Chartered Accountant, a career which gives ample scope for a stable and decent remuneration. However, I do not think stable career was or is my calling. I have generally been driven by the questions like – can I go beyond the basic needs and cause larger impact/change in the society.

When we started Graviky, both Anirudh and I, we had a common objective – to build a path from idea to product in the real-world settings. So often it happens that during our school or college days, we come up with really interesting ideas. But most of them die in form of project reports or lab experiments while we move on to the opportunities that give stable career opportunities. We are committed to not let our creativity die at the altar of stable career options! Not only the cofounders, the whole team of Graviky is full of individuals who have given up stable options for the riskier but highly rewarding, in terms of impact, option of working with us.

How has Graviky Labs evolved? (New product lines, business practices)

It is still evolving. As we build new products, address the needs of different industries, often, we are at the same time floating between different stages of product development. While some of our solutions are already in the market such as collaborations with like of Pangaia and Dell, several other solutions are still in the lab phase.

So, we evolve every day, doing a back and forth in the process of evolution as a product and as a company. Currently, our focus is on improving the carbon footprint for apparel and packaging through higher adoption of AIR-INK. At the same time, we are building the technologies that could help us capture more and more CO2 that could directly contribute to reduction of CO2 levels in the atmosphere.

In terms of business practices, we stick to 2 foundational principles:

1. Do not reinvent the wheel. Whatever can be done using existing production capacities should not be done in a new way just for the sake of it;
2. Branding and awareness are as important as lab work. Therefore, we ensure that we that the communication around AIR-INK is as user-friendly and as catchy as possible to make it easier to recall and use.

How do you think a product like AIR-INK which is still an alien concept to many can be mainstreamed in the collective consciousness and people accept it in everyday use?

I think there is a long journey yet to be covered before AIR-INK becomes a product for day to day use. However, over last few years, several global enterprises have successfully adopted AIR-INK and taken it to their customers with largely very positive feedback.

The journey, from where we started to our ultimate goal of a livable planet, is a long one. Our effort is a simple one – present people with all the relevant facts, offer them a solution in form of AIR-INK and then let their conscience decide for them.

What we ensure is that our customers/users get a high-quality product in form of AIR-INK, which makes their decision to shift from the traditional products an easy one.

Nikhil Kaushik

Co-founder and CEO, Graviky

Nowadays we see many initiatives being taken by the next generation of leaders to tackle air pollution. Do you plan on utilizing their vigor to expand your innovation in India?

Absolutely. We are always open to collaborations as well as enlisting such individuals as part of our team. Solution to Climate change is not going to be a "winners take all" climax. We will require hundreds of entrepreneurs, activists, political leaders to come together with their respective solutions to create a galaxy of ways to solve this problem. We are happy to be part of any constellation that does the job of getting rid of the excess CO2!

How do you plan on expanding your tech (Kaalink) to India? Like will it be a B2C model or a B2B etc.?

Expanding Kaalink to India and even, everywhere else, is going to be a slow and steady approach. Currently, our focus is on expanding the demand for AIR-INK, which in turn shall fuel the need for Kaalink and other technologies that we are building.

However, as we scale up, we are pretty sure that it is going to be via B2B route. Being an industrial application, the scaling up though slower in deployment, is going to be more impactful in terms of scale of emissions captured.

Whether, we go B2C way or not, is something we are going to decide later on only.

Can you please enlighten us as to how this will work exactly?

Currently, we primarily work with MSMEs for sequestering their emissions using existing technology stacks and using our proprietary tech to upcycle these sequestered emissions into AIR-INK. However, we are exploring tying up with large industries to increase our impact exponentially.
The idea here is to create plug and play micro circular economy solutions, where we will be deploying our technologies at large sources of carbon emissions and then upcycle it into AIR-INK for the use of local needs itself. This will all be done using existing manufacturing capacities, hence, doing away with new capital expenditures as well as the associated additional carbon footprint.

Once you were done with the innovation part and perfecting your device, how did you move forward with physically applying that tech in the real world? What will be different in your approach to establish your product in India?

The process of application in real world is already happening. However, we do not have a geography specific approach. Air pollution is a global problem and hence, there is a need to build for the potential deployment all over the world.
The key ingredient for large scale adoption is the awareness level among policy makers and general population as well as the ability to pay for the costs of moving away from petroleum-based products to more sustainable options.
These factors are going to be the key driver from our growth. Currently, we see most of the demand for AIR-INK comes from western economies. We are confident that slowly adoption will pick up in India too same as it happened for solar industry.

You have faced some criticism of your product because some people conceive it as improving smog's image? Being the CEO of the company, what changes or modifications did you undertake to tackle this?

Recycling of plastic does not mean promotion of plastics; recycling of paper does not mean cutting of trees is being promoted!
We are driven by a simple philosophy – nature does not have a concept of waste. Everything in nature is recycled. Buckminster Fuller said this long time ago – Pollution is nothing but a resource that we are using.

How many people do understand the real carbon footprint of their day to day consumption. How many people understand that the ink they use in their printers is also coming from a petrochemical source? I believe the solution to such criticism, lies in making people aware of the real carbon footprint of the products they use in their daily life. And help them understand that by using their own emissions - isn't this what smog is – the net effect of our private consumptions – for their day to day products is only going help ease the negative impact of air pollution.
The good thing for us is that number of people who understand this outweighs the critics by a very big margin. That is huge positive for solution like ours to build and scale up.

What is your business model and how do you ensure its sustainability?

The fundamental sustainability comes from our core tech and product itself. AIR-INK replaces carbon black in the production process by up to 100%.
However, there is a lot of secondary footprint associated with shipping, packaging etc.

Currently, we are building the plug and play part of our tech, (the one I referred to above), that could obviate the need to ship AIR-INK from India to different parts of the world. Over next few years, we are going to build a franchise of AIR-INK license holders who would be able to create the micro-circular solutions for the printing world in their own geographies that would further increase the impact of AIR-INK by doing away with the shipping carbon footprint.

Young and Bright: The Budding Entrepreneurs of India

Sir, you both have started young. In the age when most of us are struggling to find a path for ourselves, how did you establish yourselves? What was your motivation?

Early in my 10th, I realised that I wanted to be an entrepreneur. I could not see myself doing a job, and not that I despise it or anything, but I just realised that it was not something that was meant for me. I wanted to own a business and run it all by myself. So I started studying and researching about it quite early. Secondly, if we talk about motivation or inspiration for that matter, it came straight from my father. He is also an established businessman as of now and started with nothing very early in his life. I have seen him working hard, day and night and not just because he wanted to provide his family with a good living but he was and has been so passionate and dedicated about his work. So I wanted to see myself there too. Also, I do realise that most of the people of my age are still struggling to find a path for themselves and that's good because the struggle is important. I believe you should keep trying to figure out what you do or what you are good at, till you find what inspires and motivates you and then give your goal a hundred percent effort. Nothing good comes easy to you and the same is the case with success. I'm working as of now to expand my business and want to take it to greater heights.

What is your vision for the future?

My vision for the future is to see my business growing by the day and expand it nationwide and internationally too if it all works out fine. I don't plan to, or want to, settle or retire at a certain age, instead, I want to work till the last day of my life because I love what I do. It gives me strength, inspires and teaches me a lot of valuable lessons.

What according to you, should be a habit every student should try to inculcate in his or her schedule?

One of the many important habits students should have in themselves, is to be persistent in whatever they are doing. They should not lose hope or give up on their passion and dreams and success will follow. I understand that it gets very depressing and it's very difficult for one to always be as motivated but believe in the process. It might take a little longer but you should know that not all days are going to bring you disappointments, somedays would bring you success too. You just need to believe in yourself and what you're doing and give your complete effort in doing so.

What message would you like to share with the youth of this nation?

The message I would like to share with the youth of this generation is that do not give up and do not lose hope. Your grades alone don't define what you are capable of achieving in your life. If one door shuts down then another one opens up. Keep working and keep trying and one day you will achieve what you want. First of all, find what you want to do and then set a goal and then give it your 100% and it will all turn out to be good sooner or later.

Hans and Vineet

Entrepreneurs

Shifting Sands: India's Approach to a Changing World

The world has undergone dramatic changes in the last two years. Pandemic, change in US government, Abraham Accords meant to usher peace in the Middle East, Taiwan, China, Iran, Afghanistan and so much more that has changed the whole world and alliances in it. And as a major global player, India has and will not go untouched by its effect either. The most critical situation for India lies in its neighbourhood in the form of China and Pakistan. While the situation with Pakistan has remained unchanged over the decades, where it continues to actively support terrorism in India and keep crying victim at international forums, China attained a new position in terms of the focus of Indian Defence forces with its standoff in Ladakh last year. The speculations are still wild and many, on why did China do it? Was it to counter our fast developing infrastructure at the border, or to pressurize India to lay off from Pakistan, or to take advantage of the COVID situation or many other conspiracy theories? But the fact remains that China deployed its troops in large numbers all across the border in Aksaichin, and built defences and structures to intimidate India.

However, it did not anticipate India's response where Indian forces not only responded in strength and numbers but also ensured that the territorial integrity was not compromised at any location.

The clashes got violent at times, like in the case of Galwan, where hundreds of troops engaged in hand to hand combat and both sides lost a lot of lives. China soon got the message that this is a different India and the best step ahead would be peace and reconciliation. Hence started the rounds of discussions which finally led to disengagement and de-escalation. The importance of this for India was that a message was sent globally that India is that country that may be sharing a huge border with China and facing the threat up close and personal, but we are the country that will stand up to Chinese bullying and expansionism plans. While the world takes a lot of caution while dealing with China, even the US, India gave it back right then and thereby not only in terms of military action but also banning tons of apps and imports from China. The stand which India took has ensured newfound respect for the political and military will of India across the globe. The next issue which India is looking hard at is Afghanistan. Once the US forces pull out from Afghanistan in September this year, it will be a battle of control between India and Pakistan mostly.

While India has supported the elected government and Northern Alliance traditionally for decades, this time Indian foreign policymakers have shifted the gears a little and decided to engage the Taliban also, because not only has the Taliban been a traditional Pakistan ally and partner, it has also been winning district after district every day and is in absolutely perfect condition to take control of the government the moment US forces exit completely from Afghanistan. The Taliban in Pakistan is however at loggerheads with the Pakistan Army. Around three million Afghans are living in Pakistan and unlike India, Afghanistan is not something Pakistan can choose to ignore.

Manik M. Jolly

Founder and CEO, GRID

Having a porous border doesn't help. For India, it plays well that Pakistan is trapped in a situation where it cannot exist, giving India the leverage to negotiate from a place of strength. Having said that, the coming days will tell how India can benefit from its new policy and can continue its overall good relations with Afghanistan. India is not a direct stakeholder in the Middle East and has always maintained a very diplomatic and politically correct position on all matters. This was mainly because from the times of Mrs Indira Gandhi, we formed good and healthy relations with PLO and Yasser Arafat, but continued to buy Arms and technologies from Israel. There was never a hard line for India that defined our stand. Also, since we had major trade links with Arab countries, including Iran, we never followed the stance of others who had issues with them. However, in the past couple of years, India has improved on these relations tremendously. Especially with Saudi Arabia and UAE. This has played well for India as the moment Arab nations signed Abraham Accords with Israel, trying to bring peace in the region, India's position was galvanized as a friend of both sides. Mr Modi's visit to these countries and especially Israel has been a momentous step in creating these friendships. India even shares healthy trade relationships with Iran, which is a testimony of India's diplomatic prowess and the ability to maintain multi ideology connections and associations and not bowing to any one market or global leader. India's plan to join QUAD has been one of the most strategic and wise decisions. The Naval alliance of India, Japan, Australia and the US provides a solid and diverse wall of naval force against China.

While the Pacific may not be of immediate and even remote concern for the Indian Navy, even in times of war, for India, the alliance provides it with the capability of neutralizing Chinese efforts to block the Malacca strait, the lifeline of Indian trade and commerce via sea. Additional benefits like joint exercises, use of ports for logistical support etc are going to benefit India too. As India is taking major steps on modernizing and equipping its Navy, it has started to build critical relationships in Southeast Asia too, by creating bases at locations like Vietnam, Malaysia etc. These are signs of a growing regional and global power, which exudes its strength and diplomacy both, by not only the presence of friendly nations but by sharing knowledge and technology. India might soon be exporting its famous and lethal BRAHMOS missile and talks are on for even Tejas, the indigenous Jetfighter. India's relationship with the US will undergo major changes now with the change in government there. President Biden is a known Pakistani sympathizer. He was even given Hilal-e-Pakistan, one of the highest civilian awards by Pakistan, for ensuring a non-military grant of one billion dollars from 2008 to 2014.

But those were the days when the US needed Pakistan badly due to its presence in Afghanistan. Things have changed in the last ten-twenty years and the US has started to gravitate a little more towards India. Also, Pakistan being globally accepted as Terrorism Capital and a failed economy, there have been many voices in the US Congress and media who have repeatedly questioned the decision of continuing aid and support to Pakistan. Whereas India is one of the largest arms and technology importers, with deep pockets and large ambitions.

If the economy drives relationships, there is no reason for the US to not warm up to India. We have recently finalized a 3 Billion Dollar deal with the US to buy 30 MQ 9 armed drones and talks are on for the purchase of many more technologies and armaments. Also, India has a solid record when it comes to standing against terrorism. The US would like to align with that, rather than being dragged in mud for partnering with 'House of Terror', especially when the overwhelming need for it due to Afghanistan is gone. India continues to develop and improve its relations with Russia and France who have always been our major Defence providers and partners.

India's 'Vaccine Maitri' project has consolidated our position as a friend and well-wisher with nearly seventy countries, some of which, like Brazil, Maldives etc have gone out of their way to express their gratitude to the Indian government. India has resolved long-standing border disputes with Bangladesh and announced many joint projects too. Bhutan, which also had to suffer from China's 'Salami slicing' and had to face threats of losing land, was supported by India and we even inaugurated the 5,012-crore Mangdechhu hydro-power project. Nepal, India's traditional and longstanding ally, had raised the issue of border dispute on its Western border in the Kalapani area, under Chinese influence. But the issue was immediately resolved, and things are back to normal. The future of this world is unpredictable and so is India. But if one was to go just by present trends and alliances, India has pushed itself, against all odds, to be one of the leading economies and Military powers. Our influence and opinion at global platforms will continue to grow as we move ahead with 'Atmanirbhar India' the backbone of our strength and capabilities. India will soon be a power to reckon with in every aspect, and as the world moves towards a multi-polar dimension, we will be one of those poles. The future belongs to India!

Decarbonization: Emission-Free Economic Recovery

In the post-COVID world, green economic recovery has garnered significant attention as a win-win strategy to avoid the worst risks of the climate crisis. Climate change is the defining crisis of our time caused by the heating of the planet due to the ever-increasing carbon emissions into the atmosphere. In the post-COVID era, we need a cohesive trifecta of national, regional, and global decarbonisation plans with transparent reporting, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms.

Lack thereof will vastly stymie development goals such as poverty alleviation, access to drinking water, electricity, and shelter in the emerging and developing economies, subsequently creating new multi-dimensional complications in every productive segment of our society. However, following a time-based multi-sectorial and multilateral plan eliminating carbon emissions may reverse and restore the climate change-induced damages on our lived environments.

In accordance with the Paris Agreement target; warming of the planet beyond 2°C (pre-industrial levels) will cause severe and irreversible environmental damages. The warming of the planet is caused due to Carbon's propensity to hold heat for a longer duration; increasing global temperature irreversibly. This increase in global temperatures signifies serious risks for ecological systems along with significant adverse impacts on all the living organisms including our own species.

As a result of climate change we are witnessing; widespread environmental catastrophes; urban droughts, disrupted climate cycles affecting agricultural yields, soil erosion, rising sea levels, super-cyclones, forest fires, acidification of oceans, and similar events threatening the very existence of life on our planet.

Ameliorating such environmental deterioration requires a national plan of action for the decarbonisation of our production and supply chain infrastructure. The decarbonisation plan entails a long-term strategy focusing on weaning off greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions primarily carbon dioxide because of its large share (76%) within the atmosphere. As of now, only 29 countries have submitted their 'long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies to the UNFCCC secretariat in accordance with the Paris agreement that obliged all parties to submit their plans by 2020. Additionally, this year will witness two important events in climate diplomacy; COP 26 in Glasgow UK and the review of the Paris agreement's member states 'nationally determined contributions' (NDC) submitted to UNFCCC.

According to the Emission gaps report (2020) of the UNEP, the world is headed for a catastrophic 3°c temperature rise way beyond the Paris agreements under the 2 °C goal. Therefore, this makes the COP 26 a 'make or break' summit to rejuvenate the global consensus on emission reduction. Unfortunately, the list of countries with a long-term decarbonisation strategy does not include the top emitters China, the USA, and India respectively, responsible for more than half of the global CO2 emissions. Singapore is the only Asian country out of the total 29 countries to have submitted a long-term emission reduction strategy to decarbonize its economy.

Syed Ali

Advisor to Ambassador of Costa Rica in India

India is the 5th most vulnerable country to climate risks with its extreme poor being the worst affected. In 2020, out of the ten most expensive climate change events, two were in India; Amphan the super cyclone, and the October floods in the NE region of India, profusely costing the economy. Even worse, India is home to 9 out of the 10 most polluted cities in the world and this trend extends to the entire South Asian continent that has 49 out of 50 most polluted cities in the world. Pollution is a growing Asian problem, which needs an urgent regional plan that can contribute towards reducing global temperatures. At this juncture, a holistic and forceful decarbonization strategy explicitly formulating milestones to scaling clean transportation, infrastructure, energy, and agriculture at low costs through innovation is urgently needed with

the re-entry of the USA in the Paris agreement, substantial steps have been made towards emission reduction. The USA has committed to reducing 26-28 % of its emissions by 2030 and net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. India has constituted an apex committee for the Implementation of the Paris agreement. China in its recent 14th ' five-year plan has laid out the roadmap for 'carbon neutrality by 2060, with an immediate reduction of 18% and 13.5% CO_2 and energy intensity, respectively from 2021 to 2025 levels.

Quantifying the amount of innovation required to replace all polluting technologies with cleaner sources is a daunting task. Innovation is at the center of our fight against climate change and for this reason, we need proactive International alliances on climate innovation across sectors especially the scientific community. During the Paris agreement (2016), a coalition of 24 countries + European Commission launched the 'Mission Innovation' to foster and support the financing of greener technologies, and double the public investment in R&D of clean energy. Most importantly, we need to focus on climate literacy to extract human ingenuity from wherever possible similar to the development of COVID-vaccine in record time. As Bill Gates articulates in his recent book, 'How to avoid a climate disaster', "Solving global warming would be "the most amazing thing humanity has done".

How to Secure Funds for Your Start-Up?

Till just a few years ago, getting a traditional job was considered a “safe” thing to do, with most people preferring job security instead of going for the more challenging world of entrepreneurship. However, entrepreneurship has always been a strong point for Indians, with many very successful businesses having started off as family-owned enterprises.

In the past, starting your own business had a very limited connotation. One would either go into some kind of manufacturing, or retail etc. Usually, the finances to start a business would be provided by family, or – based on feasibility – by banks. The government also provided funds to small entrepreneurs under it’s various schemes. The amount of funds raised, however, were very limited due to the source of funds, and as a result most such businesses ended up either shutting down or being a shadow of the scale that they could’ve been had there been more funds available to scale.

In the last few years, however, this has changed. has over 40,000 government startups, with 3-4 startups coming up each day. For most startups, the initial money needed to kick off is still provided by friends and family. This money isn’t a very large amount, but usually enough for a small set of people to put together their ideas into some kind of plan.

Once there’s a general understanding in the founders of what they want to achieve, and the way they want to achieve it, and possibly some proof of concept, they can look for funding from the very large angel investor community in India. Angel investors invest money in the company when it’s little more than just an idea, so it’s a very risky investment as typically it’s said that only one out of ten ideas actually succeed. However, if it does succeed, the investment can grow many times over and easily cover the nine failed ones. Usually the ticket size (the amount an angel investor typically invests) is not very large – ranging from a couple of lakhs to around a crore, but still angel investors have to be very careful about investing as there are no traditional markers to indicate if the idea will work or not.

Investing in a startup is kind of like financing a movie. A movie with the best of actors and plot can still bomb at the box office, while one with absolute newcomers can be a superhit. The reverse is also true. Once a movie becomes a superhit, it’s easy for people to say that the financer had it easy and would be laughing all the way to the bank, but one needs to consider that things could easily have turned out differently.

The Financier

In a similar manner, when an investor – and from this point onwards, when I say “investor” I’m referring to myself, and how I myself make these decisions – decides to invest in a startup, he’s investing in the founders (the cast and crew of a movie), and the business idea (the plot of the movie). Just like in the movie business, where it’s easier to invest in a movie with an established set of actors or an award-winning director, startup investment decisions are also easier if the founders are pedigreed. The other way of looking at it is that founders have proven themselves earlier, or at least have a history of other startups, will find it easier to raise funds than someone who is entirely new into this space.

Sumit Gupta

Investor

In fact, depending on their past success, usually the investors who backed them earlier would back them again. So clearly, the most important thing to consider while investing in a startup are the founders.

Depending on the amount of money being raised (which in turn usually depends on the stage of the company), founders can go to different "levels" of investors. Most start off with F&F (family and friends), which is usually able to raise just enough funds to get the concept off the ground. But after that, one needs to look for angel investors. These can be individuals, networks (like AngelList or IAN), or funds (like GrowX Ventures). Typically, up to a few crores can be raised from such sources. However, when the requirement is higher, once needs to go to venture capitals, institutional investors or private equity funds. These investment firms usually cater to Series A or beyond, where the startup might already have proven the concept and the risk is slightly reduced, but the money is needed to scale the business or hire the right kind of talent etc.

The Crew

Wherever I've talked of founders, I've talked about them in plural. There's a reason for that. Again, this is my personal investment philosophy, but I am more inclined to investing in startups with more than one founder. Typically, I find that a founding team of 2-3 members, each with clearly defined areas (such as operations, management, technology etc) makes for a more robust and scalable team, as if the business succeeds the it can become too much for a single person to oversee but by then the business processes are too reliant on that single person to be delegated easily. Also, it's better to maintain a small core team with a common belief and passion for the business, and that sets the tone for all the future hires in the company.

So, what does one look for in a team, to be convinced enough to put money into their business? Clearly, intelligence is at the top of the list. Intelligence doesn't mean that the founders are highly educated or from reputed institutions – though that does have some bearing. More importantly, it's pertinent to understand how much the founders know about the field in which they are planning to start the business (domain understanding/expertise), and how well have they researched the business, its problems, the proposed solution, etc. It's very useful to know why the founders think why they are the right set of people to take on the problem that they are trying to solve, and why they are well placed to solve said problem.

While talking to the investors, one can also get a sense of how passionate the team is – that provides some understanding of how the team will behave during tough times, and whether they have the conviction to continue when the odds stacked against them. It may also help to understand to some extent how settled they are, to get an understanding of how long they will be able to hold off the financial pressures of day-to-day lives while the startup isn't making any money. It is most important to see how well the founders get along with each other as well, and how they complement each other in terms of skills and capabilities.

As the old adage goes, too many cooks spoil the broth. Similarly, having too many founders can often lead to cracks in the team, which can often be the downfall of the company. Hence, it's important that the roles and responsibilities of each founder are clearly defined based on skills and experience, and there are no ambiguities or overlaps. This doesn't mean that founders will be limited to doing only those things that fall in their areas of work – in startups, since there are limited resources, each person has to don multiple hats. However, the primary focus of each person must be agreed upon. In case of conflicts, it's important that one of the founders has been mutually agreed upon to be the decision maker.

The Plot

The kind of business an investor invests in can be very varied, and is usually a personal choice. Your truly, for example, invests mostly in business-to-business (b2b) technology startups. These would be companies that provide technical solutions for challenges that business face in their own internal processes or in interactions with other businesses, as opposed to business-to-consumer (b2c) startups such as those that are targeting retail customers, for example e-commerce stores for end-users. This doesn't mean that one doesn't believe in the other kinds of businesses that one doesn't invest in, it just means that the focus is kept on things that one understands well, and is most comfortable with.

Just the b2b-tech space is itself very large – my investments range from companies that use drones for surveys and delivery, provide access to satellite data processing, healthcare automation, provide logistics platform that enable goods to be moved efficiently... to those that provide AI tools for the apparel industry. I don't claim to understand everything about all these verticals, so the investment deck and the pitch that the founders make are my starting point. If I'm interested, I'll do my own research in the space. I understand tech very well, so I'm able to determine if what is being proposed is feasible/sensible from a technical or otherwise standpoint. Sometimes I've made decisions on gutfeel as well, for example when I like the pitch or the team so much that do not have second thoughts about investing, but that's relatively rare.

IJust because I understand and like tech doesn't mean that I only invest in tech companies, though they do form the bulk. Sometimes the founders or the idea convinced me so much that I've stepped out of my comfort zone... making investments in areas like online dating etc. Most other investors I know of have a similar thought process – they will have their areas of preference, but will be willing to step into other areas if fully convinced – this totally depends on the conviction of the founders and their pitch.

The domain is only one of the things that will be the deciding factor for an investor. What is more important is the problem the founders are trying to address. Usually, the companies that provide the most value are the ones that find a gap in the market which they can fill. The domain and the gap decide the scale of the opportunity, and the bigger the opportunity the more interested an investor will be in putting in the money.

The founders need to make sure that they have done their due-diligence about the domain in general and their offering in particular, as investors can grill founders very intensely (after all, it's the investor's hard-earned money too). In order to get their attention, founders should work on what is known in the industry as the "elevator pitch" – this is a roughly 30-second talk which is compact, precise and to the point, and explains the concept that is being proposed in the best possible manner. If this hooks in the investor, they will ask for more details. A good presentation detailing the business offering, the gap, the solution, the costings and basic projections, and relevant details of the founders should also be prepared beforehand. Pitching is story-telling, refined, and one investor will usually only give one opportunity to a startup so it has to be as clear as possible to help the investor decide if they want to spend any more time on it.

Note that fund-raising isn't easy, and is full of rejections. The best and biggest of startups around us would all have started with emphatic "NO"s from investors. This is specially true for startups that come up with concepts so ground-breaking that investors do not immediately understand the value. Founders need to be prepared to be rejected – but they have to understand that the rejection is not for them or their idea, it's just something that that particular investor doesn't want to be involved with. Most good investors, even if they decide not to invest, will still provide very valuable feedback about the idea, the business, or even the pitch itself, which should definitely be considered by the founders to improve subsequent pitches. However, care has to be taken to not divert from the core premise of the business based on an investor's rejection reason, just to make the offering more attractive for an investor. The pertinent thing here is that if value is being created for the users, then value will be created for investor as well and it's a byproduct of the business.

Investment Instruments

No discussion on investments would be complete without talking briefly about the way the investments can be structured. Typically, the investments come in lieu of equity: that means that the investor puts in the money in return for part ownership of the company. Good investors will be fair in their evaluation of the company, as well as the slice of the pie that they will demand. They understand that in order for their investment to grow, liquidity has to be provided at favorable terms to the founders, and enough equity needs to remain with the founders for them to still have "skin in the game" after several rounds of funding have significantly reduced the share of the founder in the company.

Another popular way in which funds raised are structured is Convertible Debentures. This is essentially an unsecured loan taken by the founders, where interest accumulates to be paid out, safeguarding the interests of the investor. When the instrument matures, the investor is given the option to convert the debt into shares at a certain rate, usually at a better rate than that for later investors.

Founders need to be mentally prepared for significant reductions to their share within the company, as usually every subsequent round of funding will reduce their share of the equity. One way to look at this is that at the beginning the founders own 100% of nothing, while after 3-4 rounds over some years, they may hold 30% of millions. While their share may decrease with each round of funding, the value of this share increases, and this is true for all investors who might have invested in the journey of the startup.

Hope that helps future founders amongst you understanding how the startup funding mechanisms work. My parting advice is to initially focus on the problem that's being solved, and if it's a big enough problem and your solution is good enough, money will be easier to raise. Don't start a business with the primary objecting of raising money and you'll be fine.

REGULATORY AND FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK FOR SHARED MOBILITY IN INDIA

Background

Improved Public transportation witnesses better services, results in better air quality and helps fight climate change. In India, we have failed to achieve both. In recent years investment has been limited to the metro only, leaving bus transportation at its mercy.

Not so improved public transport and day by day increasing demand, gave rise to paratransit services. These are privately owned and informally operated ride services providing both points to point (P2P) and shuttle services between destinations. Recent years also saw a rise in "New mobility services" providing app-based services, Ola and Uber are two prime examples.

Indian cities are faced with the combination of inadequate formal private transport and competing private solutions like paratransit and New mobility services. This is in contradiction to the National Urban Transport Policy that advocates for an integrated public transport system in cities that reduce the need for private modes.

But to move forward and cater to the ever-increasing demand we would have to come to a solution which would have a blend of public transport, paratransit, New mobility services in the most efficient manner.

Integrated regulation of shared mobility

The key barrier which we currently face for the implementation of Integrated Regulation of Shared Mobility is the fragmented governance structure being used in India. Each different kind of shared mobility is regulated and administered through various legislations which are enacted upon by several agencies.

There is little to no cooperation between these agencies, leading to poor implementation of public transport plans for the cities at the best, and at the worst, these agencies even compete with each other for high-density corridors with lower demand areas remaining underserved.

Few cities have tried to overcome this problem by establishing the Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (UMTA), but their role has been restricted to only infrastructure and finance planning, with no focus on integrated regulation. Hence a separate or smaller body within the UMTA needs to be constituted where coordinated steps for regulations can be taken. Such Public Transport Authorities should also be backed with finances and funds for integrated decision making.

MODE OF TRANSPORT	LEGISLATIONS	AGENCY IN CHARGE
BUS	Motor Vehicles Act, 1998 Road Transport Corporations Act, 1960	State Transport Undertaking (STU) / Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)
METRO	The Metro Railways Act, 1978	Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)
SUBURBAN RAIL	Indian Railways Act	Indian Railways

Regulations for the formal public transport system

The Metro Railways (Construction of Works) Act, 1978, and the Metro Rail Policy set the legislation in India (2017). For instance, The 'Motor Vehicles Act, which provides permits to entities providing bus services or 'Contract carriage permits' i.e. vehicles operating point to point services between predefined origins and destinations.

Ravi Gadepalli

Consultant at World Bank and UITP

In many cities, STUs play a monopoly over city bus services with private buses only issued contract carriage permits. This was done to promote STUs so that they could be compensated for undertaking various obligations such as subsidised fares, operating in off-peak hours, etc.

In many cities, STUs play a monopoly over city bus services with private buses only issued contract carriage permits. This was done to promote STUs so that they could be compensated for undertaking various obligations such as subsidised fares, operating in off-peak hours, etc.

All of this suggests that changes are required to protect STUs and SPVs from losses suffered as a result of their service and fare responsibilities.

PTSO and PTSC

European Union (EU) brought a regulation mandating cities to define Public Transport Service Obligation (PTSO) which prescribed a minimum level of service be provided on various corridors of the city. Each city has an authority body looking after all the undertaken activities.

Services i.e. metro, bus, tram are given to public and private operators making public operators work without being burdened by losses. Electricity Act, 2003 a similar kind of regulation inspired by the EU was brought in by the government of India.

TYPES OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT	EXISTING REGULATORY FRAMEWORK		
	Service Planning	Operations	Fare Setting
BUS	Done by the Employees	Self or Contracted by STU/ SPV	State Transport Authority
METRO	Done by the Employees	Metro SPV	Metro Fare Fixation Committee
SUBURBAN RAIL	Done by the Employees	Indian Railways	Indian Railways

Improved regulation of paratransit services

According to the present paratransit regulations in India, there is an operator's initiative in which the operator asks for a stage or contract carriage permission and the authorities determine whether to provide it. However, such a regulated framework led to operators focusing solely on high-demand routes, leaving many sections of the city underserved.

The act mandated electricity companies to split into generation, transmission and distribution companies. This allowed the Indian government to turn every arm profitable except generation companies. The learning from the EU can also be adopted in the Indian Public Transport sector, like the EU, Public Transport Authority (PTA) can also be established to take care of Policy decisions.

Therefore, an alternative model in which the government plays a larger role and assures a sufficient level of service for passenger demand is proposed. This job has been delegated to the Public Transport Authority, which is vested with a legislative framework and an adequate mission.

New Mobility Regulation

New Mobility Regulations which are technology-based aggregators offer flexibility that comes closest to a personal vehicle. Cities should harness these on-demand services as part of their efforts to reduce personal vehicle-based mobility as people are likely to use other shared modes like formal public transport and paratransit services.

However, on-demand services come with some challenges as well. They tend to be positioned more in busy areas, and thus aids congestion in these areas rather than reducing it. Moreover, the adoption of these new mobility regulations also witnesses a simultaneous decline of city bus services and is thus seen as a potential threat to existing shared modes of transport.

Measures like 'Aggregator rules' and 'Taxi regulation' practices have been developed to reduce the competition. The 'Taxi guidelines' issued by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways calls for an open approach that positions them as a part of the solution and not the problem of congestion.

The regulation of 'New Mobility' service being an evolving matter, should be accepted with a welcoming mind where the New mobility rules are seen as tools that reduce personal car dependence, rather than as competition to public transport. However, it is to be ensured that we don't replace personal cars with commercial cars.

YEAR IN
REVIEW

01

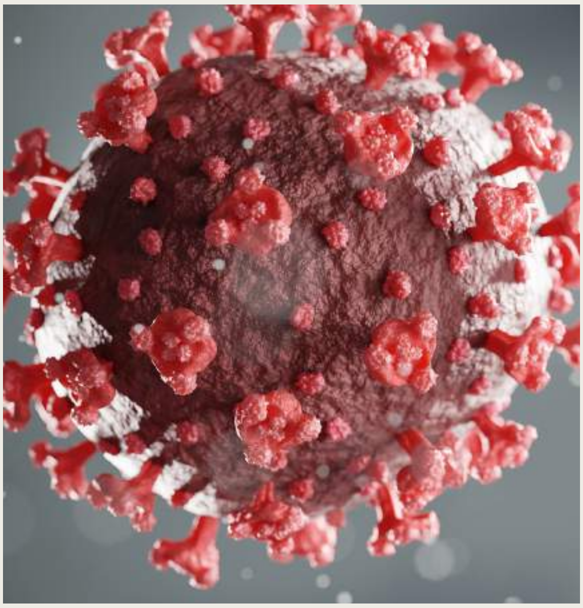
02

03

04

05

COVID-19
(SARS CoV 2)

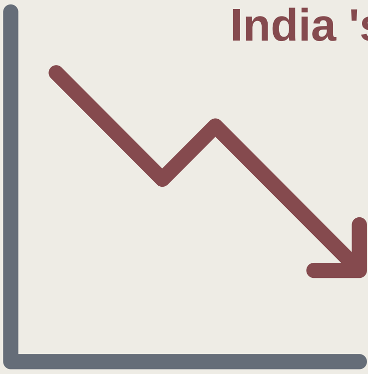


total number of

196,001,848

cases globally

First case was confirmed in **December 2019, in Wuhan, China.**



India 's GDP faced an annual contraction of

7.3%

in FY 20-21.

WHO was globally criticised for being a laggard, and not following up the case actively and judiciously with China. Soon, the world reeled into lockdowns and restrictions causing severe financial and mental hardships on people. Millions of people have died due to Covid-19. Even the computed financial loss in terms of lives lost is beyond our wildest dreams. Surprisingly, after more than a year since the detection of the first case, we still don't know how this pandemic will turn out. One thing is sure however, Covid-19 has turned the tides of decades if not centuries.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

500,000

people participated across the USA in **550 places** for the protests.

93% of BLM protests were reportedly peaceful.

This movement began in 2013, however, it came into the spotlight on **May 25, 2020,** When **George Floyd** was Unlawfully killed in the custody of US Policemen. The States soon reeled into widespread arson and rampant protests. Mega Cities like **New York and Los Angeles** were vandalised following the tragic event.

WILDFIRES & CLIMATE DISASTER

The California wildfires continue to ravage through America. Due to climate change and the consequential ecological disturbance, wildfires have become a painstakingly common sight.

But why has this devil been on the rise?

The answer is simple, we have invited it with open hands, shorter spring seasons, frequent droughts and windier conditions all contribute to these devastating incidents.

The economic impact woes budgeting as well, with the increasing responsibility for fire damages and decreased economic activity, key areas are left with fewer allocations and resources.

Time is ripe to reconsider our outlook towards Earth, the battle is not to save earth anymore, but to save ourselves!

The number of wildfires in 2020 alone, was

58,950

SPORTS

Japan spent

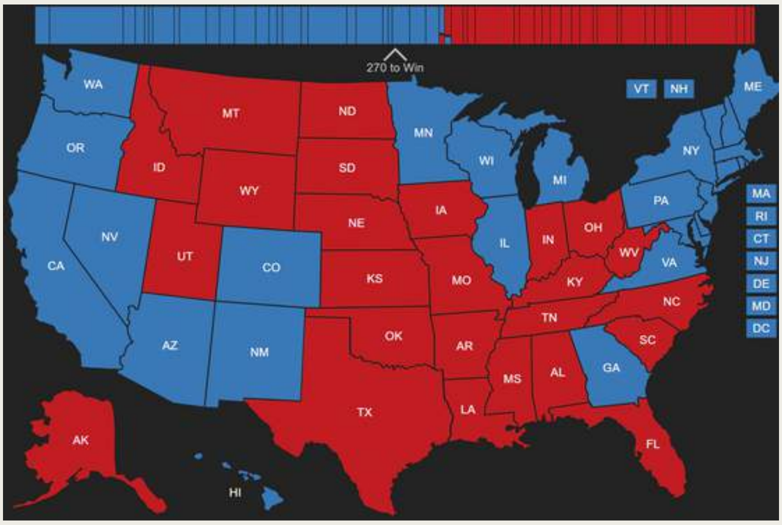
20 billion USD

for the 2020 Olympic games.

Tokyo 2020- the worldwide sporting spectacle was all set to be held in Tokyo in 2020, however fate had other plans. Due to SARS CoV-2, IOC, Japan agreed to postpone the games to 2021. As the pandemic unfurled, the clouds of financial losses began to cover Japan's economy, with close to 70% of Japanese citizens finding hosting the games a futile move, it was tough for the govt. to take a stand.

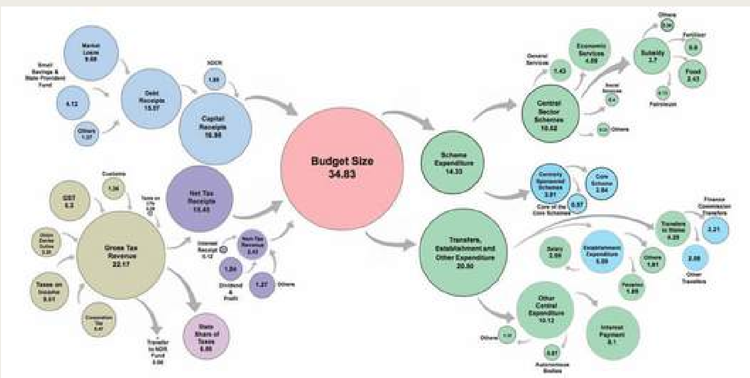
The event was touted to bring Japan back to the global stage, apart from the **$300 Billion worth of economic benefits the games were expected to create.** Some however feel that games can be a relishing sight in this tough time of a pandemic, giving the world some sense of normalcy and a commonplace to stand.

USA ELECTION



The 2020 Presidential Elections were the **59th quadrennial presidential elections**, held on 3rd November 2020. **Biden won by 36 college electoral votes over Trump**. The then President wasn't so happy with the results and claimed that the elections were unfair. He filed multiple petitions with the Supreme Court to review the validity of Postal Ballots, however, all his attempts turned out to be futile.

BUDGET



The Union Budget of India for 2021-22 was a highly anticipated one. The Indian economy was trying to recover from the effects of Covid-19 and do damage control. There were a lot of speculations that there might be an increase in tax rates to decrease the fiscal deficit. This led to a dip in BSE Sensex after it touched **50,000 marks.**

It was presented by the Minister of Finance, Nirmala Sitharaman on the 1st February 2021, this was the first-ever annual budget to be presented as paperless.

Aiming to flatten the curve, the allocated budget for **healthcare was increased by 137%**. The Government also proposed schemes that would focus on developing healthcare and establishing new institutions that would help in quicker detection of new diseases.

The budget was well-received by the market as the BSE Sensex closed with over **5% gain**, the highest gain since the Budget of 1997.

CRYPTO

The famed multi-baggers made a return in 2020, with bitcoin advancing well over **62,000 in March 2021**, it left many millionaires. However the music didn't last so long, Tesla's decision to suspend bitcoin payments and TechnoKing Elon Musk's controversial tweets were at the centre of the crypto storm. The Volatility in crypto is enormous, the currencies crashed 50% following the lifetime high, depicting how they lose out in terms of a store of value and how superficial their claim to be a currency replacement is. Countries like **China** have already launched a digital **yuan**, which piggybacks on blockchain technology as well. India too has started to look into the feasibility of creating state-backed crypto.

Total Market Capitalisation of crypto currency is roughly

$2 Trillion

The future is bright for blockchain technology, however, as for cryptocurrencies, no one knows when the music will end.

WHO IS THE RICHEST PERSON?

The past year has been a topsy turvy ride to be crowned as the **'Richest Person in the World'**. The throne has been accommodated by several personalities over the year. The race to the top has been affected by the pandemic, divorces, tweets and what not.

Throughout the year, we saw a cutthroat competition between **Jeff Bezos**, founder of Amazon; **Elon Musk**, founder of SpaceX; **Bernard Arnault**, CEO of LVMH and **Bill Gates**, founder of Microsoft. While 20 million Americans lost their jobs in the pandemic, the billionaires witnessed their wealth increase by **$1 trillion**. When Covid-19 was taking the world by storm, the rich got richer by 35%.

Currently, Jeff Bezos sits atop the list of the Richie Riches of the world with Elon Musk and Bernard Arnault close behind.

Elon Musk was the biggest gainer in the pandemic with

540% increase in his wealth.

Jeff Bezos became the first person to rack up a total wealth of more than $200 Billion.

CABINET RESHUFFLE

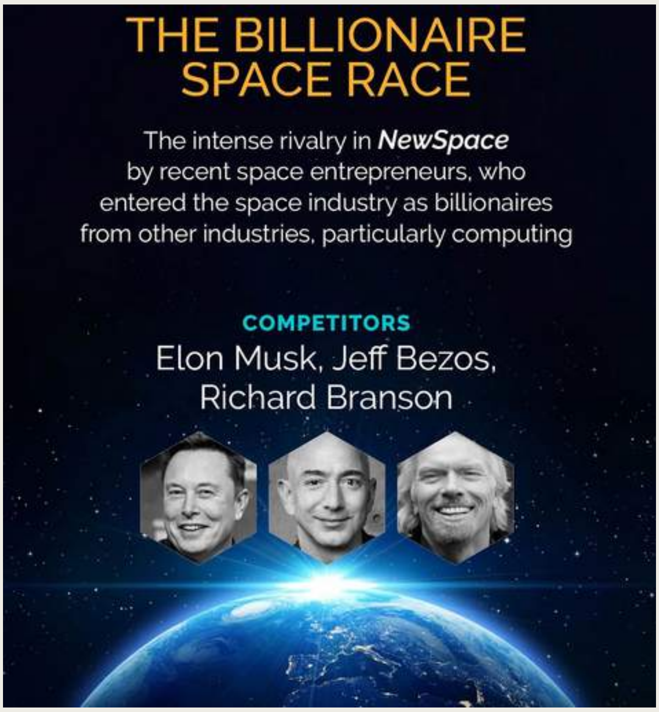
On 7th July 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi carried out a reshuffle of his ministry. A cabinet reshuffle refers to the change in the composition of ministers in the cabinet.

In the changed cabinet, the PM will monitor the Ministry of Science & Technology. Home Minister Amit Shah will get the added responsibility of the Ministry of Cooperation. This newly formed ministry provides a separate administrative, legal and policy framework for strengthening the cooperative movement in the country. Smriti Irani will be in charge of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) and also look after Swacch Bharat Mission. Piyush Goyal will be Minister of Commerce and Industry; Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution; and Minister of Textiles. The Education Ministry and Skill Development will be looked after by Dharmendra Pradhan.

12 Central Ministers resigned.

43 new ministers took oath in the revamped Cabinet.

BILLIONAIRE'S RACE TO SPACE



This rivalry amongst billionaire entrepreneurs to make a suborbital tourist spaceflight began in the 1980s with the formation of **'Students for the Exploration and Development of Space'**. The race took up pace this year with billionaires Richard Branson, Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos involved in a tussle to travel space.

While this may look like a progressive step to many, we cannot ignore the fact that this might just be a quintessential feature of capitalism. We have a primal urge to expand and reach for the next horizon. The Space Race is just an extension of humankind's obsession with economic growth. **Richard Branson and Jeff Bezos** have already launched the trial run of their mission to travel space. Richard Branson has also started the booking procedure for it.

Rewind

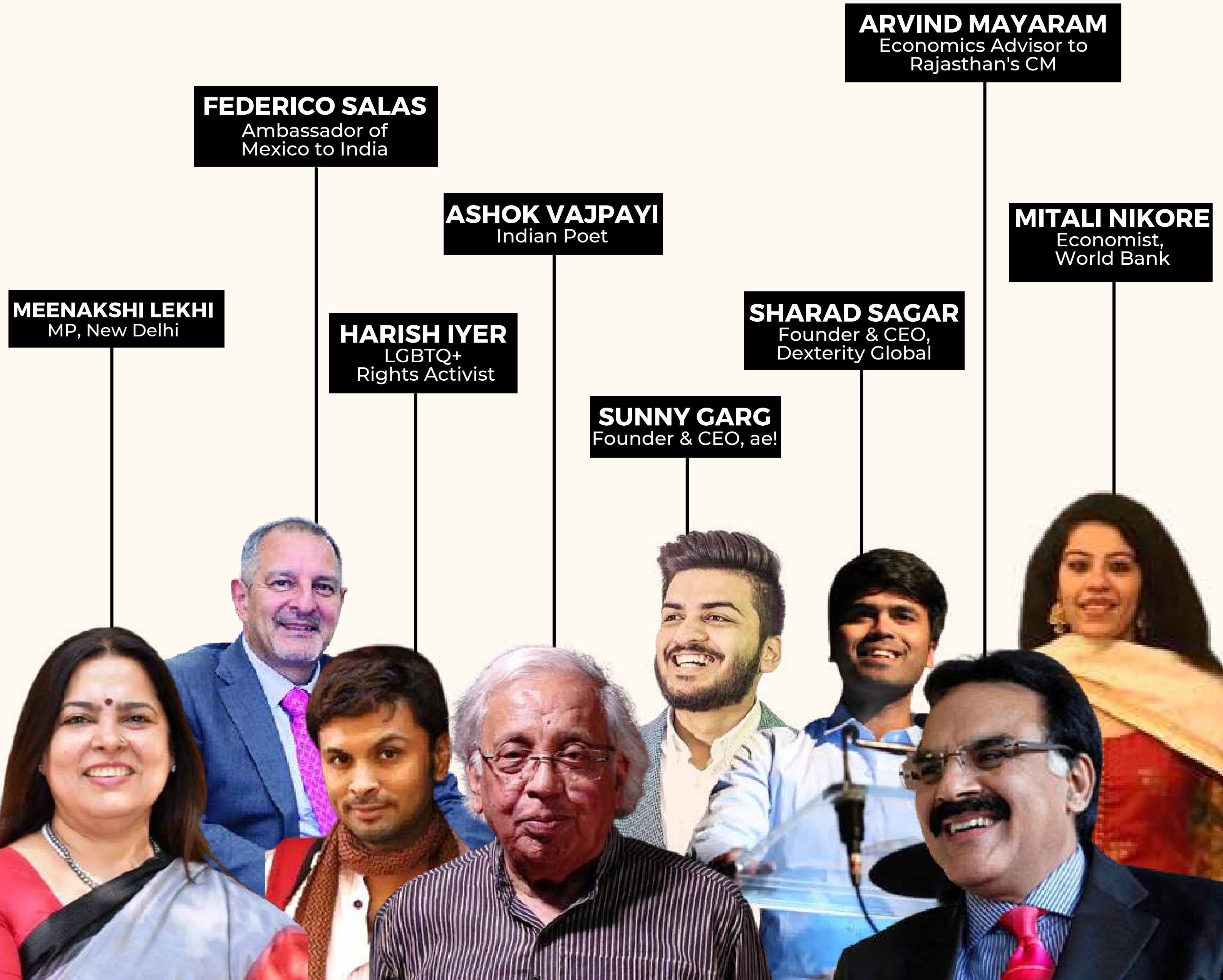
A lookback at the events that shaped the session 2020-21 of FIC Aryabhatta.

FINOMENA

Deliberating Ideas, Directing Minds

We organized our first-ever annual conclave, ‘Finomena- Deliberating Ideas, Directing Minds’ on **23rd and 24th January 2021.** This event initiated discussions and deliberations with significant personalities from diversified fields to steer young minds in the right direction.

6K+ 600+



FIC CHARCHA

7K+

700+

Charcha is our flagship **podcast series** to fulfil our audience's learning and entertainment needs. The initiative, sponsored by Uniline Energy India and the Delhi School of Communications, serves as a forum for students to interact with **pioneers** from **diversified fields** and expand their knowledge base. The series were conducted during the months of **May and June 2021**.

"The only way to become happy is to excel, and the only way to excel is by passing through a challenge."

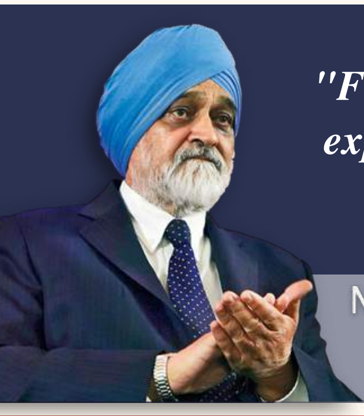
HARI OM RAI

Founder & CEO, Lava

"You should try to do everything you can to go outside of your comfort zone."

MICHAEL KUGELMAN

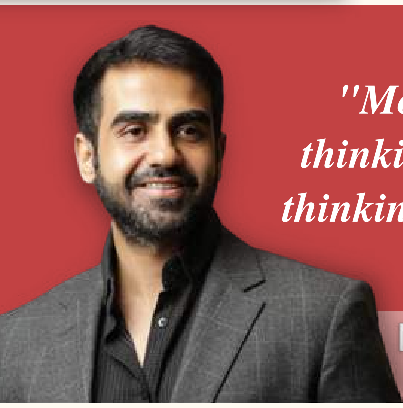
Asia Program- Deputy Director



"For young people having multiple experiences is a good idea to work their way to the top."

MONTEK SINGH AHLUWALIA

Indian Economist



"Most startups waste their time thinking about funding rather than thinking how they can be profitable."

NIKHIL KAMATH

Founder & CEO, Zerodha

Euphony

25-26 JUNE

ENGAGE IN EXCELLENCE

Euphony-'Engage in Excellence' is the **annual festival** of the Finance and Investment Cell, Aryabhatta College. Adapting to the new normal, Euphony'21 was held online on 25th-26th June and was a massive success.

THE RESURGENCE
Simulation and Case Study

TOTAL TAKEOVER
M&A Case Study

KNOWLEDGE GAMBLE
Quiz Simulation

BOARD OF TRADES
Mock Stock

DECIPHER
Scavenger Hunt

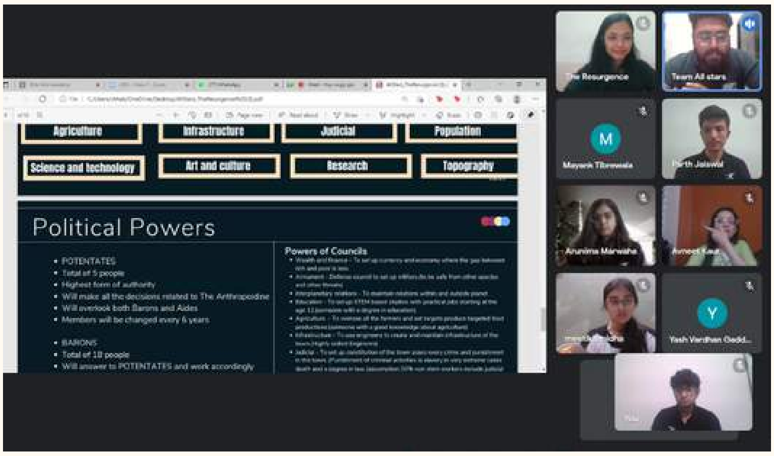
DUGOUT 3.0
IPL Auction

Lok Sabha Simulation
YOUTH CONVOCATION

5000+ REGISTRATIONS

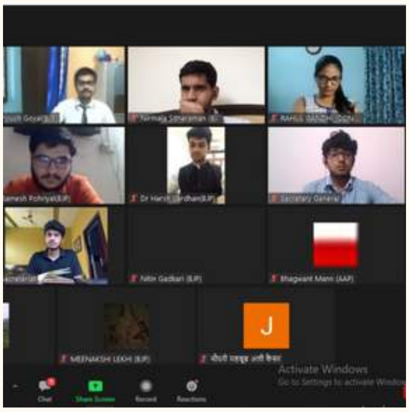
THE RESURGENCE

The Resurgence was a two-tier competition consisting of some exceptional mind-taxing rounds which required one's innovative ideas to move forward in this game. Set in the post-apocalypse world, it tested one's analytical, logical and survival skills as they aim to rebuild the economy.



YOUTH CONVOCATION

Youth convocation was a simulation of, "Lok Sabha" and "NITI Aayog" where Ministers/ MPs were indulged in active debate and policymaking, it was presided by the Executive Board who managed the flow of debate while marking the participants based on their points and the impact they created in the committee.



KNOWLEDGE GAMBLE

Knowledge Gamble, was a quizzing competition in a very unique way. The Competition challenged the wisdom of participants, give them a chance to represent their creativity and also gave them a great experience.

TOTAL TAKEOVER

Total Takeover, was a Merger and Acquisition based Case Study competition designed to check the participants Quantitative, Qualitative and presentation skills.

BOARD OF TRADES

Board of Trades, was a mock stock game modelled on real stock exchanges and designed to be a cutthroat competition of luck, skill, strategy and instinct like the real world.

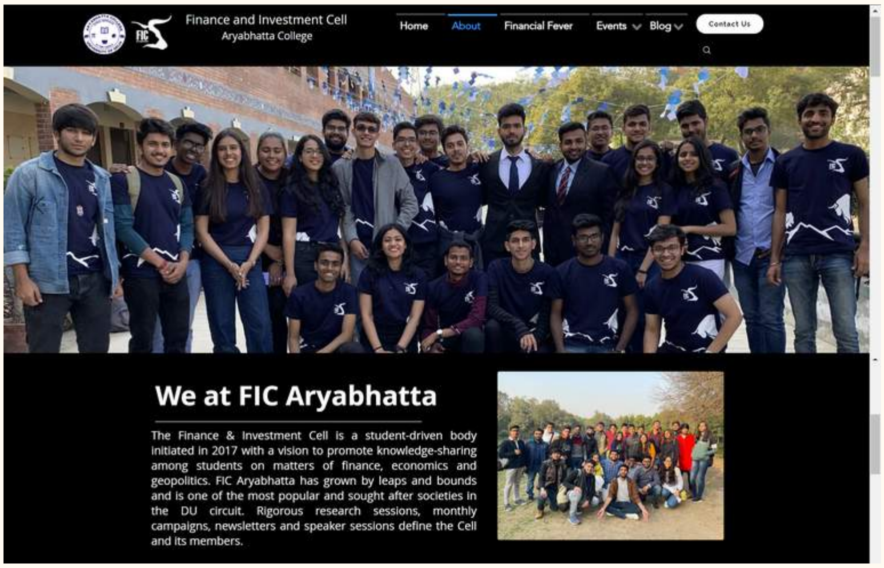
DECIPHER

A race against time, at 'DECIPHER' was put to test one's thinking capacity as they moved on a treacherous path where every correct answer Unveiled the next thrill until one deciphered the final clue.

Dugout 3.0 was a cricket-based competition that had it all. An IPL auction, a trading window along with fantasy cricket. It tested both one's cricketing and trading knowledge.

WEBSITE LAUNCH

We launched the official website of FIC Aryabhatta to provide our audience with an easy-to-use, information-intensive platform for all their learning needs. It is a one-stop destination to provide the perfect support system to all those who wish to delve deep into the world of finance. The website features weekly blog posts and an in-depth report of all the group discussions and presentation sessions organized by us. It has helped us in increasing our reach and in further improving our digital presence.



SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The society was formed with a vision to promote knowledge-sharing among students on matters of finance, economics and geopolitics. To provide justice to its motto, we organized a number of events to promote skill development and knowledge sharing for our team.

- Regular group discussions are organized every Friday and the topics range from national to international news and major economic developments.
- We have collaborated with organizations such as The Money Roller and Nikore Associates to provide internships in the most sought after fields like research and equity.
- One of the most recent collaborations is with Trillionaire89, a knowledge-based startup that will provide skill development sessions exclusively to our team members about trading, technical analysis & market psychology.

INDO-MEXICAN GROUP DISCUSSION

We collaborated with The India-Mexico Youth Forum, Global Youth to organize a round table conference on 3rd April 2021. The delegates had an in-depth look into the various aspects of the 70 years of India-Mexico Relations. The informative and intriguing discussion covered various topics ranging from cultural similarities between the nations, trade relations, collaborations on climate action among others. The forum came up with many strong conclusions which can strengthen India-Mexico relations in the future.

MEET WITH THE AMBASSADOR

On 10th February 2021, we met the Ambassador of Mexico to India, Mr. Federico Salas to express our gratitude and thank him for enlightening our conclave with his presence. The students had some fruitful conversations with him about the history of the two great nations, Mexico and India, and how students play an important role in furthering the ties between the two countries.

On March 24th, 2021, we organized a meeting with Prof. Manoj Sinha (Principal, Aryabhatta College, University of Delhi) and His Excellency Amb. Federico Salas (Ambassador of Mexico to India). The Agenda of the meeting was to discuss the future opportunities and student exchange programs between both organizations.

WEBINARS

In order to improve financial literacy amongst the youth of this nation, we conducted numerous webinars for the student community of the University of Delhi and other colleges across India.

During this session namely following webinars were held:

1. On October 11, 2021, the very first session was organized on "How to crack Civil Services Exam" with the guest lecturer as Ms Ilma Afroz:

Ms Afroz is an IPS from the 2017 batch and secured 217 overall rank in UPSC. She at large talked about her struggles and strategies she adopted to crack the Civil Services Examination and inspired many with the session.

1. On 31st October 2021 the second session was organized on "How to get high paying jobs and internships" by Mr Shivansh Garg:

Mr Shivansh Garg is the founder of Young Engine, a premium community for finding jobs and internships and an IIM Dropout.

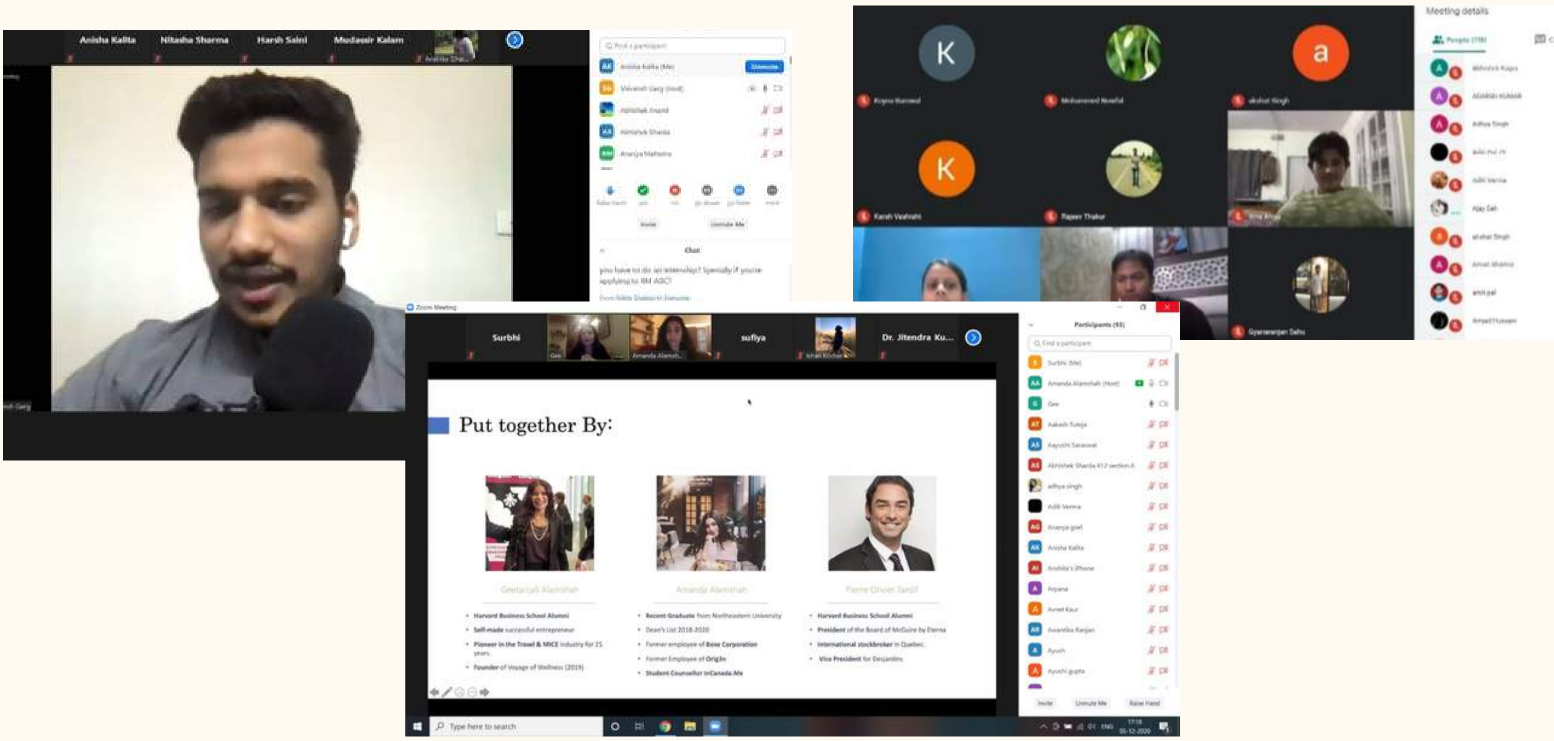
The session with Mr Shivansh Garg was aimed at personality development and goal orientation for the students where Mr Garg shared his own story and how his startup helps in bridging the gap between employers and students.

1. On 5th December 2021 another webinar was organized on "Opportunities to study abroad" by InCanada.me:

InCanada.me is a unique educational institution in Quebec, Canada which ranked 18th in Canada's top Research Colleges in 2018. The speakers were Geetanjali Alamshah – Alumni Harvard Business School and Amanda Alamshah.

The Webinar focused on educational opportunities abroad, specifically Canada and the Courses, Cost, and ROI extensively in a 2-hour session.

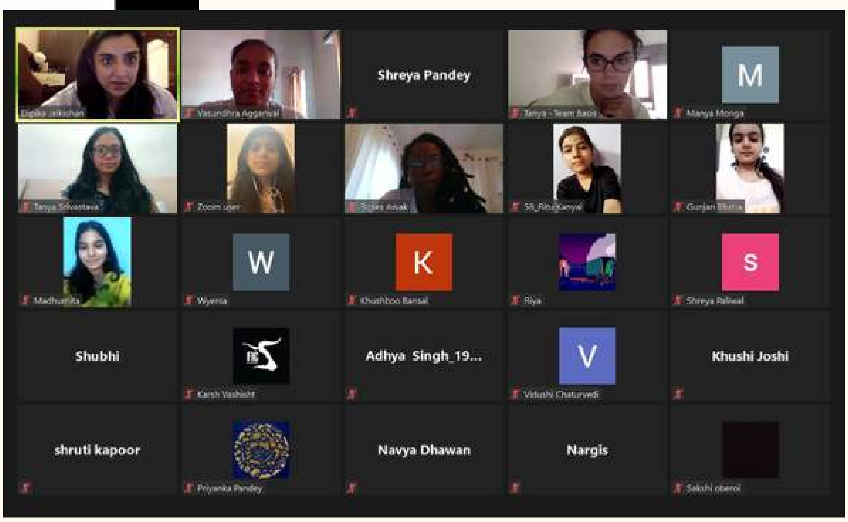
1. On 20th June 2021, we conducted an enlightening session on "Civil Services Exam preparation during COVID-19" with DRISHTI IAS. The session was conducted by Mr Anmol Srivastava (IAS, AIR-83) and Mr Abhishek Mishra (Faculty of International Relations, Drishti IAS). The key agendas discussed were how to remain motivated despite the pandemic, preparation strategies, and the online and offline mode of learning.

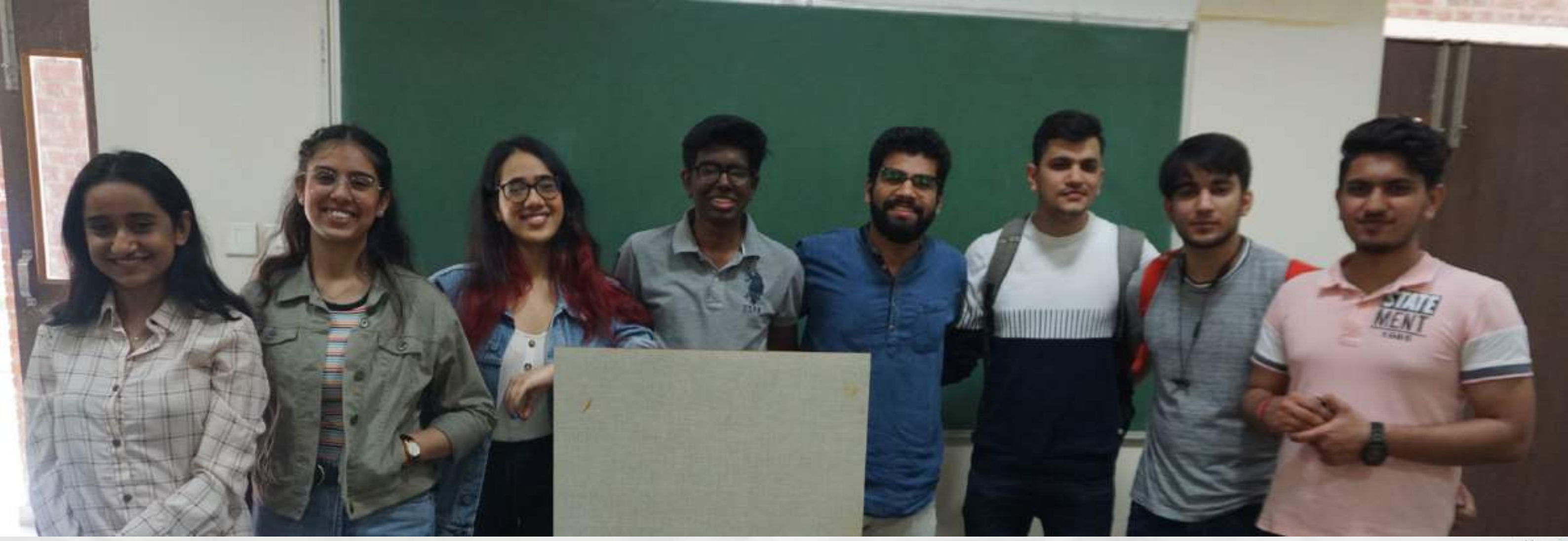


SOCIAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

In an attempt to broaden the horizons of what a Finance and Investment Cell stands for, we conducted several awareness campaigns in this session.

1. On 8th July 2021, we conducted an informative webinar on the topic "Achieving Financial Independence as a Modern-day Woman" in collaboration with Basis. This webinar was exclusively for the women of Aryabhatta College as a part of our vision to make women financially independent. The webinar featured insights from Ms Dipika Jaikishan, Co-Founder and COO at Basis. Ms Dipika has worked with numerous organisations, managing portfolios of over 100 crores in value and conducting 1200+ financial awareness conversations impacting 3 lakh+ individuals.
2. On 19th May 2021, we presented a hopeful and optimistic message showcasing the reality of Covid-19 to provide our audience with much-needed motivation. The video was filled with facts and do's and don'ts during the pandemic. It highlighted the reality of the situation and showcased that by taking precautions and trusting each other we will be able to tackle this.
3. Following up on our video message, we even organized a campaign to check up on the mental health of our audience. It was a fruitful and interactive session with Dr Priyal Bhatt who has completed her MBBS and has given over 100 therapy sessions in the past year. She has also started her own initiative which helps and provides sessions to those who are facing anxiety and stress during these times.





Messages
from the
Core Team

2020 - 21

Sarthak Malhotra
PRESIDENT

"If you desire something that you never had,
then you have to do something that no one has ever done."
My journey in FIC started as an associate member filled with ambition, vision and plans to achieve, as I grew up in this organisation I always had a question: what is the actual meaning of leadership and how to delegate responsibilities while maintaining a balanced environment being a leader? But eventually, when I got promoted and started my journey as the President of this esteemed organisation I got my questions answered most subtly. Leadership is totally about selecting aid over self-interest. It is actually the vision not the power. We at FIC, have never failed to grab opportunities and had always welcome new innovative ideas, nothing seemed impossible for us, we work on a basic idea, then plan the execution of the project, and finally end up succeeding in it whether it is FIC Charcha - a podcast series or Euphony - annual fest.
It makes me proud today when I see how hardworking and dedicated my teammates are and how much we have achieved in so little time which honestly seemed impossible at the start of this beautiful journey.
FIC truly believes that the youth of today are torches of tomorrow; exuding humanity, vision and benevolence in this country. I'm thankful to everyone who gave me the opportunity to be the forefront of the organisation. I have created a lot of memories that I can cherish throught my life. I further wish more success to the cell for future endeavors.

When everything in this world was shut down including my college life, it was the FIC and its members who made a little meaningful college life for me in the past 1.5 years.I joined this organization to learn and improve my soft and hard skills. I met so many new people and a few of them made my college life absolutely worthwhile.
From a normal student exploring his college life, I took myself to a stage where I competed for leading this esteemed organization and became its Vice President. I realized what it means to lead, to work, and to set and achieve goals. This 2 years journey with FIC made me learn the most from life and its values and practices. I along with my team have achieved so much that I will always carry the name of FIC Aryabhatta proudly with me.

FIC Aryabhatta has instilled a feeling of achieving the impossible in all its members. This team of 50 members has achieved what nobody had ever. From the first annual conclave of the college to the first international conference of the college, we never stopped for a single day. There were many failures and setbacks during this journey, but we never allowed them to stop us from achieving our goals. Even the cruel pandemic couldn’t stop us from achieving what we desired.
I know the caliber of the upcoming team of FIC Aryabhatta. New year, new people, and new goals. I envisage a great year ahead for the team and I will always stay at the back end with them.

Karsh Vashisht
VICE-PRESIDENT

Anisha Kalita
GENERAL SECRETARY

These past two years in FIC have been the highlight of my college life.
From being an associate member to the General Secretary of the society has truly been a whirlwind of a journey.
Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we could not experience a lot of things offline. But working with the wonderful team dimmed the misery of the situation.

Since day one, I have learned so much, be it from my exceptional seniors, benevolent peers, or diligent juniors. For me, FIC is a culmination of its members, our spirit, and our zeal to initiate and set new benchmarks. It has provided me with everything one wishes to achieve in their college life: amazing memories, lifetime friendships, the knowledge and intellect that no classroom lecture could have provided, and has given me every possible platform for my holistic development.

With great milestones achieved in the last 4 years, may the cell never stop challenging itself and expanding its boundaries!

My journey at FIC Aryabhatta can be summed up as—aspiring, executing, achieving and growing. FIC has never failed to provide its members with a plethora of opportunities for sharing knowledge, developing a free-form vision, and gaining insights from the multitude of experts we have onboarded throughout the year. The amount of exposure I got and the skills I have picked up could not have been possible without the dynamism of the Cell. Working with a group of 50 driven, exceptionally bright and resourceful young minds has contributed immensely to expanding my knowledge base.

We, at FIC Aryabhatta, have never shied away from challenges. Instead, we view these challenges as opportunities. One such opportunity was founding our annual Finance magazine—Absolute Advantage. Our constant quest for knowledge and goal to create a one-stop destination for ingenious ideas pertaining to a diverse range of topics allowed us to push ourselves in clever, new directions, and present the very first edition of the magazine. With this new endeavour, we hope the cell is successful in outdoing itself yet again.

I am extremely grateful for having been part of FIC. To me, it wasn't just a student-run society. It was a well-rounded experience —one that I will cherish forever.

Khushi Joshi
DESIGN & CONTENT HEAD

Sufiya Salim
MARKETING & PR HEAD

During my work experience at FIC, I was fortunate enough to have experienced firsthand and learned many several aspects of what goes into a project, the extensive process of how a project is originally planned, formulated and finalized; as well as how much struggle and detail goes into every phase. An additional practical lesson I have realized during this tenure was the numerous types of job a marketer has to achieve, which in turn, have provided me with more insight into the unique types of roles and commitments that I did perform, as a Marketing & PR Head. FIC has always been close to my heart but indeed it was a roller coaster ride with many ups and downs but as the journey ends, I have made few friends for a lifetime and I'm happy that I'm taking a box full of memories with me which I will cherish forever because it is perfectly said, "yaadein mithai ke dabbe ki tarah hoti hain, ek baar khula toh sirf ek tukda nahi khaa paoge" :)

Started my journey with a bunch of unknown people wondering where this will lead to. But as we reach towards the end I can see the growth of myself along with our organisation, FIC. Being an associate member in FIC heightened my communication skills and expanded my knowledge in the field of finance and investment. By being a core member in FIC polished my leadership and management skills and enlightened new skills such as website development. For me, FIC is not just society but a family where I made new friends and memories which I'll be cherishing all my life long. It helped me change my introverted behaviour to an extrovert. I can proudly say that FIC has made my college life remarkable.

Pratham Goel
TECH & ANALYTICS HEAD

Madhav Khurana

KNOWLEDGE & RESEARCH HEAD

"It is the possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting." - Paulo Coelho
FIC Aryabhatta has been one of the ubiquitous elements of my college life. From attending the orientation in first year to being a part of the core team in second year, I have come a long way, and grown and evolved drastically. It helped me cultivate skills that will remain a part of me not only in professional life but in my personal life as well. Our organisation got the chance to host Mr. Nikhil Kamath (Founder, Zerodha) and other eminent dignitaries in the middle of the pandemic, we published several research articles from varying backgrounds, and were able to create a platform that exemplified student's voices. Under the guidance of our teachers and mentors as well as the able leadership of FIC Aryabhatta, This organisation grew leaps and bounds. I am truly grateful as having served as the Knowledge and Research Head and led a dynamic, expressive and talented group of young students. The memories I have made,the landmarks we have created, and the learnings we have derived will always be close to my heart.

Subjects like finance and investments have really fascinated me since my school time. Entering this college, FIC was one society I immediately decided to join. Being the Knowledge and Research head at FIC has really helped me in becoming a better leader and acquiring essential skills pertaining to the fields of finance and investments like critical thinking, analysing case studies, portfolio management, technical expertise like valuation and much more. The research oriented aspect of FIC along with active participation at various social platforms makes this society a perfect blend to ensure holistic growth and development of all its members. Through the teams' relentless efforts and ambitious mindset, FIC Aryabhatta has now become one of the most reputed societies across University of Delhi. Time and again, FIC Aryabhatta has successfully nurtured one of the brightest minds and achievers of this institution and will continue to strive towards success in the near future.

Sahej Kapoor

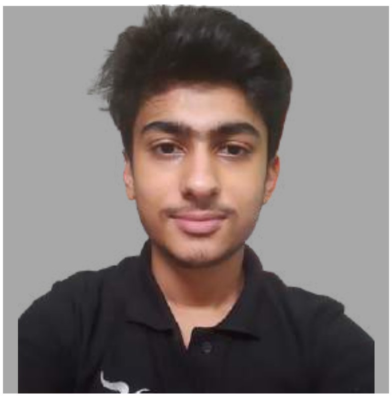
KNOWLEDGE & RESEARCH HEAD

FINANCE & INVESTMENT CELL,
ARYABHATTA COLLEGE

YEARBOOK

SESSION 2020-21

"A picture is worth a thousand words but a memory is priceless."



AJITESH RAI

Being realistic is the most common path to mediocrity

AMAN JHA

Success is not about how much money you make, it about the quality of life that you are living

ANISHA KALITA

You must always have faith in people. And, most importantly, you must always have faith in yourself.

ANSH MEHANDRU

C'mon, what did you expect?

ARUNIMA MARWAHA

" That's what" - she.

ARYAN JAISWAL

How do I sum up my amazing experience in such a short space here?

ASHWIN KALRA

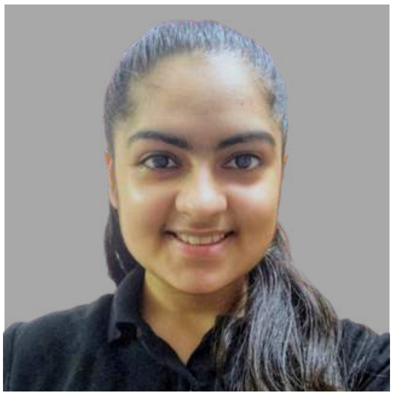
Success is not about how much money you make, it is about the quality of life that you are living

GAUTAM CHANDRA

Itminaan se

HARSH SINGH

Happiness is not something you get, but something you do.



Harshita Dhamija

Experiences matter the most and give the best learnings, be they your own or someone else's.

KARSH VASHISHT

Don't see success like what others show you. Success has your own definition, you just need to find it.

KARTIKAY SARAF

Stop existing, Start living !!

KARTIKEY GUPTA

Being realistic is the most common path to mediocrity

KHUSHBOO BANSAL

Success is not about how much money you make, it about the quality of life that you are living

KHUSHI JOSHI

Futures don't make themselves. You have to invest in them.

MADHAV KHURANA

Life is nothing but a set of bold decisions.

MADHUMITA KUMARI

Spending money to show people how much money you have is the fastest way to have less money.

MANAV JAIN

I hate the rich unless I am one.

MANYA MONGA

learning, unlearning and relearning!

MUDASSIR KALAM

The ladder of success is best climbed by stepping on the rungs of opportunity.

NAVYA DHAWAN

Somewhere between reality and fantasy

PARTH JAISWAL

I have my bad days, but then I remember what a cute smile I have.

PIYUSH PANDEY

If you're reading this, future me, I hope you have learned to write good quotes.

PRATHAM GOEL

Dattebayo!

RAKESH GUPTA

1 hour of Doing is better than 10 hours of Thinking

SABHYA CHANDRA

All is cause and effect!

SAHEJ KAPOOR

Stocks are like marriages, you gotta learn when to hold them and when to get rid of them.

SAKSHUM KUMAR

When money speaks nobody check the grammar.

SANA GUPTA

Higher, further, faster baby

SANDEEP MAJI

Anyone can do my job, but no one can be me.

SARTHAK ARORA

I believe in doing right things.

SARTHAK MALHOTRA

Success is defined by the vision not the power.

SIMRAN METHA

It's all simply complicated.

SUFIYA SALIM

Just keep swimming :)

SUMIT RAJ

Sarcasm? Bring it on but hey don't shy away when it's my turn!

TANISHQ MADAAN

People like trees, all bark.

TANMAY GUPTA

Being realistic is the most common path to mediocrity

TANYA SRIVASTAVA

Be your carefree soul.

UDHAV AGGARWAL

A man with an experience is not at the mercy of a man with an opinion.

VAMANI GUPTA

Unapologetic in my evolution!

VANSH RASTOGI

Here for a good time.

VIDHI KHANNA

Just wing it. Life, eyeliner, everything.

VIKAS JAGWAN

Tatakae! Tatakae!

VINAYAK TIWARI

God damnit # RestoretheSnyderVerse

YASHASHVI YADAV

Forget the chicken dinner, just play the game.

“

Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.

- Aristotle

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