



The CBS *Post*

The Official Newsletter of Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies

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PLACEMENT SEASON 2019-20 COMES TO A FINISH

The consistent efforts of the Career Development Centre of Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies and the students have once again managed to solidify the position of CBS as a premier Undergraduate Business School, in the Placement Season 2019-2020. As per statistics released by the placement cell, the placement ratio was 86.76%. The highest package was offered by D.E. Shaw India as INR 18 LPA. The college's average package was upto INR 7.03 LPA, one of the highest across the University of Delhi circuit. It hosted 75 recruiters with 177 offers which included eminent recruiters like the Bain Capability Network, Boston Consulting

Group, Byju's, Periscope by McKinsey, FTI Consulting, Grant Thornton, Goldman Sachs, CBRE, United Airlines, Praxis Global Alliance, Oxane Partners, etc. The college also witnessed the participation of the Big 4 i.e. EY, KPMG and Deloitte in the placement season. SSCBS has attracted recruiters from diverse fields like Consulting, Finance, Marketing, Investment Banking, Sales, Tech, Analytics and Research. The vibrant blended learning, efforts of our principal and faculty and practical corporate exposure contributes to the most heterogeneous mix of students in any course or college of DU. Its selection procedure assesses the exam takers on verbal

and analytical aptitude, case interviews, group discussions and personal interviews which allows companies to accommodate students, irrespective of their stream, and centric to their field specialization.

The CBS Post expresses gratitude to the efforts of our Placement Cell and congratulates the students to have maintained and broadened the career prospects in our campus. We wish the virtual placement and internship season of 2020-21 also bears new laurels and converts the crisis into opportunities!

Check out the full Placement Report [here](#).

THE STUDENT-BASED STARTUP EXPERIENCE WITH HouseItt

Forbes Magazine recently published an article detailing the tremendous success of HouseItt, a student housing sector startup and the plethora of growth opportunities the business aims to provide to its investors.

HouseItt is a student-based real estate platform which helps people who are unaware of accommodations around their workplace or college, to find the most suitable and feasible accommodation. It helps bridge the gap between brokers/owners and the customers, thereby reducing the difficulties students face in securing a reasonable place to stay. It takes in the housing needs of their potential customers and contacts the brokers. Thus, it brings in sales for the brokers and provides the desired accommodation hassle-free to the students; charging a fee for the same.

It grew out of need when its founders faced problems while settling in Delhi, having moved here for College. The inconvenience of shuttling from one broker to another in search of a place made Bharat Bhatt (CEO and Co-Founder) determined to change the plight of the housing sector for students. Together with Rajat Malik (COO and Co-Founder) and Ishaan Sudan, his fellow Hindu College alumni and close friends, Bharat came up with the idea for HouseItt

Nihal Goyal, a second year student at CBS pursuing BMS, has been an active part of the HouseItt team and has been associated with it since the turn of the year. He speaks on his exciting experience working for a startup.

"My first encounter with the people at HouseItt was when I was trying to raise sponsorship for a society event. I ended up at their office (which was apparently their flat too) to collect the sponsorship. There I met

Bharat Bhatt and Rajat Malik, who were in the third year of their graduation. I ended up talking about a lot of things including running a startup, student housing sector, HouseItt Business model to name a few. Based on my first interaction with them, I genuinely felt that they are trying to solve the problem faced by millions of students who migrate to other cities for their further studies."

This drew Nihal's interest towards the startup. In February 2020, Nihal started working with HouseItt and it has all been uphill for him from there.

"When I joined HouseItt, there was not much social presence and no team was working on the marketing aspect. As such, we started hiring interns and understanding how to place and market ourselves. Then, we started our marketing through different channels including social media platforms and other innovative campaigns; and have since dedicated ourselves to branding and positioning HouseItt in the market", said Nihal. From recruiting the whole marketing team to planning the strategy for marketing through Social Media, he played an integral role in the startup's marketing effort.

He has also undertaken PR responsibilities in terms of sponsorships and collaborations. While working in the Tech department, he was involved in ideating on a business solution given the needs and market conditions along with conducting a feasibility study for the proposed solution. He also worked on understanding the Tech Stack of the company.

He believes that working with a startup comes with a lot of learning as one is responsible for many roles and is accountable to get things done. The experience has helped him improve his teamwork and communication

skills. He added "From being a college student who was in the bubble of college societies, I realised how the world works and how things are actually done. HouseItt changed my perspective on leadership, team management and gave me great insights about the Startup Ecosystem. Everyday at HouseItt brings a different challenge and sometimes it becomes really overwhelming dealing with all the things simultaneously but at the end of the day it is a feeling of satisfaction once a problem is solved. I have contributed to the best of my capacity and in return have learned a lot."

Upon being asked about the Forbes article, he adds "The whole team was working tirelessly for the last 6 months and Forbes article came as a wave of motivation for the whole team. We were really glad that our hard work got the recognition it deserved."

In terms of what next and the vision going forward for the startup, he explains that since the startup is trying to serve a really big market with a lot of potential, it is expanding its operations in 10 more cities and aspires to build a one-stop platform for all the students to make their college life easier and comfortable. Currently, the team at HouseItt plans to launch a campaign- 'Business Development Associate Programme' and are hiring interns for that same. He goes on to say "Housing industry favours those who provide the best service at affordable prices. We are trying to do the same to the best of our capabilities."

While this is one of the most significant events in Nihal's career yet, he hasn't yet decided whether to continue this full time after college or not and wants to keep his options open.

A NEW LEAF - ACM SSCBS

A group of students, in February 2020, founded the SSCBS Chapter of Association for Computing Machinery, ACM, a US-based international learned society, brings together computing educators, researchers, and professionals to inspire dialogue, share resources, and address the field's challenges. As a leading global source for scientific information, ACM promotes computer research and innovation through its journals, magazines, and the proceedings of over 170 annual conferences and symposia. ACM authors are among the world's leading thinkers in computing and information technologies, providing original research and firsthand perspectives.

Abdal Lalit (President and Co-Founder) shares his insights about the initiatives, achievements and work methodology of ACM-SSCBS. What led him to found an ACM student chapter of SSCBS, was a lack of community of students who care deeply about enhancing the quality and the quantity of research done in college. While it's gratifying

to see a strong and growing Computer Science Department here, there is still a lot more we can achieve. Concerted action by all students is necessary for the future of the department to reach the quality and recognition it deserves.

ACM-SSCBS strives to work as a medium for the promotion of research activities across the college. They are proud to be the first student body in the college which is working on research projects and their publication. The association believes that they will be able to aid in building a sense of community among the students in the college by acting as an interface between students and various sections of the society relevant to research: Government, Industry, Academic Institutions, and Professionals.

A lot is planned to be achieved by strategizing towards a common plan. Abdal shares some initiatives taken up by this chapter:

Mentor-Mentee Program launched on a pilot basis in the department. A total of 19 students from the second year volunteered to mentor 40+ students from the first year to

address problems related to academics, career, time management, and higher education.

Official website of the chapter: sscs.acm.org

Research Projects: Analysis of COVID-19 Tracking Tool in India: Case Study of Aarogya Setu Mobile Application was published in the August edition of Digital Government: Research and Practice. Additionally, over 5 other papers have shortlisted/accepted to be published in esteemed journals and conferences (asbSpringer, CSI Magazine, and IEEE).

As the world's largest computing society, ACM strengthens the profession's collective voice and supports the professional growth of its members by providing opportunities for life-long learning, career development, and professional networking.

Team CBS Post wishes all the members of ACM very good luck for all its future endeavours!

SSCBS TEAM REACHES TOP 12 AT GMCC, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

The Global Microfinance Case Competition, an annual case study competition organised by the University of Melbourne, Australia, recently announced its results. Aryan Bharadwaj, Ishaan Jain, Rishabh Bansal and Vedansh Chopra from SSCBS, were among the Top 12 teams. Under the guidance of Dr. Poonam Verma, Mr. Neeraj Sehrawat and Mr. Amit Kumar, they represented the country at a global level, beating the likes of IITs and IIMs. We interviewed the team members who shared their experience and insights.

What motivated you to take part in case competitions? Any suggestions to others who wish to take part in them?

Case Competitions are a propitious opportunity to test your skills and application of theoretical concepts while solving real-world problems. Apart from the adrenaline rush, our team's motivation revolved around the opportunities which a global case competition provides: learning, developing skills, networking with global industry professionals. We would encourage others to find their motivation.

What was the experience like to take part in a global case competition?

It contained a more dynamic short-listing process along with a unique case. They presented us the case of a real-life financially distressed Filipino microfinance institution that faced economic inefficiencies amidst this pandemic. We realized the intensity of the competition seeing how granular the data was, which was presented in the form of

multiple problem statements. Our structured approach helped us get out of the maze of facts and figures.

What were some challenges and lessons while solving this case?

The major challenge was to handle academics while we brainstormed till late in the night. We got to know the nuisances of the Philippine's microfinance industry, the insurance industry and the credit rating system feasible for the lower-middle income class families. We also realized how synergies within a team are crucial for success. With the time constraints, we were on Zoom every night for discussions.

Any advice to students about how they can crack such competitions while managing their other commitments.

Half of the battle is won once you have the right team. The skills of the members must be collectively exhaustive. The business solutions that you give need to be workable, innovative, and financially sustainable. Many people follow an ambitious approach and don't consider the feasibility. Stick to the basics, take the help of various case frameworks, and do justice to the case both qualitatively and quantitatively. As far as managing time, we faced problems with that, and that can only be handled via effective prioritization of the right thing at the right time. Don't get so carried away with the competition that you sacrifice on your academics and other commitments. It's not important to win, but take away some lessons out of it.

How was your team formed? What rounds did you clear?

We got to know about this competition very late, and we didn't have any inclination of participating. We were already enrolled as a team in another competition and we just took it up to test our synergies and ended up qualifying. There were three rounds, initial case video submission, then Global Heats, competing against other teams from Brown University and NTU, via a Q/A session and lastly the finals.

Is the art of case-solving beneficial to students? How should one prepare for such competitions?

It is beneficial for everyone as every case statement is unique and helps you to research different industries, markets and come up with innovative business solutions that help to expand your overall business acumen and keeps you up-to-date with what's happening around. Few ways in which people can prepare for such competitions is to solve past year cases and test your solutions with the winning ones apart from that you need to read a lot of industry reports of various companies so you are well-versed in what's happening around in your business environment. Something like case solving isn't just about an activity or a competition, it's a process which involves prioritisation of work, time and most importantly a good grasp of the basics.

The CBS Post congratulates the team and further motivates others to gain inspiration from their experience.

THE BIG SHORT 2.0

Brick-and-mortar retail has been in distress for years. Trapped between the growth of online shopping and the popularity of discount chains, many retailers have struggled to find a foothold in the changing firmament. The coronavirus pandemic, which prompted stay-at-home orders, increased the financial strain on malls by choking off much-needed foot traffic and cash flow.

It was 2019 and 31-year-old hedge fund analyst Catie McKee, who had been scrutinizing the mortgages on the nation's malls, was convinced that some of those malls would default on their loans. She and her colleagues had even bet a substantial amount of money on that likelihood.

Ms. McKee made her case to Carl Icahn, one of the country's best-known investors, who had made a similar wager and invited her team to discuss the trade. Both agreed that e-commerce, changing consumer habits and evolving demographics had pummeled all malls to some degree in recent years, but some were far worse off than others. So by betting on their demise, both could profit handsomely — which they did.

Mr. Icahn, whose hostile takeover of Trans World Airlines (TWA) in the 1980s established him as a major dealmaker, has made \$1.3 billion on the trade since that meeting. Mr. Icahn and the investors that made the trade within Ms. McKee's firm, MP Securitized Credit Partners are among a handful of investors who have, collectively, more than doubled their money. The trade Mr. Icahn and Ms. McKee met to discuss, known as the "mall short" in financial circles, is the latest in a longstanding Wall Street tradition that some criticize as bottom-feeding because it preys on failure and can push a business over the edge while contributing little to the economy.

Most investors buy stocks and bonds with the expectation that they will rise in value. A short is the opposite, and their defenders say they can help expose corporate fraud or deflate a dangerously overvalued asset, which can aid the smooth functioning of markets.

More than a decade ago, some investors famously profited off the collapse of the housing market, even as the United States plunged into a financial crisis. Their trade came to be known as "the Big Short," inspiring

a book and a movie. Daniel McNamara, a colleague of Ms. McKee's, called the mall short "the Big Short 2.0."

While the economic turmoil due to the pandemic has caused misery for employees and small business owners, it has been favourable for the world's richest investors and hedge fund billionaires with the mall short not being the only instance where a "short" trade has succeeded. Another similar instance is of the chief executive of Pershing Square Capital, Bill Ackman, who made a 100 fold return for the hedge fund that yielded \$2.6 Billion within a month, making a series of 'protective bets' on market volatility and predicting correctly that the markets would plummet - making it "the single best trade of all time" for his speed and accuracy.

There is something discomfiting about the idea of getting fantastically rich off someone else's misfortune, which is what happens when a "short" trade — or bet against a stock or industry — succeeds. But on Wall Street, such brazenness is celebrated. Investors love little more than a contrarian bet that pays off, a combination of math and seeming magic that allows them to find a market disruption before everyone else and score a big win.

INDUSTRIES BOOMING IN THE PANDEMIC

Industries have evolved in the pandemic and new-normal era with the birth of new industries, startups, innovations in existing ideas and inventions of theories.

Ed-Tech Industry: The growth of the Ed-Tech has recorded investments worth \$1.1 billion in 2020, its highest-ever annual tally. Asynchronous learning, blended learning, AVR, and most importantly the induced Heutagogy (Self-Determined Learning) represent the future of learning. BYJUs "acquisition-bag" includes LabInApp and White Hat Jr. After BYJUs raised \$500 million in funding led by US private equity giant Silver Lake at a \$10.8 billion valuation. SoftBank augmented a round of venture investment in India's education startup Unacademy, boosting its valuation to \$1.45 billion.

Astrology: The new normal has led to a renaissance through the "normal" where the belief and faiths have to be restored in the self-dom and World. Astrology, numerology, tarot reading, palm Reading professionals have witnessed a 70-80% increase in business. AstroBuddy reported to have witnessed 40 to 50 percent growth in its app downloads and customer calls over the last few months.

Psychology: In the second-quarter of 2020, mentions of mental health and wellness more than quadrupled from the first quarter. The

NHMS report states that 4.48% of people in rural India had experienced depressive disorders in their lifetime, as compared to 8.23 in urban metros. Initiatives like TogetherWeCan (TWC), a prominent parent support group from Kerala, recently started a series 'Speak Up', which discusses mental health problems.

Med-tech: India's medical technology sector has been identified as a sunrise sector and is expected to touch USD 9.6 billion in 2022. Initiatives like the Telangana Government using drones that are being deployed for spraying disinfectant are the pandemic led innovations. Siemens Healthineers which is a leading healthcare innovation space has declared India as its global technology development hub. Even private practitioners have evolved in making healthcare consultation more accessible geographically. Our alumni, Saurabh Uboweja, Co-Founder of Credihealth is on a mission to provide a new age technological prowess to transform how tertiary care is delivered in India.

Gaming Industry: By 2021, India's gaming industry will be worth over \$1 billion with 190 million games, a KPMG study estimates. The Data from SEMRush reveals that PUBG has been the game of choice for Indians last month with 22 lakh people playing it. Minecraft took the second spot with 8.2 lakh people players.

Many Indian games are prospering on the opportunity. Ludo King is one of the popular mobile games from Gametion Technologies with more than 100,000,000 installations on the Google Play Store. FAU-G is a made-in-India PUBG Mobile alternative founded by Bengaluru-based nCore games.

Music and Podcasts: A whopping 96% of smartphone users use their devices to listen to music, the highest in the world according to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI). The industry is battling with domestic and international penetration with streaming giants like Gaana, YouTube Music, and Spotify, among others. Indian podcasts like The Taste of India, Moneycontrol Podcast, 3 Things, Audiogyan etc. are delivering some best content in their content specific notes.

OTT: Over-The-Top has estimated to have added 3-4 million new viewers during the lockdown and battling for the ever-growing engagement. Entertainment today is modernising to become routine from leisure. Interestingly, the intense oligopoly market competition between OTT platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Zee5, Disney+ Hotstar, Sony Liv etc. is being banked upon by telecom giants offering incentives such as subscriptions to services from Netflix to Amazon Prime to win customers.

THE RISE OF CRYPTOCURRENCY IN AFRICA

Several countries in the African continent have been witnessing an interesting trend. One that has been existing for some years, but has only recently observed a noticeable spike. They have been seeing a surge in use-cases of cryptocurrency among its people.

Earlier this year, a study was published by Arcane Research in collaboration with the cryptocurrency exchange platform Luno, called The State of Crypto: Africa. It highlights the many ways in which Africa is conducive for the growth of cryptocurrency adoption across its countries. The study also mentions that countries such as **Uganda, Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya and Ghana frequently find themselves ranked amongst the top 10 in the world on the topic of cryptocurrency.**

Despite businesses closing and investors assuming a wary attitude amidst the pandemic, Nigeria recorded a trading volume of \$7.2 Million in a single week in May 2020. Kenya was second in place, reaching \$1.6 Million in a week, followed by South Africa trading at \$1.1 Million.

These trends give rise to a fundamental yet necessary question: **WHY?**

The economic landscape of a majority of African countries is painted with high inflation rates and financial instability. Countries like Zimbabwe and South Sudan reside in hyperinflation, with inflation rates reaching beyond 80%. All this undermines the purchasing power of its people. However, cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin have a decentralised structure that gives it a shield,

where it is not prone to the inflation rates of any single country. Naturally, people started shifting to these platforms to take care of their purchasing power resulting from continuous economic volatility. While COVID saw uncertainties climbing up in the economy, cryptocurrency looked like an effective direction to turn to.

What also sets apart the crypto usage pattern in Africa, is that it is a proper means of payment for many, and not just a motive for investment or speculation. There already exists a considerable number of crypto-based companies there, notable ones being Luno, Paxful, Binance, Payplux and The Sun Exchange, among others. A few of these also back apps that facilitate cryptocurrency-based transactions. "Bundle" backed by Binance, for instance, is a commonly used one.

Another reason can also be attributed to the political chaos raised by regime changes, civil wars and mass migration for close to 7 decades. What repeatedly ensues is a high inflation rate and a crashing GDP. The way Bitcoin functions - in that it combines wealth preservation properties of hard assets and portability of digital currencies - serves as a perfect solution to these economic problems. What's more, most cryptocurrency companies enable cross-border payments, charging much lesser than traditional payment services.

There exists a severely underdeveloped financial infrastructure in terms of traditional services. The number of commercial banks and the percentage of people having access to a traditional bank account across Sub-

Saharan Africa is considerably lower than the global average.

The usage of cryptocurrency remains largely unregulated in many countries of Africa, including Ghana, Zimbabwe, Uganda and South Africa. It is not a legally accepted tender, although, no ban is imposed on their usage. Naturally, governments in these countries discourage carrying out transactions through this channel, warning citizens of the risks involved.

Escalating digital trends and mobile banking sets the ambience for even increased acceptance of cryptocurrency in Africa. Over 20% of Sub-Saharan Africa's population has mobile bank accounts. These, however, come with a hefty price tag and that's where crypto platforms can beat the hitherto popular mobile financing methods. The emerging success of Neobanks in Africa can offer a plausible direction for increased acceptance of cryptocurrency as well. Some fintech startups, like South Africa based "SOL Wallet", enable customers to create multiple currency accounts online, buy and sell those at interbank rates and trade cryptocurrency too.

There are certainly some obstacles to overcome, the primary of which is the internet coverage scenario. Almost all cryptocurrency wallets require internet service for carrying transactions. Infrastructure around electricity is another challenge. Over 50% of Sub-Saharan Africa has poor electricity coverage, with little or no access to electricity. These will set the ground for increased competition from mobile payment providers. There is, of course, resistance from regulators across countries bringing in another hurdle to crypto's success.

Solopreneur

(noun) "a person who sets up and runs a business on their own." - Oxford Language

They are types of solo proprietors who, in addition to being the founder and creator of their business idea, are responsible for carrying the business forward by rendering services on their own.

Most entrepreneurs' ultimate dream is that their business gets acquired by a larger company. After a certain stage, entrepreneurs tend to be more inclined towards finding profitable networking opportunities while solopreneurs' work completely revolves around building their concept and idea since they do not hire any employees and therefore have to do almost everything on their own. This is in contrast to most entrepreneurs who have a managerial nature and are more interested in leading a team.

Solopreneurs need to have courage to take risks and important decisions for their business as they are the ones solely responsible for its success or failure. A continuous learning attitude is also a must because every day new ideas are emerging so it is necessary that you incorporate them in your business. Graphics and social media skills are some must have skills as they will help in making one's social presence and increasing the business reach.

Solopreneurs get to keep majority of their profits with themselves. They have complete freedom and right to make the major decisions related to their business. They work on their self discovered vision of their business that too with full independence. Statistics also show that such people are much more happier and satisfied with their work in contrast to their contemporaries who are a part of the 9-5 corporate life. Some business ideas that come under solopreneurship are freelancing,

consulting, social media management, social media influencers, blogging, graphic designing.

Solopreneurship has already become a mainstream career choice in the US with more than one-fourth of the American workforce working as independent workers. There are currently 41.8 million US adults that identify as solopreneurs, contributing more than \$1.3 trillion annually to the economy. Reports show that independent work is growing at 3 times the overall employment rate in the US.

The popular belief that a high paying job in a multinational company is the end goal is now breaking down in India and the youth of our country are becoming less risk averse. Estimates show that 10 years down the lane solopreneurs will become a major category of workers in India with their individual combined market valuation in millions.

BIZ-TERMS

INDIA'S GDP : CHALLENGES AHEAD

Mrs. Shalini Prakash Associate Professor, SSCBS

Amongst the major economies, India and China had achieved a high rate of growth in the recent past. Although India's GDP growth rate declined from 8.26% in the year 2016-17 to 4.2% in the year 2019-20, yet it overtook France and the United Kingdom to become the fifth largest economy in the world. The COVID-19 pandemic and the global and national lockdowns have hit various economies hard, India being no exception.

According to the World Bank Group Report (Global Economic Prospects, June 2020), major economies in the world are expected to show a decline in their GDPs. Global GDP is expected to contract by 5.2% whereas India's GDP is estimated to drop by 3.3%. More recent assessments by ADB, OECD and others have forecasted that India's GDP will shrink at least 9-10% in the year 2020-21. This assessment is in line with the provisional estimates for GDP for the first quarter of 2020-21 released recently by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. It showed that India's GDP sharply declined by 23.9% in this quarter. NSO data for this period reveals that on the basis of year to year comparison, the construction sector declined by 50.3%, manufacturing by 39.3%,

mining and quarrying by 23.3%, trade hotels, transport and communication by 47.0%. Only the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector showed an increase of 3.4%. The gross fixed capital formation was down by 47%.

The reasons for the economic crisis can be divided into supply and demand side factors.

Supply Side Factors

1. Fall in employment numbers due to mass exodus of migrant workers, quarantines and travel restrictions
2. Closure of production units, especially in the MSME sector
3. Restrictions placed on utilization of Chinese products for raw material and intermediate goods
4. Restriction on movement of goods
5. Cash flow crunch
6. Increase in fuel prices
7. Decline in utilization of productive capacity in the manufacturing sector

It is evident that there is a huge impact on the supply of goods and services. This major reduction would limit the ability to provide commodities to the common man. This would in turn bring down the aggregate supply in the economy which is a key input to GDP and has a long lasting impact. The sensitivity of the economy to these interrelated factors will play an important role in formulating the action plan for improving the GDP.

Demand Side Factors

1. Fall in private consumption expenditure due to fall in income, wealth and uncertainty in employment
2. Reduction in private investment due to uncertain economic environment
3. Lower exports and imports due to slowdown in other countries, travel restrictions, transport barriers and move towards self-dependence
4. There was an increase in government expenditure on account of relief measures undertaken to reduce the impact of pandemic. However, this could not offset the dampening effect of reduction in other components of demand.

Impact of these factors has a far greater consequence on the GDP than the supply side factors. Even with a significant improvement in supply, the desired results would not be achieved if the demand does not move in sync with the improvement in supply. Hence, India needs to adopt a balanced strategy, which focuses on both sides of the market to recover from the current economic crisis.

Measures have been taken by the Government to minimize damage. These include farm sector reforms, labour reforms, infrastructure development, digitization and Aatma-Nirbhar Bharat scheme. The success of India's economic recovery will depend on implementation of policy announcements, duration, progression and control of pandemic.

TRUMP AND THE NOBEL DILEMMA

The lack of moral clarity in terms of who ideally deserves to win the Nobel Peace Prize coupled with this year's infamous nomination for Donald Trump has raised questions about what are the values that the prize recognises.

The Nobel Peace Prize went from being awarded to those who "have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses" to those who tried to achieve peace but failed. The 2009 Peace Prize, awarded to Obama after spending 12 days in the Oval Office for "extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between people" whilst in his term prosecuting two wars begun by his predecessor, or the 2016 Peace Prize, awarded to Juan Manuel Santos despite rejection of Farc peace deal, are instances of the Nobel Prize being awarded not on merit but on political viewpoints.

Proponents arguing for the revival of the tradition of giving the prize to no one at all are more principally consistent with their demands. These instances beg the question of whether the Peace Prize should be awarded

to incentivise efforts towards peace even if it comes at the cost of honoring enablers of genocide or those of questionable virtues like Trump.

Trump has repeatedly questioned the legitimacy of the Nobel Prize Committee from time to time. Last year, he predicted that he would win the Nobel Prize "for a lot of things if they gave out fairly, which they don't." In April this year, he again claimed that he was a "lock" to win the Nobel Prize in Medicine because of his work in prescribing the drug hydroxychloroquine. His lack of medical association didn't deter him. He said, "The fact that I'm not a doctor makes my ability to prescribe drugs more impressive." He went on to declare, "I did peace and I didn't get the Peace Prize. If I don't get the Medicine Prize, then the whole Nobel business is rigged."

What he conveniently chose to ignore were the efforts of overworked medical researchers that have tirelessly contributed to the cause. However, this series of scathing attacks haven't reduced Trump's aspiration to win a Nobel Prize. In fact, it has pushed Trump to do what he does best - Lobby. Trump has been nominated by a far right Norwegian lawmaker

Tybring-Gjedde for the Nobel Peace Prize, iterating his efforts in the Middle East. He had earlier nominated Trump in 2018 for his efforts to resolve the North Korea- South Korea conflict. It becomes imperative to uncover the lobbying at bay when it comes to the UAE-Israel deal that has allowed Trump to portray himself as the poster boy of 'World Peace'.

According to verified news sources, Trump has promised to sell F35s to the UAE to effectuate the deal. This occurred just before the elections, a perfect timing to satisfy the Israeli lobby. The ramifications of the sale of fighter jets could be catastrophic. The UAE has consistently been rated poorly in upholding democratic principles. Moreover, it is not the part of any democratic defense group like NATO which makes it even more difficult to fixate accountability.

There is no question about the Nobel Peace Prize carrying with it a great deal of political influence; but choosing a candidate on that basis does not truly respect the nature of the prize and is a disservice to previous deserving recipients. It has thus begun losing its legitimacy for being viewed as a political tool for the sole motive to further ideology and propaganda.

ABRAHAM ACCORDS BETWEEN UAE AND ISRAEL



On August 13, 2020, The United Arab Emirates and the state of Israel agreed to come together for the Israel-UAE Peace Agreement or the Abraham Accords. The deal is said to be arranged and negotiated by the Trump Administration. The deal was signed on 15th September, 2020 in a ceremony hosted at the White House, attended by Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu and the foreign ministers of the UAE and Bahrain.

The UAE became the third Arab country to normalise relations with Israel after Egypt (1979) and Jordan (1994) and the first Persian gulf country to do so. Following the footsteps of the UAE, Bahrain astounded everyone by declaring a fourth agreement with Israel within a month's time which is again said to be brokered by US President Donald Trump. Past relations between the UAE and Israel have been quite embittered and truculent, to the extent that fierce rhetoric were exchanged by the leaders of both the countries, tagging each other "the enemy".

That being said, the UAE isn't the only country to have directed hostility towards Israel. The entire West Asia bloc, comprising mostly of Arab countries, have grudge-bearing against the only Jewish state in the neighbourhood, a primary reason of which can be traced back in history.

Israel was created after the United Nations passed a resolution in 1947. Soon after, the Arab- Israel War (1948-49) broke out when Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Jordan attacked the newly created state. Israel was able to clinch victory and extend its boundaries by

annexation. The victory could largely be attributed to the large support it received from the international community and especially the British, who had agreed to support the Zionist cause of establishing a homeland for Jews, in the wake of the Balfour Declaration of 1917.

Eggs clashed again in 1967 and 1973 during the six days war and Yom Kippur War, respectively. Israel was able to repulse both the attacks. However, the wars paved the way for negotiations between Egypt and Israel which was actualised into a peace agreement in 1979. Twenty six years later, Jordan became the second Arab country to normalise relations in 1994.

Nevertheless, the deep seated resentment and fear from the technologically superior Israel and a soft corner for the conflict-ridden Palestine still breeds in the Arab countries which acts as an impediment in the embracement of Israel by the entire West Asia. The treaty, seen as a precursor to absolute peace in West Asia, has been well received by the US, Egypt, Oman and Europe. However, some gulf residents lambasted the treaty. Kuwait and Turkey condemned the treaty, the Iranian foreign ministry called it a "shameful" act of strategic stupidity and Palestinians tagged it as betrayal and being "stabbed in the back" by the UAE. Palestinian share a century old antagonistic relation with Israel due to land dispute. Palestine has often accused Israel of annexation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and establishment of unlawful settlement on their land to expand Israeli control.

This makes it important to ponder over what the future of the Abraham Accords looks like? According to US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, "Israel and the United Arab Emirates will fully normalize their diplomatic relations. They will exchange embassies and ambassadors and begin cooperation across the board and on a broad range of areas including tourism, education, healthcare, trade and security."

This, nevertheless, didn't deter both the parties on clearing their respective stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict. The UAE has stated that it will continue to align by the Palestinian population whereas Netanyahu clarified that its claim on parts of West Bank is still on the cards and would remain unaffected by the treaty.

Direct telephone services have been established and both countries are closely working together on the research for COVID-19 vaccine. The first commercial flight from Israel to the UAE commenced on August 31, 2020.

Conjectures about other Arab countries initiating similar peace agreements with Israel are making rounds in the upper echelons of the diplomatic circle. Such prospective parties seeking normalisation with Israel include Morocco, Sudan and Oman. This has revived a ray of hope for a conflict ridden West Asia but equitable peace requires everyone to be at par, hence it becomes imperative to keep Palestine's view in the forefront as well, a party which has been brazenly ignored in this deal.

“ **Humans are the best books you can read...** ”



ADITYA ARORA
CEO, FAAD NETWORK

The CBS alumnus talks about Angel investing, startup funding, his college life and more.

How was your college life like at CBS? Did it help you in becoming the person that you are now?

I spent two years in East Delhi Campus. In the first year, I gave all society auditions and made some really good friends. Second year was more or less settling down in terms of friends and society groups. I also made friends with our professors. In third year, the travelling hustle got pretty relaxed as we shifted to the Rohini campus. It was an overall good and enriching experience at CBS.

You have been an active blogger and TEDx speaker . How does it help you in sharing your thoughts with other people and in connecting with them?

Humans are the best book you can read and you can learn from their experiences, mistakes, success and failures. No book can really teach you all that, and connecting with people beyond their achievements is very important. People saw my work and wanted to know my insights of preparation. My first TedX was at BPIT College. Helping and mentoring people is the least we could do for others both personally and professionally!

How does it feel being the “Youngest Nominee for Padma Shri 2020” just after 2 years of completing undergraduation?

If you asked me if I realised every day that I was hitting those milestones, I would’ve said no to it. Because once I do, I’ll start jumping in the air and probably never stop!

I love this thought by Ishita Katiyar at one of her TED talks, “Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?” and she used to always say that what is stopping her right now from achieving that? Why do I have to wait for 5 years to get that?

Being a Padma Shri nominee is extremely big and the highest level of validation and gratitude you can get. So I’m just accepting it as it comes.

What are your early experiences in entrepreneurship and pitching that led you to establish such a diverse network of Venture Capitalist? How vital CBS was in this journey?

When I would say I’m from CBS, it left a good first impression but the second impression was that I’m still a student! In the Venture Capital industry everyone in the room was probably in their late 30s / early 40s. I preferred to be an investor and learn more from them - what drives them to put capital in a startup which is not a BSE 500 Company, not a NIFTY company where you can get the drawdown analysis. The very first 2 years in Faad, I executed only 5 investments in 2 years which is not a good margin at all. But in the last 4 months, I’ve almost done 12 investments. That is the kind of learning I’ve got.

Would you call Faad an Angel Network or is it just individual Angel Investors separately funding startups?

It is an Angel Network. We have 350+ investors, HNIs, VCs who are actively investing with us. We have people who are heading IPL teams and are CEOs. We pitch about 36 startups and aim to close more than 20 deals that shows our credible and growing record.

Just like every other Angel Network in India, Faad gets one name on the cap table. Let’s say Faad invested 50,000 to get our name on the cap table, and whatever investors that invest

through us, get their individual names on the cap table. Unless and until we become a fund, we can't get this. We try to do an LLP structure. In fact, we have it in one of the deals: we formed an LLP of all our investors and that LLP has come on the cap table. There is no regulation on this in India and that is something we don't want because a Partnership model is always very tricky in a business.

In a recent interview, you mentioned that you intend on setting up an early stage investment fund rather than just being an aggregator with a network of investors. How is that investment fund coming along? Have you directly invested in certain startups?

We probably want to launch a fund in the next couple of years which will start at least 10 Mn USD. Right now, we have put in our capital in one of the early-stage investor funds. It's a marquee fund - backed by one of the leading accelerators and investing entities in India. We're looking for co-investors in our fund wherein we can just log into someone else's fund and run a dummy fund of our own and all the compliances are taken care of by the Principal Fund Partners. Once we've gotten about 35-40 companies and sufficient cash - because in a fund you have to put in your own money as well, there's a 2.5% management fee - that's when we'll go and launch a fund.

As the nature of your business demands taking extremely high risks, How do you prepare or mitigate such risks? Do you have a specific exit strategy in case of a failure?

We don't encourage investors to put more than 5% of their portfolio value in start-ups as the risks are high and exit becomes difficult when a start-up reaches the point of saturation. Even the Angel Investors by their virtue understand that they have to act like an angel to these ideas and help them grow. We involve informed and strategic investors rather than the volume of investors. We also invest in start-ups to show a note of confidence to the investors.

9 out of 10 start-ups fail in India but the one that succeeds gives bumper returns and compensates the losses of the others. That is how portfolio diversification 101 works.

How did (Dr.) Dinesh (Singh) and Karan (Verma) envision Faad Network, and when did you get on-board with it?

It was like a perfect after-office story where the co-founders of Faad used to meet for beers and just discuss casually on what to do next. They thought of a name called Faad, bought

the domain name and held it for one year but they did not know what to do with it!

I joined Faad as intern through CBS and never predicted that from an intern at Faad company I'd become the CEO.

Initially, it started as a one-stop solution to help entrepreneurs. We were doing everything in the room that you can think to help an entrepreneur. In 2017, we realised that you can't help startups with everything. It's like diluting your brand if you open up a multitude of services. The very first investment we made was in ClearDekho.com, which is now India's leading budget eyewear retail brand. We invested in them when they had one store in Delhi-NCR. It was like a traditional business, and we already had Lenskart which was our biggest rivalry. It took us 6 months to close that transaction and once that transaction ended we thought, we wanted to be the money guys!

How has the scenario of startup funding changed since the pandemic has dawned?

There are about 1200 angel investors in India out of which only 5% are active. But there are 60,000+ start-ups in India which require funding. As the demand-supply mechanism is not favorable to start-ups, we are conducting master class sessions and inviting guests who aren't part of our network. We have converted around 50+ people into active angel investors with a conversion rate of roughly 50% through our sessions.

We've almost done half a million USD+ in investments in the past 4 months. We haven't met for a meeting and everything is done online. That's the new normal and that has helped us to drive things faster.

Have you noticed a common fashion with early-stage startups that gives/loses an edge while trying to acquire funding?

There are 5 Ts that every investor looks for in a start-up ecosystem;

1. Team, which is the most important factor. My strategy is very clear. I back the team. My point is to take them from 70 to 100. So if they're 70, I'll probably accept that. Even if they are 50, I'll probably accept that too but I'll get a much larger equity stake for doing that. Entrepreneurship is a very difficult journey. So my only thesis is that the people shouldn't give up easily when results don't work out in their favour.

2. Traction, which is basically how a business performs. If you are a revenue-making company, what sort of gross topline numbers you have in terms of Revenue, EBITDA PAT Margins etc.
3. Target Market- Even if you're the best in your market but it's a very small market: probably investors don't want to fund that, because then the value to which your startup can grow would be very limited.
4. Ten-Times potential, that's how the interest generates. Always remember that there is a 30% tax cut straight on your investments, and once a company announces investment there is a 50% DDT (Dividend Distribution Tax) as well which is now applied on corporates. Always make sure that if you make 10x, then you probably get a 6x or a 7x return, which is a very healthy return for someone who is investing for about 2 years.
5. Terms. Investing terms primarily. What sort of an equity stake am I getting in that? What sort of exit terms the startup has? Will it come as an acquisition or a future fundraising?

What is your message for the students who wish to choose the road less traveled by and aspire to pave their own path in the future ?

Even a competitive exam gives you some sense of choice and you solve it using elimination and trial & error. But in life, students usually restrict themselves to very few choices. A lot of people think that MBA and job are binary and the only popular and therefore the right choices.. But that choice might not be right for you. I even tried stand up comedy in a lot of DU Colleges and Crescendo in the third year and also maintained writing jokes and scripts as a hobby. Your CV won't define your college life of your worth. Adjusting yourself to fit in that 1 page by minimising fonts or curbing your personality traits should not be the task. Differentiation and diversification of your personality and interests will always hold more value in career and life.

COACHING PRESSURE AND STUDENT SUICIDES IN INDIA

Tvisha Tuli
BMS'22

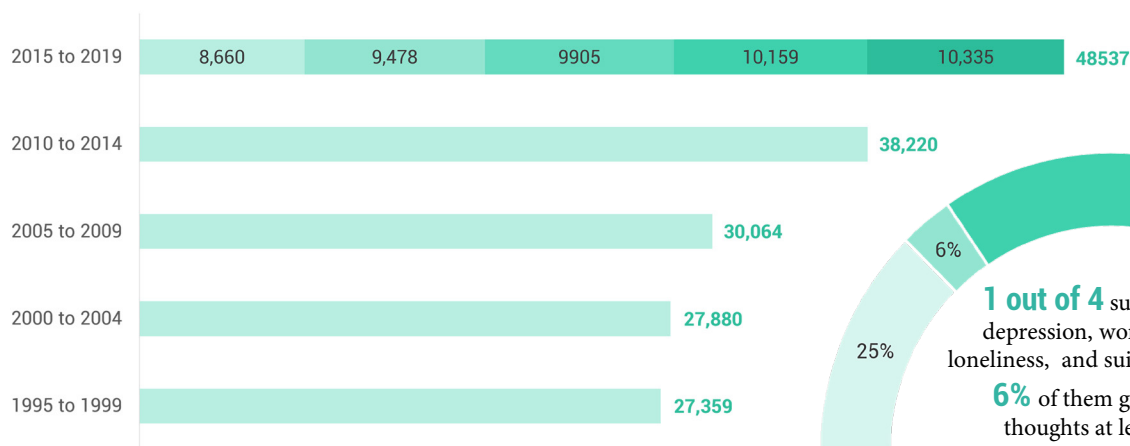


Figure 1. Number of student suicides over the years in India. (Source: NCRB)

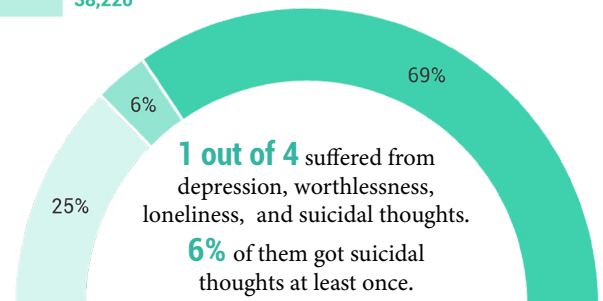


Figure 2. Finding from 2017 Lokniti-CSDS survey for age the group 15-34 years

“It’s easy to buckle under pressure. But can you blame the racing track or the goal post for casualties on the way?”

Imagine, a child in his early teens. His parents are boasting all around that their son has scored a perfect 10. “He is going to crack the competition, he just got a perfect 10 in the boards, he has been a perfect 10 all his life.” Even students with 9.4, 9.6 are going to have the same ego-inflation all around. Nobody really understands that about 2–3 lakh students have better than 9.4 grades. Then, comes the reality — you face the competition, everybody is a perfect 10 pointer. Egos are hurt, reality sinks in, you are not as good as your neighbor, your roommate. All that you have believed about yourself and your dreams is wrong. That is too much for the young children. Some fight back, some give up on education and most unfortunately, some give up on life.

Mrugesh Vaishnav, president of the Indian Psychiatric Society said, “Stress, anxiety disorder, depression, personality disorder — all these result in mental illness that leads a student towards suicide. This happens when the students are not familiar/satisfied with his or her surroundings.”

Senior academicians and psychologists state that a student commits suicide when he doesn’t get emotional support at the time of crisis. This might happen when individual expectations are too high. Parental and peer pressure also have an adverse effect. They also reason that academic stress is an obvious factor for students taking their own lives. After studying to a certain level when they feel they are supportless or he/she can’t fulfill their own and their parents’ role expectations, a role conflict starts within the student. In this type of situation, students feel they are left without any choice and so they take such an extreme step.

Pradip Kumar Saha, Director of Institute of

Psychiatry, Kolkata, said, “Fear of failure is a leading cause for suicide among students. When students pass through an unsuccessful phase, everything seems pessimistic to them. They feel their future is bleak and this may result in committing suicide.”

Take the example of the infamous city of Kota. Hundreds of aspiring students of engineering and medical, home in Kota every year. Apart from being a coaching hub of the country, Kota has also become the suicidal capital of India. As per a report by The Tribune, lakhs of students enter the city to achieve their goal and fulfill the promises given to their parents. Though they ignore or fail to take little note of the mere 3 percent of success rate caused by the competition and hanker for an IIT or government medical college seat.

Anyone who has studied in a coaching institute in Kota will tell you, the classroom is more of a factory. A hundred or more — unless you are the creamiest of the several thousand — are being constantly monitored. Your doubts have to be extraordinary or can be laughed upon, sometimes discarded with disdain even by the teacher. Your seating arrangement, to avoid hassles, is usually according to rank — one poor rank and you are either in a lower batch or on the back benches. A rather explicit preference in attention to those who score well makes the pressure of performance explicit within days of your arrival, which is soon after your 10th standard board exams.

“Students looked like people hijacked and put in concentration camps.” That is how the Prof. Neerada Reddy led committee described the conditions in private coaching centres in its reports after studying the reasons for student deaths in December 2007.

Those preparing for admissions experience pressure from not only being able to pursue a passion or career but also from an emotional undertone of honour and prestige. Every rise and drop in scores or rank is scrutinised by

your peers and your parents and sometimes even distant relatives who have hopes pinned on you to guide their children.

This was also acknowledged by a Task Force constituted by the MHRD to look into and prevent suicides in all central government-funded technical institutions which submitted its report in 2012. The report observes, in the context of coaching and tuitions, that the “focus is no longer on engineering as a career choice but on “preparing for IIT” and identifies “social isolation, poor coping skills to face failure and the inability to share problems” as emerging behavioural patterns.

So what may be the way forward?

First, the government must undertake a comprehensive study on the reasons behind these suicides. Second, the curriculum should be designed in ways that stress the importance of mental exercises and meditation. Third, parents should do an initial recce, if possible, to understand the atmosphere of coaching institutes, to decide if it is right for their children. The New Education Policy maybe a step in the right direction. After the announcement of the new education policy, the Central government is claiming that this will reduce the pressure on students, although it is too early to gauge its effect as right now above stated statistics show that the number of students who commit suicide is increasing year after year in the country. Finally, the incessant call to merit, performance, ranks and scores that plague our education system is something that our society itself should abandon if it is not to make machines out of the labour force of technocrats that it boasts of. The stigma associated with mental health issues and internalised by young people needs to be addressed too. It is high time we seek to reinvent our educational ecosystem in ways that impregnate new meanings, new ideas of living, and renewed possibilities that could transform a life of precarity into a life worth living.

IN REVIEW: A CALL FOR BEING "SOCIAL" TOWARDS THE SOCIAL DILEMMA

Anisha Gera
BFIA'22

"Nothing vast enters the life of mortals without a curse". As the Sophocles' quote, accompanied by foreboding music, sets the momentum of "The Social Dilemma", an American docudrama directed by Jeff Orlowski, it endeavours to create a conscience into the consciousness of the virtual world. It delineates how the wealthiest companies in the Silicon Valley have stimulated the world and its truth is winned and dined by us for extracting our data and privacy. The film gathers interviews with former Google design ethicist and Center for Humane Technology co-founder Tristan Harris and other notable innovators and pioneers from the Silicon Valley.

The momentum is created by hurling the concept of Surveillance Capitalism, which is defined as the unilateral claim of human experience as free raw material for translation into behavioural data by the Harvard Business School professor Shoshana Zuboff explores those in her 2019 book, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*. "It arises as a jolt of information despite us being too informed", which clearly symbolizes how information is being displayed today, which has ultimately given birth to *The Age of Disinformation*.

They dissect the business models of tech companies, where the advertisers are the customers. They monetize human behavior and attention into 'big data oil' augmented and ready to be mined from services paid for by large advertising companies. What is being competed for is our attention, behavior, lifestyle, and ultimately, our lives. "It starts from the gradual, slight, imperceptible change in your own behavior and perception", which has created the wealthiest market of the globe; *Trade in Human Futures*.

While the "exploitative at best" business model of tech companies starts haunting the viewer, a suburban family is featured to show the consequences of social media addiction on teenagers. The body-shaming, addiction, insecurity, mental illness, exposure to polarized views, depression, and suicide, and wrong comprehension of the society is commonplace, fuelled by exposure to social media that tracks everything and everyone. The illusion of choice and falsified comfort of privacy is exploited as both leads to you being connected to your device. The visual graphics, foreboding music, personification of the algorithm, and the strong narrations summons a malign opinion from the viewer. Just as the



movie makes the viewer realise how social media is their self-dom, the democracies in attack and cyberwar fronts are delineated by the polarization of political examples; the role Facebook played in fuelling violence against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, the alleged Russian meddling in the 2016 elections in the United States of America, and more recently, the spread of conspiracy theories about the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic.

The irony is not lost on the movie; the fact that the information it feeds to the viewer in a limited time gives surreal feels of how the criticised search engines work. The communication is unilateral and somewhat biased against tech companies without assessing its alter ego.

A recent study by JMIR Public Health Surveill. 2020 evaluated the 100 most viewed videos on YouTube with the word "coronavirus"; these together had more than 165 million views as of March 5, 2020, 85% of them belonging to news channels. It was found that less than a third of the videos mentioned the recommended prevention measures, less than half mentioned the most frequent symptoms, however, almost 90% commented on deaths, anxiety, and the quarantine status. This study reflects an important aspect about the dissemination of "quality" information on the prevention of contagion and frequent symptoms of COVID-19 on mammoth platforms such as YouTube. What can be deduced out of this kind of viewership is that while YouTube might disseminate information that can run haywire, it's "our data" fuelled algorithm that leads us to those falsified trending videos. If the inclination for chaos has become more important than the prevention, is the disseminator of both up for blame?

When it comes to publications, studies have shown that the dissemination of scientific literature on social media platforms has witnessed a rise in the traffic, downloads, queries, and citations of these articles

which, with the COVID-19 pandemic are characteristics that have undoubtedly allowed rapid dissemination of knowledge worldwide, in addition to markedly reduced editorial times, which have gone from months of processing to days or weeks since its reception. If we prefer to gather information from social media platforms prone to misinformation rather than credible scientific journals and references, again is it the provider of both to blame for the trajectory?

"Misinformation is a concern, but not a bigger concern than feeding information." While *The Social Dilemma* explains this concept in the most vivid way possible, these underlying questions on the hedonistic and irrational choices of humanity is not significantly questioned.

The intriguing observation in the title "The Social Dilemma" resides in the fact that only one side of the dilemma is abundantly explained while the other side is hardly touched upon.

What really the bottom line of the documentary is to elevate before reaching the end of this whirl of existential crisis. The million-dollar question of when technology will supersede human strengths is the blunder that is hiding the question of when technology will exceed human weakness. Are really these our weaknesses or born out of the onset of this madness? The matrix of this virtual world is a utopia brimming with the dystopian characteristics, or vice-versa, which is incomprehensible at best and oblivion at worst.

The documentary really made the manipulated brains quiver at the thought of what really is the reality, while still calling for changes in the business models, ethics, and the inevitable checkmate on humanity. It is worth watching at least once on Netflix if only you could watch it without posting about it!

A MONUMENTAL HISTORY OF ABUSE *Pranjal Swami BMS'22*

Public monuments are representative of what the country honors, what side of history it wants to commemorate and remember. The Confederate monuments have symbolized heritage but have long been viewed, by many, as symbols of white supremacy, racial inequality and systematic oppression. Drawing increasing attention amid the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement protests, these statues have either been removed by the officials in numerous states or toppled by the protesters themselves.

Destroying a statue from its place of prominence marks an inevitably political and cultural shift owing to its symbolic value - it is a collective statement that as a community, we confront and reject the ideology that these monuments represent.

Iconoclasm holds cathartic value for these communities. It is the reclamation of a past that has antagonised them and a present that denies them opportunities. Righting past wrongs must come with a public consciousness of what values should a country uphold. Those vilifying protestors for toppling statues should instead vouch for pressuring governments to give these communities the right to decide what to do with them since the state has maintained them with public funds.

Critics, however, view the invisibilisation of these monuments from the public sphere as risking 'erasing history'. Except what this argument leaves out is that the sole purpose of 'putting them on a pedestal' is not to reflect on past injustices inflicted on the African American community. It leaves out that the state has actively destroyed detailed records of their crimes against black people during colonization and whitewashed instances of

dehumanization and violence that came along with it. These statues are monuments to the deliberate erasure of the contributions of the black community and decades of racial violence, to denying responsibility for past injustices.

One might argue that these monuments can be preserved in museums whilst confronting the insidious origins of these monuments - false historical narratives of which legitimised an environment where African Americans were subjected to lynching, racial discrimination and disproportionate incarceration. Historians, therefore, have argued for 'contextualisation', the idea of adding plaques explaining and adding the historical context of these monuments. Except it begs the question of who determines what context is appropriate and in a larger scheme of things, whether or not it is pertinent to value art for its intrinsic aesthetics and not for what it glorifies and should be held accountable for.

As art, monuments have preservationist value, but at the same time, the purpose behind erecting these statues was always immoral. That's why their 'intrinsic beauty' is far less important than the discourse they have collectively provoked towards the intolerance of celebrating those who perpetuated racism to begin with. What fuels the current movement is not destruction of art but dismantling overt ways in which racism is overlooked in America. They are signifiers of the country's racial amnesia and thus its historical value isn't one that can be equated to the pain they cause as a constant reminder to these communities.

Banksy's reimagining of a bronze statue in Bristol had cables tied around the neck of



Banksy's reimagining of the Colston statue in Bristol

the statue of slave-trader Colston, which was previously torn down by protestors, returned to its pedestal along with commissioned life size bronze statues of protestors in the act of pulling him down. This simple artistic gesture is an example of reinterpretation of history by allowing for the voices of the African American community to rise above their oppressors.

An analogous 'problematization of narratives' led HBO to remove *Gone with the Wind* from its platform due to its whitewashing of slavery and romanticising discriminative treatment. The narrative of 'let us not destroy, but rather keep as a warning' - like *Forrest Gump* being named after a confederate tenant - has created awareness in the public sphere and sparked discourse around the whitewashed history and decades of neglect towards the black community.

Whether it is removing cinema or toppling colonialist statues, people are willing to take action to heal from the past and to stop modern racial injustice. Statues must fall because institutionalised racism must fall: without a strong gesture of rupture, the problem would be barely discussed. We are creating a new narrative by choosing the side of history that reflects our values and who we are.

READING IN THE PANDEMIC *Manan Matta BFIA'22*

Being here in 2020, nobody would've seen it coming. Coronavirus has impacted our lives in almost every way imaginable. In these times of desperation, people seek solace in different places, different hobbies and different people. As such, a sort of lost pass time has resurfaced and has former revellers on the hook again. The habit of reading has dwindled in this fast-paced technology-driven modern world with the majority preferring to invest their little leisure time on scrolling Twitter or Instagram feeds or watching movies on demand with the ever-increasing OTT services. Those avid-readers too moved away from the warm world of books.

The statement is supported by data provided by the Washington Post and CNBC which reported in 2018 that the share of Americans

who read for pleasure on a given day has fallen by 30% to 16.8 minutes a day (survey conducted by Bureau of Labour Statistics, USA) and further adds that about 24% haven't read even a single book in the past year. In comparison, India leads the chart amongst global readers with an average of 10.42 hours per week, which again is an all time low for the country as reported by Global English Editing. In contrast, average screen time for a person is 3.25 hours in 2019, which is greater than 4.5 hours when considering only the top 20%; going as high as 7.5 hours among teenagers(as reported by Rescue Time and the Washington Post). This is 10 times higher than what it was in 2011 and continues to grow at an alarming rate.

However with the ongoing situation, people

found loads of time in their hands to kill and have again picked those old books covered in dust or their Kindles, which earlier were rendered useless.

BookNet, Canada conducted a research and found that about 80% of Canadians had read a book during April 2020, with 58% of them reading more than they did before. The increased reading time has been compensated by reduction in shopping, dining out and time spent listening to music. 22% of the surveyed are buying more books than before.

Data from studies show that during this pandemic, Americans have increased their reading activities. Facebook mentions and Google searches of Barnes and Noble (upto 23,100) and Books-A-Million (upto 31,000) have peaked in this pandemic in America as per Thinknum Alternative Data Tool. Amazon, China reported 70% of the existing

readers picked up more books during lockdown. Survey conducted by three graduate students in India on reading habits was published on Digital Commons by the University of Nebraska. The findings of the study show an increase in the number of hours spent reading per day, the average of which has increased from 1-2 hours to 3-5 hours; with 70% of those surveyed reporting an increase in reading time in this quarantine situation.

Many countries including India have also seen a sudden surge in the number of books bought online, be it an e-book or a traditional paperback. Online video-conferences with authors have helped individual booksellers stay competitive during this time. Couple this with the thousands of lists of critics' recommendations and you might find yourself already busy for the next few months.

Imagine yourself during those summer

vacations from school, curled up in one corner of the house, with no care for the world, immersed in the mythical land of Percy Jackson or racking your brains trying to unravel the mysteries weaved by Agatha Christie or longing for an embrace from that special someone reading the lines of Wordsworth! Feel nostalgic yet? Who knew restrictions on physical movement would yield an unexpected but welcome emergence of lost freedom with regards to reading.

Yet in this sudden expanse of time all is not the same as reading habits have undergone a paradigm shift. With the flexibility to read at previously unavailable moments of the day, one might find themselves waking up next to a book instead of rushing to the college or office. Having previously sought comfortable places like a bed or sofa, readers are reportedly preferring more open spaces with a hint of sunshine falling on those pages. This has also been accompanied by an increased movement

with frequent breaks, as per a study conducted by the National Centre for Writing, USA. People, who travelled on a daily basis and used to listen to Audiobooks; now have the luxury to delve in those yellow-scented pages and take pleasure in with their own eyes rather than somebody else's narration.

While it has brought back a lost past time for most, this situation has also opened the avenues for first-time readers. Toddlers and teens are being encouraged to take up books and are developing reading habits. Adults too, in an effort to reduce screen-time, have turned to books and have found themselves inspired and amazed.

As it stands, we need more of such inspirations and distractions to take us away from this bleak situation and give hope for a better tomorrow. And Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa rightly sums it up, "Literature is the most agreeable way of ignoring life around us."

Smell the flowers! *Cheshta Vohra* *BMS'21*

As I sit down with my bowl of popcorn browsing through the same set of movies, deciding which one to watch, I wonder whether it's because of the comfort I get from the familiarity or the opportunity to evade the unsettling feeling of a situation ending in multiple possibilities. I decided to discuss this with the most trusted, Google, and landed on a plethora of articles detailing how anxiety leads people to avoid watching new movies and shows. This got me thinking, how many people feel this way? Are they even aware of such a thing, or am I overthinking? Before my response mechanism of rationalising every emotion kicked in and I began shutting these feelings down.

We most often feel the need to justify our emotions and use logic and reason to break them down. It is rarely something we talk about, and if we do it's always in hushed up tones. Honestly, this is something I don't find amusing and seeing the media circus going on recently, it has become all the more pronounced that we do not understand and refuse to accept the intricacies of mental well-being.

"But there are people dying", "I should be grateful for what I have", "I have no reason to feel this", "There must be some reason you feel this way".

We have told ourselves this or have heard someone else say this. For many, expressing and accepting our emotions is nothing but a

show of weakness and it's so much easier to brush it off under the garb of rationality.

The "hustle culture" pushes us to perpetually work and taking a break is the cardinal sin we must not commit. We are taught that in order to succeed we need to work ourselves to physical and mental exhaustion and the telling signs of the body and mind should be ignored to keep up this facade of productivity.

"Because your dreams are what should keep you awake", but how is that healthy? Sustainability isn't important just for our environment, it is also equally important for us as humans. We must imbibe in us the ability to not 'balance' work and life, but view them as disjoint entities. We should use our logic for our work but at the same time we must learn to be in touch with our inner-self. We need to understand the importance of taking a break and knowing that your feelings can exist in isolation to what may be going on in our lives and the world.

Let's classify some of the filters we use as an alternative to understanding our emotions under the following heads:

CONTRAST AND GRATITUDE FILTERS: We try to see how others have it much worse than us, and that in itself is somehow supposed to lessen the gravity of what we're feeling.

POSITIVITY FILTER: "Look on the bright side!" Though this one is helpful and does

help, it leads us to escape the reality of our experiences.

BE STRONG FILTER: This concept is wrong since it suggests that your natural response to situations makes you weak, and that everyone deals with it and hence so should you.

SUCK-IT UP FILTER: Bad experiences are a part of life, so deal with it! Well, yes, they are a part of life, but do allow yourself the time to grieve.

These filters are great for temporary relief, quick fixes if you may call them. But they all have one thing in common, they act as barriers for us to actually own up to our feelings and resolve the more deep-seated issues behind them.

Bottling up your emotions doesn't eliminate them, it causes what is similar to a soda bottle. When a soda bottle is shaken and pressurised, it tends to 'explode' when opened. Our mental well-being works in a similar way, and if we don't allow ourselves to recuperate it can have adverse effects on our physical well-being as well.

It is okay to pause and think, why am I always running? This is important because often times we realise we're actually running away from the weight of our own expectations.

So the next time you feel sad, anxious, stressed or any emotion on the broad spectrum that exists, tell yourself "Oh, how human of me." Embrace it, talk about it, don't be ashamed or dismissive and never be afraid to seek help.

VERSUS VERSES with Kainto

How did you start with rapping? What inspired you for the same?

I think a better way to answer this would be to tell you how I started with music. As someone who has always loved performing, I always gravitated towards art. I actively participated in singing, dancing, sketching, etc. I still vividly remember performing 'Smack that' by Akon when I was 12, in the school assembly. The entire school was silent while I was there on the stage passionately singing Akon's masterpiece, not even knowing what those words meant. All this escalated to a whole new level once I came to Delhi for my college, joined the dramatics society, and started performing, acting and creating music, which involved writing songs in particular. While it started as something I had to do, it evolved to writing during the lectures by jotting down lyrics in my notebooks, albeit they were pretty trashy and then I was exposed to Delhi's underground scene. That's how it came about. I think the process was something that inspired me and it felt as if I had been doing this all along. One time I had to write a folk track. I sat down for 3 days, 8-10 hours a day, but I couldn't come up with a single idea. Then suddenly, on the third night, it came to me, and the entire song took less than 10 minutes. Obviously, it has only been possible because of those 3 days and the time I put into it; and this is something I still believe in. Whenever I get an idea for a track I start thinking about it, I let it rest and then I wait for a beat to come to me and by piecing it together, the track comes into being.

What do you like to rap about? What does it mean to you?

What I started writing about is pretty much what every amateur starts with, "tu ye, mai ye, etc tere jaise bahut, meri league alag", the tracks I have put out

currently are just better versions of these, what you call braggadocious tracks. But the tracks I am working on currently and what I want my music to stand for is what I call mood music, tracks that suit a particular mood, a certain setting, or a certain incident. For example, there is a reason you prefer Arijit Singh over Siddhu Moosewala when you go through a heartbreak. That's just the kind of music he works with, right? My acting background helps me here because it lets me put my emotions in my track so it could be felt by the listeners. Your favourite track is not just your favourite because of what was being said, it is your favourite track because of how it made you feel. That's exactly what I am going for.

Who has helped you along the way? What keeps you going?

Although I have just started, I definitely feel my songs are what keeps me going. Just being able to make music and put it out keeps me motivated. Also, when I play any of my tracks for my mom, and she enjoys it I can see her smile, how proud she is, and that's one thing that I think is going to keep me going for the rest of my life. It's a constant thing, you need to put in the work, and you have to love the process.

What are your future plans?

I have been working with my friends, Vibhu, who's a producer and Vikram on their project "kalbaisakhi". I have my own tracks which I have self-produced in the pipeline. I have a project planned for next year too but currently, I am focusing only on finishing tracks and will be putting them out as soon as possible on all the platforms. Talking about making a career out of it, right now my priority is to make music, hone the skill, learn as much as I can.

Putting it out smartly, understanding the game and playing the game.

How difficult is it to take up an unconventional career path?

I don't see it as unconventional. Like we are probably at a junction right now, more people are pursuing arts because of the opportunities being created in this space. But it's nothing unique. If you think about it being unconventional, it's just playing into the hands of the stereotypes that the society has created, and doing that would take down a lot of work done by people who came before me. If I could just say one thing, it would be that there is no such thing as something being conventional or unconventional, it's just how you as an individual see it. It's about what you want to do and feel strongly about. I know for a fact

that we like to group similar things together, take the odd ones out but clearly, that's not the case here.

Any message for the students?

I am no one to preach so let's call this a message for myself and anyone reading is free to take it. You might think now is not the right time, so you keep waiting for that perfect moment. But believe me, you got to do it to now, without trying you won't know if you have the ability to enter a room full of people and surprise them all. And in the end, the person who is the most surprised, turns out to be you. Because you never know if you have it in you, unless you try. So just do it and do more, learn more, collaborate more and put out more music. They say that nothing can be taught but everything can be learnt. So let no one tell you what you should be doing. Do what you like with all your heart. Be grateful to the people who help you.

INTERNSHIP OUTLOOK

Credicxo Tech Private Limited

Role: [Django Development](#)

Work-from-home

Stipend: 15000/mo

Duration: 2 Months

Application Deadline: Oct 6, 2020

Gambit Knowledge Consulting

Roles Available:

(a) [Business Content Curation](#)

(b) [Human Resources](#)

Virtual Internship

Stipend: Unpaid

Duration: N/A

Application Deadlines:

BCC - Oct 23, 2020

HR - Nov 24, 2020

Digital Investo

Role: [Event Management](#)

Work-from-home

Stipend: Unpaid (PPO available)

Duration: 6 Months

Application Deadline: Oct 15, 2020

MedTour Easy

Role: [Business Analytics Trainee](#)

Work-from-home

Stipend: Unpaid

Duration: 4 weeks

Application Deadline: Oct 15, 2020

Modget

Role: [Graphic Designer](#)

Work-from-home

Stipend: Unpaid

Duration: 4 weeks

Application Deadline: Oct 12, 2020

