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AMITY SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

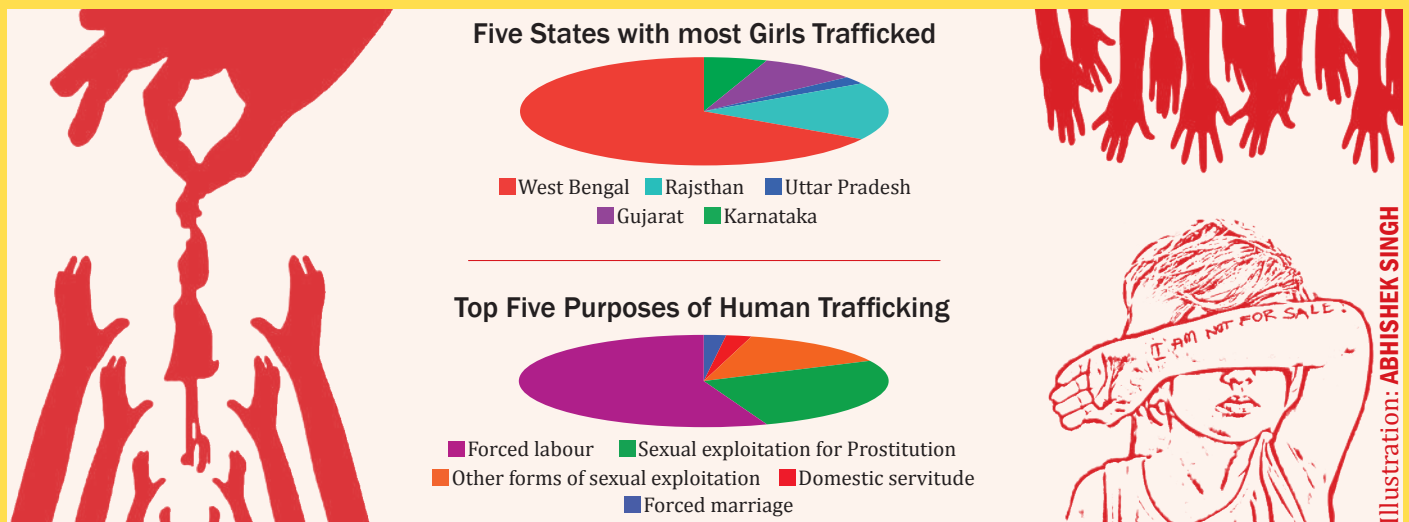
# Expressions



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# Human trafficking on rise in India



### MARIA SIDDIQUI

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Struck with poverty, lack of education, and the need to financially support their family are some of the root causes of human trafficking in India. Children in poverty are often forced to trade sex for a place to live or food to eat. To get out of poverty or to pay

off debts, some parents have even been forced to sell their children to traffickers. Children are often trafficked by gangs and forced to beg on the streets. Nepal, Bangladesh and North Indian States dominate in human trafficking.

Human trafficking in India, although illegal under law remains a serious socio-economic problem. People are frequently trafficked for the purpose of commercial sexual

exploitation and forced as labour. Reema, Riva and Sonali (names changed) are some of the examples among thousands of girls from eastern Uttar Pradesh who were trafficked from remote villages to large cities and sold as domestic help and were sexually assaulted. Trafficking though illegal crime takes place on social media, massage parlours, on rural farms, in homes and on street

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**PROF (DR) SANJAY M JOHRI**  
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## 8 thesis submissions : 2023, a milestone for ASCO

Writing a PhD is always physically, intellectually, and emotionally daunting as you spend each day doubting yourself, not sure if you're making the right choices and unsure whether you've achieved at the end what you wanted. It's a long journey to reach to the last stage of completing your voluminous research work in the form of submitting your thesis and Eight of ASCO Scholars have done it in recent months. Year 2023 can truly be termed a milestone for the institution.

Expressions' Congratulate Mr. Sanjiv Sabharwal, Ms. Ranjana Dean, Mr. Mohit Sharma, Mr. Amit Massey, Mr. Soumen Bhattacharya, Mr. Sanchita Mehrotra, Ms. Alisha Syedain and Ms. Asha Adhikari for submitting their thesis and they are not far away from having prefix as 'Dr' in their name in coming months. We have five more scholars who are in different stages of their doctoral work. Ph.D. & Research has come a long way at ASCO with first Scholar registering almost ten years ago and today we can take pride in building the institution as one of the best communication schools in this part of the country. Kudos to the scholars and the institutional research team led by Dr. Areena Z Mirza and Dr. Mohd. Faisal for guiding and helping the scholars through out and also Mr. Vinay Tripathi.

In a globalised world, the role of research in an academic institution is significant for its sustainability and development, and it is imperative to have knowledge-driven growth based on innovation. The quality of research work directly translates to the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom, thereby benefiting the students and the society in general. Students, both undergraduate and graduate, I am sure will benefit from studying in an environment rich with research as there will be opportunities to engage with faculty during the class interaction taking up topics for case studies and delve deep in their studies.

### ALUMNI CORNER

**SYEDA LARAIB FATIMA WARSII**

Reporter (Journalist)  
GAON CONNECTION  
BA (J&MC) 2015-2018



## ASCO helps students to shape opinions

Dear Younger Self,

How are you? This is me, your older self. Five years have passed by, uh! Life has been a roller coaster ride, right? I have had my share of ups and downs and I must say that they engraved a deep imprint on me. As the years passed by, I got to learn a lot about myself and my journey. Everything that I have gathered so far in this journey helped define who I am.

I still remember those carefree college days, with all my friends sitting in those wide, windy corridors of Amity University, relishing kebab rolls and maggi. When I recall my younger self, I remember the times when those aspirational eyes and a hopeful heart kept telling the younger Laraib to be brave and pursue her dreams.

Today, I am working as a reporter with Gaon Connection, India's biggest rural media platform. My role as a reporter requires me to be objective, sensitive and analytical while documenting stories. Honesty and determination — these words still echo in my ears, taught to me by my mentor, Johri Sir — Head of the Department of ASCO (Amity School of Communication) who inculcated the much needed values. He taught me the importance of being honest, earnest and determined in whatever work I do.

ASCO helped me shape my opinions and taught me to work as a goal-oriented individual. Johri Sir has been a phenomenal teacher apart from being a supportive mentor. These memories are still fresh in my psyche as if I have just enrolled in the undergrad course and my teachers are still guiding and nurturing me in every step that I take in life. During my graduation years, I was eager to venture into the professional realm, but now I wish I could go back in time and slow it down so that I could cherish every moment to the fullest.

Since graduating from Amity and then embarking on a new journey in Jamia Millia Islamia before working at a rural media platform, life has been full of struggles and joys and I feel without them I wouldn't have evolved into the person that I am today. Coming from a small town on the outskirts of Lucknow, a passionate Laraib was always uncertain about her dream of becoming a journalist. ■



# It's thumbs up for offline shopping



Pictures: KASHIKA NIGAM



## KASHIKA NIGAM

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

As the festive season comes around the corner, the spirit of joy pervades everywhere. So it is always interesting to capture the exuberance pervading the atmosphere.

Every year hundreds of artisans and retailers assemble their shops prior to the festivals in the hope of making their Diwali and everyone else's a bit more special. From setting up shop in the morning to winding it up till midnight it takes more than hard work and dedication to do so. But presence of the internet and rise of online shopping-mars this hard work.

Online shopping has become a convenient alternative to shop and has significantly impacted the traditional retail especially during the festive season. Major online businesses like Blinkit and Swiggy Instamart dominate the marketplace by making small things available like "Paan ke patte and Kamal gatte" to Ganesh and Laxmi idols.

Online shopping has brought in the ease of comparing prices and the luxury of all which is home de-

**Diwali 2023 season: Sales at retail & online stores clock all-time high, 65% of online sales outside Tier-1 cities** CNBC NEWS

livery which has made it the first go-to preferences for everyone.

Expressions went down the lanes of these festive shops in Lucknow and asked few customers about what will be their preference in the ongoing war between the traditional and online shopping, Anjali, who is a home maker said, "The experience and guarantee which I get from the offline shopping is something else which I feel I can never get it from online, because until I do not touch the items which I am buying I do not get satisfied with the product." There were many customers who felt the same way and most of them were women who wanted to see and touch the quality of any product they bought.

However, this does not spell doom for the traditional retail. Many

consumers still prefer to go out in the market and have those experience, or the ability to try before buy, and the instant gratification that comes with the in-store shopping. Although it can easily be seen that the key lies in balance and it is very evident that traditional stores are evolving, incorporating technology, and emerging trends that is going around in the world and offering the audience with unique experiences to compete in the digital arena. Whereas, hybrid models where consumers can browse online and pick up in-store are becoming increasingly popular these days.

Atul Srivastava owner of a retail shop in Nirala Nagar told Expressions, "Online shopping has affected our business in a large amount as there are customers who come and see the stuff asks the price and do not buy it. I feel it is very important for vendors like us to shift to online too."

Rise of online shopping has undeniably changed the retail landscape, particularly during the festive season. Yet, the charm of traditional shopping persists, indicating that the future might not be a competition but a collaboration between the two. ■

# Tesla to make Indian debut?

**ARYAN RAJ**

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

**T**esla, the trailblazing electric vehicle (EV) pioneer, is on the brink of transforming the automotive landscape in India. With its innovative technology and eco-conscious approach, the anticipation of Tesla's entry into the Indian market has sparked widespread excitement and speculation.

India has been a brand ambassador of green technology for years and introducing electric vehicles is the next logical step. For Elon Musk, Tesla's CEO, it's all about timing for an Indian entry. The two of them met in June during PM Modi's visit to the US. The two had discussed Tesla and its Indian entry.

For years now there have been rumours that the Tesla may open a manufacturing facility in India and dreams of a giga factory in Gujarat or made in Maharashtra model 3es. Despite the enthusiasm Tesla plants have failed to spring up in India allegedly because of Tesla desires for special treatment. According to The Economic Times it wanted incentives and that is just a polite way



Picture: ARYAN RAJ

of saying it did not want to pay its fair share of taxes. India apparently didn't want to give EV makers special treatment after all India has a robust vehicle market it offers tremendous growth prospects for any new entrant so why incentives? The Indian government reportedly suggested customer subsidies instead. But apparently Tesla wanted more. Tesla car is expensive, Rs 2 million. Another demand of Tesla is to work with Chinese firms. Tesla wanted these companies to come to India. Now this is a geopolitical problem. The Indian government has provided a solution by suggesting Chinese firms can be partners with existing Indian companies. But all said and done, Tesla's entry into India is yet to see the light of the day.

Upasana Yadav, a student of psychology at Amity University told Expressions, "Tesla's arrival in India is akin to witnessing a tech revolution on our roads, where innovation meets sustainability in the most exhilarating way possible." Abhinav Verma, a media student added, "Tesla's entry into India isn't just about cars; it's a testament to redefining our relationship with technology, driving us toward a greener and more electrified future." But now there are talks of a compromise and of approvals being streamlined. They are supposed to be cleared by January next around India's republic day where US president Joe Biden is expected to be the chief guest. The timing would be perfect. Of course for now this is speculation. ■

# Traditional videos games in revival mode

**ABHINAV VARMA**

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

**W**ith the recent announcement of the Persona 3 Reload remake, and the Final Fantasy 7: Rebirth, and Vampire the Masquerade Bloodlines 2, it seems like the Role Playing Games are making a return in the worldwide market. While RPGs have always been an integral part in the Eastern countries, particularly Japan, the birthplace of Pokemon, Final Fantasy, Dragon Quest, Legend of Zelda and various pillars of the video

gaming standards over the years. The last decade itself has seen a tremendous rise of the MOBAs, or the Multiplayer Online Battle Arena games, like PubG, Call of Duty, Pokemon Unite, League of Legends, etc. which primarily utilized the online connectivity and portability of the android and ios platforms as a feature and whose target usp was connectivity, allowing players to battle other players in real time. While most of these games used the ABS or action battle system, somewhere along the process they sacrificed on the storytelling concept, with Persona 5 and The World Ends

With You neo being the only significant story-driven Traditional RPG in the past decade .

In conjuncture the massively popular GTA and Witcher series pushed for the open-world and real time Action combat at the console levels, so much so that even the Zelda series had to adopt the ABS with its Hyrule Warriors installment. Meanwhile the Persona series and Dragon Quest series remained as one of the very few gaming series with focus on the traditional RPG elements of Storytelling and Strategic turn based combat. But with the emergence of platform like steam



over the past decade has led to the popularization of the indie games that many a times are capable of going with the AAA games. For those of whom unknown to these terms, AAA games are the ones which are made by studios and companies with huge financial backings, for the purpose of earnings while indie games are the projects undertaken by relatively small teams or sometimes even individuals for the purpose of refining the mechanics or as a means to tell a particular story. Primary example of the indie game of the RPG category is Stardew Valley, which has with the increasing popularity of Steam, been able to reach to a massive audience over the years and safeguarded the space of indie games.

While the gaming industry

wheels towards more and more photorealistic visuals and complex mechanics, the entire homogeneity of the titles across different genres threatens the audience experience, with the new games simply becoming clones of older popular titles. A recent example of it can be seen with the Assassin's Creed Odyssey and Valhalla titles, who have despite their stunning visuals failed to captivate the audience due to their inability to bring something new to the table and solely relying on the success of their predecessors. Odyssey even being a complete failure of an attempt towards the series' switch to a Role-Playing feature.

With Nintendo's Switch and PS5 having their own virtual consoles, that provide with backward compatibility to games released

on older consoles, one even has an opportunity to experience the retro games. For all the criticism the RPGs have faced in the last decade, on being "dead" as attributed to their, slow gameplay, boring battles and complicated and lengthy plotlines, it seems that RPGs are once again back on stage.

With the upcoming release of Persona 3 Reload on the 2nd Feb, 2024, and Final Fantasy 7 Rebirth on the 29th of the same month, the titles are promised to take the video gaming audience by storm owing to the legendary statuses of their parent materials. And with them comes promise of the extension of the lifetime of the Traditional Turn-based Role Playing Games, in this era which is dominated by fast paced open-world-action games. ■

#### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

corners, knowledgeable sources associated with NGOs involved in saving such people revealed.

Reema (24) years was trafficked to Lucknow from Gorakhpur as her agent Manoj had sold her as a domestic worker for about Rs 15,000 to a Lucknow household. After few months, she asked her agent to send her home. Instead, he locked her in his house and regularly sexually assaulted her. She got regularly beaten by the agent even when he knew she was few weeks pregnant.

"I was apprehensive when a man came to my house back in my native town Gorakhpur selling pamphlets of job advertisements in Lucknow with high salaries promising of providing a regular wage in the big city. He promised accommodation and food and she thought she would get something to eat thrice a day which was only a dream for her back home. I was however starved and beaten. Reema managed to escape with the help of the neighbours who knew about the monstrous acts taking place in that house," she says.

She has an eight-year-old daughter Reema who sells daily

utilities at a local shop whereas Riva works at a handwoven clothes shop. Reema single-handedly brought up her daughter always lying to her that her father had died as soon as she was born due to some disease.

The story of Sonali (13) who was studying in 6th grade is equally disturbing when she got kidnapped from outside her school and was trafficked from her village in Fatehpur to Maharashtra.

She was tortured and abused by her traffickers and was about to be sold off as a bride to an adult. Her courage, however, did not let her give up, it finally paid off as she managed to escape one day and went to the nearest police station from where she was rescued by an NGO that took her to her family which refused to accept her. She now lives at an old age home in Maharashtra which is funding her education.

Interestingly the trafficking does not involve girls only but even the number of boys has been identified as human trafficking survivors which grew by over five times between 2004 and 2020.

Vyom (7) got kidnapped from the railway platform of Haridwar

railway station and later sold off to families in Noida. "I still remember the day when two men came up to me handing out some candies after that I remember opening my eyes in a crowded bus. After absorbing the entire situation, one day I hid the phone of my trafficker and called my parents. Soon I got rescued by the Uttar Pradesh Police".

These are not just the stories of Reema, Sonali and Vyom but rather those thousands of girls and boys who get trapped in this vicious cycle. Unaware and often illiterate, they have little knowledge of their rights and no clue of how to return home. The traffickers and their agencies make the most of their vulnerability and for years, move them from one household to another. The 2013 Global Slavery Index found that almost half of the 30 million "modern slaves" in the world are from India.

When contacted, the UP Police sources said that they have been tracking and taking action in cases of human trafficking as and when they were reported. They agreed that human trafficking was a serious issue and the government was committed to tackling the problem. ■



# Navigating the Firecracker Ban!

**ASHKA JAIN & SHIRAZ ASEEM**  
Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

**N**otwithstanding that Delhi's air had left its people gasping for air & Mumbai breathed heavy too and the air quality dipped in different parts of the country, the Supreme Court reiterated its earlier decision on firecrackers, stating that only the use of green firecrackers will apply not just to Delhi-NCR but across the country.

While Apex court directions hardly had any significant impact on bursting the crackers, UP Pollution Control Board said six monitoring

stations in Lucknow alone reported extreme level of air pollution on Diwali night with city measuring PM 2.5 and PM 10 levels increasing by 177 percent & 126 percent respectively.

But experts say crackers are not the only reason causing higher level of pollution. It is vehicular emission, burning of staples in neighbouring Haryana and Punjab which impact NCR and Noida and the on-going construction activity.

A quick survey carried out by Team Expressions through Google Doc focused on youth clearly indicated that they feel crackers are serious hazards of increasing pollution in general

during Diwali and lauded Apex Court's intervention and need for Eco-Friendly Crackers. Majority are of the opinion that a ban on crackers would contribute to a safer community. Combination of penalties as well as education to community in general is a better way of mitigating the danger of increasing pollution and why eco-friendly crackers are need of the hour.

They agreed that as of now mere threat alone by Apex Court may not be the only answer to check pollution, but enforcement authorities need to act tough to handle this sensitive but equally important issue across the country. ■



Pictures: **SURESH SAHU**



# Bus travel: Govt needs to gear up

**SHAHIDA KHAN**

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

India's vast and diverse landscape is traversed daily by millions of people who rely on public transportation, with government buses playing a pivotal role in connecting cities, towns, and villages. The Indian government's commitment to providing efficient and affordable transportation has led to the establishment of a comprehensive bus transport system that caters to the needs of a diverse population. However, despite the nation's significant strides in various sectors, the state of public transportation, particularly the bus system, remains a major cause for concern. Issues such as overcrowded buses, erratic schedules, and a lack of infrastructure contribute to the challenges faced by commuters.

Despite these drawbacks, the majority of the population in India prefers using buses due to their affordability, as many people simply cannot afford to travel in cars on a daily basis. One of the most glaring issues with India's public bus system is the perennial problem of overcrowded buses. Commuters often find themselves packed like sardines, standing shoulder to shoulder in the narrow aisles of buses meant to accommodate far fewer passengers.

This not only leads to discomfort but also poses serious safety risks, with passengers jostling for space and sometimes even hanging precariously from the doors. Another major flaw in the system is the unreliable and erratic bus schedules. Delays are common, and buses often fail to adhere to the



Pictures: **SHAHIDA KHAN**

published timetables, leaving commuters stranded at bus stops for unpredictable lengths of time. This inconsistency makes it challenging for people to plan their daily routines, leading to increased frustration and a waste of valuable time.

Gyan Singh, a regular commuter while talking to Expressions said, "Traveling in a government bus is akin to a roller coaster ride and highly unpredictable in terms of scheduling. Due to my financial constraints, I have consistently relied on government buses as they are more affordable, despite the lack of comfort. However, the condition of these buses is often deplorable, filled to capacity with passengers. The frequent stops to accommodate additional passengers result in delays, making reaching the destination a prolonged ordeal." Moreover, even after purchasing a full ticket, securing a seat is a challenge, as buses are often overcrowded with more passengers than available seats, he added

Safety is a paramount concern in any public transportation system, and unfortunately, India's bus system falls short in this regard. Over-

crowded buses, poorly maintained vehicles, and a lack of adherence to safety regulations contribute to a high number of accidents and injuries. Passengers are left vulnerable to the risks associated with poorly maintained roads and reckless driving, creating an environment where accidents are sadly commonplace. Moreover, a significant number of times, drivers and conductors of the same route buses speed up and overtake each other to attract more passengers, leading to conflicts during the journey. This situation forces passengers to endure the consequences of these disputes, further compromising their safety and overall experience.

Dakshita, a 25-year-old commuter and a nurse said, "Certainly, traveling in a bus is no easy feat. Over the past few years, as a working woman, it has become a routine for me. It's a game of luck; out of 5-6 trips, you might be fortunate to encounter one with a well-maintained bus. Otherwise, the reality of the conditions of our government buses is all too familiar."

"The government may not be solely responsible, but rather the middlemen who hinder the improvement of the Indian transport system. In the end, it's a journey where comfort is a rare passenger," she added. ■

The World Resources Institute estimated that 46% of all motorised trips within Bengaluru were on buses.

**FOMO:**

# Youth in grip of social media anxiety



*"FOMO includes both the perception of missing out, which triggers anxiety and compulsive behaviors, like checking and refreshing sites, to maintain social connections," It is closely related to the fear of social exclusion or ostracism, which existed long before social media! says Natalie Christine Dattilo, Ph.D, the founder of Priority Wellness Group and an instructor of psychology at Harvard.*

**ARHAMA ALI**

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

Now there is a new phobia in societal circulation that is grabbing eyeballs. FOMO – Fear of Missing Out. Whether it be daily routines of individuals or any important aspect of one's lives, FOMO has come to play a dominant role in young one's lives. And guess what it does to people's minds? It breeds anxiety.

FOMO means that one is living with the 'fear of the future'. And, the future is uncertain; uncertainty leads to anxiety; anxiety leads to stress; and stress gobbles up one's peace and happiness.

This anxiety is very predominant in electronic space. This space includes FB, Insta, WA, and Snapchat just to name a few social media platforms. And your friend or colleague will say tomorrow: "Oh! You did not see that??? You really missed it. We saw this and that. And, we also saw..." Listening to this, you will be unhappy or dissatisfied, Some of us will even panic to know that we do not know!!

Talking to Expressions, Samantha, 34, says, "I changed my career path because of FOMO. I thought I should be in a more 'prestigious' job, even though I loved what I was

doing. It was only when I went back to my passion that I felt truly fulfilled."

Ananya, 21 says, "As a college student, FOMO was immense. I felt like I should be at every event, every party, every study group. It was exhausting. Then, I realized that saying no sometimes is okay. I focused on my studies and my mental health, and I've never been happier."

Druv, 29, says, "FOMO isn't just about friends; it can affect family dynamics too. I used to miss family gatherings because I thought I was missing out on social events. Now, I prioritize family time, and I've re-kindled those relationships."

So, now let's imagine a scenario. The scenario is this: You did not go to the banquet hall in the first place. You were at home, or at a friend's place, or at a relative's place, or were reading, playing with their child, building something together with their kids, having an insightful or nostalgic conversation with your spouse or parents or a friend, or doing something useful; anything... that kept you well occupied. Now, having not gone to the banquet hall, do you experience FOMO?? Think... No. You will not. Because when you miss out on everything, you miss nothing. Meet Sarah, a 28-year-old marketing professional. She admits that scrolling through her In-

stagram feed often makes her feel like she's not measuring up. "Every time I see a friend's post from some exotic destination or attending a swanky event, I can't help but wonder if I'm missing out on something amazing," she says. "It's like a never-ending loop of comparison."

FOMO can be a real struggle. It's like that nagging feeling in the back of your mind that everyone else is having an amazing time without you. But here's the thing, my friend, it's important to remember that you can't be everywhere and do everything all the time. It's okay to take a step back, focus on what truly matters to you, and enjoy the moments that bring you joy. "Don't let FOMO control your life, embrace the experiences that make you genuinely happy!" said Shrishti, while talking to Expressions.

But how do we overcome it? So, you could do the following: Pick one aspect /source of FOMO (TV, YouTube, Insta etc.) Starve the FOMO. Or strangle it (whichever term you prefer). How to starve it?

Here's how: Pick this Sunday, or any day that is convenient to you. That day, you switch off all your devices for 12 hours or more. Do so with total conviction. If you switch it off with honesty and do not make an imaginary excuse to switch it on, your FOMO will disintegrate. ■



## Rising from Setbacks

# The Story of 12th Fail

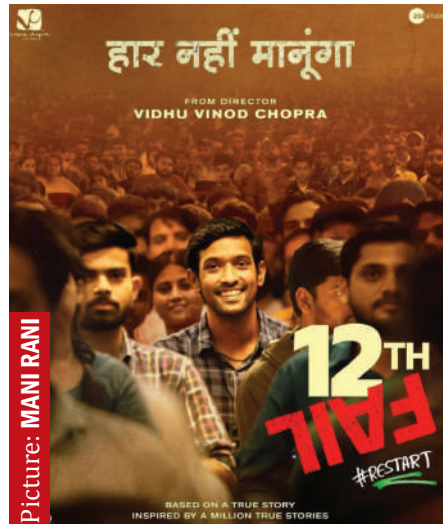
**MANI RANI**

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

There is a story that goes beyond the bounds of failure and stands tall as a tribute to resilience and tenacity in the world of films, where tales are portrayed via the beauty of the screen, and aspirations are woven into frames. This is the tale of the 12th Fail Movie, a journey that demonstrated how failures can frequently be used as stepping stones towards success. The story opens with the protagonist, a driven and inspirational person who had to confront the terrible truth of not passing the 12th-grade exam—an event that would crush many people's hopes. Instead of giving in to hopelessness, our hero used this setback as a chance to write a new narrative that reflected the spirit of tenacity and resilience.

The first several segments of this film explore the protagonist's battle with dealing with both personal failure and societal expectations. The genuine way in which the unfiltered emotions, the tears poured, and the sleepless nights spent thinking about the future were shown on film touched viewers all around the world.

The 12th Fail Movie turned into a mirror that reflected the reality that failures are an unavoidable aspect of life for everyone. As the script unfolded, the protagonist's determination took center stage. The narrative beautifully depicted the journey of self-discovery, as the character explored new avenues and discovered latent talents that had remained dormant amidst academic pressure. The storyline painted a vivid picture of the resilience required to rise from the ashes of failure, proving that success is not determined by a single



In 2022, the number of failures stood at 1,04,704 (one lakh), while in 2020, it was 1,33,881 (1.3 lakh).

exam but by the strength to face adversity head-on.

The protagonist's choice to follow a passion that had long been eclipsed by conventional expectations marked the pivotal moment in the flick. The movie's real-life authors' metamorphosis was reflected in the character's embracing of the arts and immersion in the film industry. This choice not only gave the protagonist's dreams new life but also conveyed a strong message to the audience: failures can serve as a turning point in a person's life that leads to their true calling. The storyline of the movie kept getting better, reflecting the protagonist's journey from the lowest point of failure to the highest point of achievement. The screenplay emphasized the value of mentors and friends who shared the protagonist's goal and gave the encouragement required to make dreams come true.

Viewers were reminded by The 12th Fail Movie that, more often than not, getting from failure to suc-

cess requires teamwork and is motivated by the faith of people who recognize our potential even when we may not see it for ourselves.

The film's culmination transpired when the lead character's passion project, an invention born out of extreme hardship, received international recognition. The movie inside the movie served as a metaphor for the protagonist's journey's resilience, demonstrating that obstacles were actually opportunities for growth and progress. A message was sent to viewers in the last moments of The 12th Fail Movie: obstacles are not the end of the path; rather, they are a diversion that might lead to surprising places. Many others found inspiration in the protagonist's path, which encouraged them to see setbacks as chances for personal development.

When the credits rolled, the 12th Fail Movie was recognized as a masterpiece of film, not just for its direction and storyline but also for its deep message that reached beyond the screen. It turned into a ray of optimism, reminding us all that obstacles are only chinks in the larger narrative of our lives and that, with enough fortitude, grit, and magical filmmaking, we can rise above any adversity.

Talking to Expressions, Anjali Mehta shared her experience about this film, saying that, "This was one of the best films I have ever watched. I feel that now when the competition is so high in terms of education, because of that young children are going through depressions and failures, this movie is for them. They need to know that failure is not the end; one exam cannot decide their future. They should rise up, give themselves a second chance, and without losing hope, they should start working again towards their goal." ■

# Hybrid mode transforms teaching pedagogy



Picture: AISHANI PURKAYASTHA

**AISHANI PURKAYASTHA**

Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication

The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it a plethora of changes and challenges, one amongst them was digitization of learning. It was as revolutionary as it was testing. The major obstacle was the technological gap that existed between those teaching and those being taught. Teachers struggled with how to handle the likes of Google Meet, Zoom and MS Teams.

Online classes were not commonly practiced in India as mainstream teaching methods; its sudden inclusion during COVID to avoid the loss of education, made the adaptation to this learning mode a challenge for students. Nearly 75% of students said they had problems learning during the lockdown. But, almost half of students disagreed with the belief that their learning was affected by home climate. Thus, there is a need to take into consideration the other factors that may cause difficulties. This study found that 31.3% of students were unable to understand online lectures. Maybe due to poor Internet connectivity in some regions of India. (Source: PubMed Central)

Another downside of the online learning revolution was accessibility. Students belonging to lower income families didn't have access

to internet/Wi-Fi and digital devices like smartphones, laptops or tablets to attend classes online. This created a paradox. As on one hand, there was lack of access and on another there was the perk of online classes being cost effective in comparison to traditional classroom setting.

"More than being tech savvy, my major concern was how to ensure that every student joins the class, and not just be there for the sake of it but actually listen to what is being taught. The biggest issue in this learning revolution was learning itself" said Nita Biswas, with over two decades of teaching experience.

"I have always believed in unconventional ways of teaching. It made learning fun and thus, easier. So, figuring out how to keep things interesting over a few inches-long screen was challenging. I don't really blame students for their lack of interest. Even I wouldn't be interested in listening to unproductive lectures" was the take of now former-teacher Chanchal Sharma.

Sricharan, who, at the time of online classes, was in 12th grade, pursuing PCM, recalled his experience and shared how grasping some mathematical concepts were

difficult for him which he believes wouldn't have been the case if they were taught in a traditional classroom setting. He further stated how he had to rely on friends and swarm through YouTube videos to better understand these concepts in preparation for the forthcoming board exams.

Anwasha Das, who was in 10th grade when the lockdown began, talked about how classes often had to be canceled during the monsoon season of 2020-21 owing to poor signal with no extra classes taken in its place later on to compensate for this loss even when her school took the entire academic fee without granting any relief despite many people facing financial hardships during the pandemic.

But, online learning also has its perks. Many students in classrooms are uncomfortable when it comes to speaking in public. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 74% of students suffer from speech anxiety. And to these students, the online class gives a better platform to participate in active learning.

Without a need for a physical classroom or other resources, online classes can become really affordable.

Now that the world is out of the grip of COVID, classes have returned to their traditional ways but with the increasing technology and the quick pace of advancements and increasing urge for a less-demanding schedule, Hybrid Mode could be the way forward. It'd be advantageous considering it combines the strengths of both in-person and online education, accommodating diverse learning styles and allows for a more dynamic educational environment. However, its success will depend on effective integration and adaptation to specific educational needs. ■

A staggering 84% of teachers reported facing challenges in delivering education digitally with close to half the teachers facing issues related to the internet both signal issues and data expenses.



# Mehndi artists

## Carrying on the tradition

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Lucknow's love affair with mehndi dates back centuries, intertwining with the city's rich history of Nawabi culture. The Nawabs and their courts were known for their patronage of the arts, and mehndi found a significant place in the cultural tapestry of Lucknow. The intricate designs and patterns of mehndi became a symbol of elegance and sophistication, reflecting the refined tastes of the city's elite. Mehndi has been considered as one of the 16 accessories (Solah Shringar) for a married woman or a bride and holds a great importance in Indian culture. These talented artists create breathtaking designs and play a pivotal role in safeguarding and transmitting the customs associated with this time-honoured artistic expression.

Lucknow's infamous henna artists are highly regarded for their masterful craftsmanship, which breathes vitality into intricate and everlasting patterns. You would have seen them with their small set up of intricate inks of henna at the stroll lanes of markets like Janpath and Patrakarpuram.

The mehndi designs and patterns, with their intricate details, have come to represent elegance and sophistication, serving as an expression of the refined preferences of every individual in the city. These talented mehndi artists are available to adorn your hands with exquisite designs for any occasion. The greatest advantage is that you can select your preferred design from their catalog and have it intricately recreated on your hand.

Mehndi offers natural benefits beyond its decorative use. It possesses cooling properties, soothes the skin, and promotes hair health. Known for its anti-inflammatory



*Mehndis derived from the Sanskrit word mendhikā, while henna owes its origin to the Arabic name for Lawsonia inermis, Hina.*

Picture: ASHNA ALI

and antimicrobial effects, henna is an excellent natural conditioner, contributing to overall well-being. During festivals like Kurvachauth, weddings, and other significant celebrations, mehndi plays a central role in adorning the hands and feet of both the young and old.

While this art is rooted in tradition, it is not immune to the winds of change. Embracing modern trends and contemporary designs, these artists infuse a fresh perspective into their work hence opening it not just to women but young girls.

Yazdaan Butool, 21, commented, "I used to believe that it was exclusively for married women, but I was pleasantly surprised to discover that they offer such stylish designs that I can wear in my daily life." Besides their widely appreciated art, it cannot be said that they receive consistent support. These artists work seasonally, experiencing both success and struggle.

The merge of modernization and challenges of seasons for the past few years are impacting the landscape of the art world. Despite their unparalleled skills, rise of temporary henna tattoos and other forms

body art poses a threat to the traditional practice of mehndi.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic brought a temporary halt to weddings and celebrations, impacting the livelihoods of these artists who heavily rely on such events. Shiraz Khan, a mehndi artist at halwasiya market talked to Expressions and commented, "Emerging trends in the market are exerting an influence on our lives. We possess skills akin to those of accomplished artists. It is important that the government takes action to offer us a platform where we can exhibit our talents."

G20 summit did provide a platform for these artists to emerge but these artists are in need of a constant support rather than just been a part of an event. Organizations like ODOP (One District One Product) should involve these traditionally inquired art form and encourage the artists into some futuristic creations. Until then, Mehndi Maestros are writing new chapters in the story of this ancient art form, ensuring that the beauty of mehndi remains an integral part of the city's cultural identity. ■