

An initiative from the participants of the India-Bhutan Youth Summit organized by the CEP, New Delhi and RIGSS, Bhutan.

CENTRE FOR ESCALATION OF PEACE | CEP



Indian Republic Day Edition!
Issue #1 January 2020



Explore Culture

India and Bhutan

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"GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS" IS?**

*Read Kinley Wangmo's article to
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EXPLORE CULTURE

is a platform for sharing views and facts from the youth of the nations.

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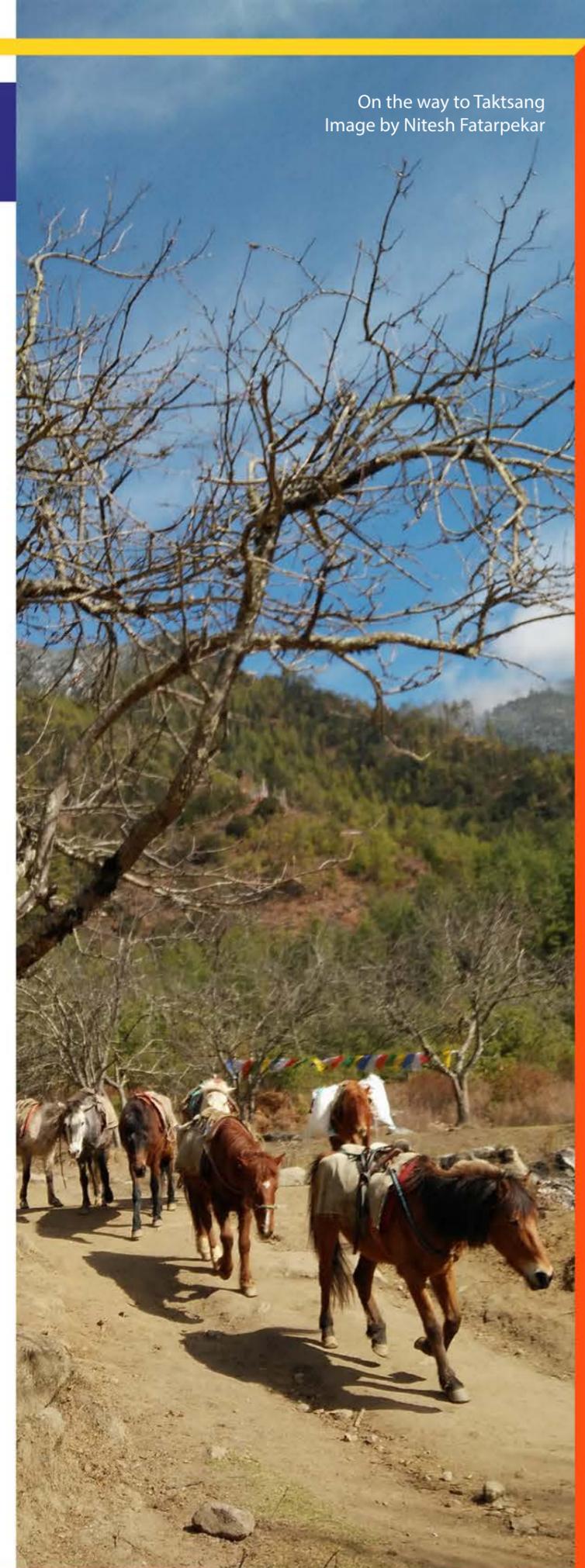
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On the way to Taktsang
Image by Nitesh Fatarpekar



FOREWORD

By Kutsab V Namgyel
Bhutan's Ambassador
to India



*The Ambassador
of the Kingdom of Bhutan*



सत्यमेव जयते

Foreword

I am very happy that the participants of the India-Bhutan Youth Summit are bringing out a magazine called "Explore Culture". I welcome this initiative by our youth.

The India-Bhutan Youth Summit was launched in 2018 when we held year long celebrations in both our countries to mark the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between Bhutan and India. The youth summit was an initiative of the Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS) and the Centre for Escalation of Peace (CEP) to bring the youth in our two countries together and forge lasting bonds.

I was very happy to observe the enthusiasm of the young participants from our two countries at the beginning of the programme. It was even more gratifying for me to see how well the participants had bonded with each other by the time it concluded. They had come to understand and appreciate each other much more; the similarities and differences of their cultures and traditions, their aspirations as young citizens of their respective countries and the importance of the very close and mutually beneficial relations between India and Bhutan. I would like to express my deep appreciation to RIGSS and CEP for this important initiative.

India-Bhutan relations are very close and special. This is because we share very close bonds of culture and geography. More importantly, the leaders of our two countries have been committed to building our relations on the strong foundations of genuine friendship and trust.

For Bhutan, India is the land of Lord Buddha and Guru Padmasambhava who brought Buddhism to Bhutan. Buddhism helped to unify Bhutan as a nation state and Buddhism gave meaning and substance to our unique national identity. It is the wish of every Bhutanese to visit Bodhgaya at least once in their lifetime. So it is natural for the people of Bhutan to feel a close bond with India.

As a landlocked country with very high mountains along its northern borders, Bhutan opens up to the plains of India along its southern borders, providing us with access to the outside world. All our trade and commerce is with India or goes through India. Economic ties have reinforced cultural bonds to give strong

*The Ambassador
of the Kingdom of Bhutan*



substance to India Bhutan relations. At the political level, from the time when India's first Prime Minister and our Third King laid the strong foundations of India-Bhutan relations, all successive leaders in our two countries, cutting across party affiliations, have nurtured and strengthened the exemplary ties of friendship, understanding and cooperation between our two countries.

As Ambassador of Bhutan to India, I am very happy with the excellent state of India-Bhutan relations. I am also conscious that we cannot remain complacent and take our relations for granted because it is so good and special. We must continue to build and nurture this relationship at the political and people to people level. In this regard, it is the young citizens in both our countries who have the most crucial role to play. Our youth is our future and we must look for ways to build close contact between the youth in Bhutan and the youth in India.



V. Namgyel
Ambassador of Bhutan to India

FOREWORD

By Ruchira Kamboj
India's Ambassador
to Bhutan



*The Ambassador
of the Republic of India*



सत्यमेव जयते

Foreword

I am delighted to learn that a group of 21 youngsters from Bhutan and India have penned down their experiences on their participation in the India-Bhutan Youth Summit 2019 in the Explore Magazine.

India and Bhutan are bound in a singularly unique relationship that epitomizes friendship, trust and understanding that has stood the test of time over decades. It has therefore been a pleasure to read through the articles penned down by our youth that reflect their insights into our linkages across the spectrum of culture, history, economics, lifestyle, entertainment, tourism and of course, politics.

I will add that the candid yet substantive thoughts expressed within the pages of this magazine capture the essence of synergies between our two countries and will hopefully also motivate the reader to imbibe the same spirit of bonhomie and camaraderie that defines the India-Bhutan relationship.



Ruchira Kamboj
Ambassador of India to Bhutan

Crop fields in Ludhiana, Punjab
Photo by Nimrat Kaur



From the Editor in Chief's Desk...

The Republic Day Edition of the Explore Culture magazine brings together a range of topics like culture, music, cinema, history, travel, leadership, business, politics, economy, sustainability and climate change. All the articles in the magazine focus on the countries: India and Bhutan.

The magazine aims to make citizens in both India and Bhutan more aware about their own culture as well as expose them to interesting knowledge about the neighbouring countries' culture. Since all the articles are written by the youth, Explore Culture is an interesting amalgamation of ideas which reflects on trends among the youth of both the countries. Moreover, it reflects on the global, solution oriented, open minded youth of today which is keen to explore the culture of diverse countries across the world.

The world has increasing problems - climate change, poverty, world hunger, terrorism and many more which require global solutions. The only way forward is to develop a multi faceted understanding about the world and formulate international solutions. The magazine is a step forward by the youth in the direction of fostering a collaborative environment between countries based on the principles of friendship and respect for partnership.

All the articles in the magazine are contributed by the participants of the India Bhutan Youth Summit, 2019 which was organized by RIGSS (Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic studies) and CEP (Center of Escalation for Peace). The India Bhutan Summit was a 10 day long exchange program where youth from both the countries interacted to exchange ideas and learn more about diverse cultures.

We aim to take the vision of this issue ahead by involving a greater number of youth in future editions, adding more topics of interest, featuring more members of bureaucracy in the magazine, interviewing political and business leaders, showcasing their achievements and celebrating the ideas and initiatives of imminent youth from the countries.

We sincerely trust that you will have as much pleasure reading the first ever edition of Explore Culture magazine as we enjoyed compiling this for you, our dear readers. Happy Reading!

Vidhi Bubna
Editor-In-Chief
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About me

I am from Mumbai, Maharashtra. Having achieved an Economics and Finance degree from Ashoka University, I am interested in understanding business and the workings of diverse economies in the world. Deeply interested by the workings of the government and the role played by bureaucrats in countries, I am currently working on a book titled "The faces of the Indian democracy" which highlights the biographies of the officers of the IAS (Indian Administrative Services, India) I am passionate about learning more about people and bringing their stories to life by my writing. I have also been the head of content for HerCampus' India Chapter, a youth initiative for women empowerment. I was selected as a participant for the Indo Bhutan Youth Summit, 2019 where the idea for Explore Culture magazine was conceptualised. It is my dream to meet the respected King of Bhutan someday and write a biography about him to

strengthen India Bhutan relations and youth initiatives in both the countries.

I am also a digital marketer who has travelled across many countries in the world and has worked with multiple hotels to promote them in the media. Patriot Act is one of my favourite shows on Netflix and I recommend it to everyone who is interested in understanding more about the global world. In my free time, you will find me in my room reading books about business, crime, governance and biographies, or I'll be travelling in some corner of the world.



Design team



I'm an Architecture student from Gwalior, India. I am delighted to be a part of this effort that aims at creating a bridge between the youths of the two countries. The friends I made at IBYS are ones that I'm sure I'll keep forever and the things I've learned from them will always have an impact on me, as through them I got the opportunity to know about cultures and customs that are different from my own. The magazine includes some great pictures from Bhutan and India taken by various participants of IBYS 2019 and I'm thankful for their input in increasing the magazine's aesthetic potential. I'm sure the readers will enjoy the articles in the magazine and I hope the way the magazine looks is also liked by our readers as it is one of my first works as a graphic designer.

Lakshya Sharma
Designer, Explore Culture
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What the environment means to the Bhutanese?

**Phuntshok Dechen Yangchen
Bhutan**

It comes as no surprise when I say that Bhutan has a wide range of biodiversity in the huge area of thick forests that we have. I feel that the Bhutanese have a really special relationship to the environment that may be hard for foreigners to understand. We are legally bound to protect our forests as Article 5 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan writes that "The government shall ensure that, in order to conserve the country's natural resources and to prevent degradation of the ecosystem, a minimum of sixty percent of Bhutan's total land shall be maintained under forest cover for all time". This inclusion of the environment does help Bhutan preserve her forests but it is not that only reason, the reasons behind why the Bhutanese respect and protect the environment have so much more essence than this Article in the Constitution. These forests are personal to us.

Religion is one of the main factor contributing to the relationship that the Bhutanese have to the environment.

Before Buddhism spread to Bhutan before the eighth century, a lot of the people in Bhutan practiced Bonism which basically meant that they worshiped nature.

Bonism, later on transformed into Buddhism which is why there are similarities between what is practiced in Bonism and what the Bhutanese practice as Buddhists. An integral part of Bonism was the sacrifice of animals to appease the Yul Lhas (deities). These sacrifices were still being practiced until it was discontinued due to an edict issued by the Je Khenpo (the Chief Abbot of the Central Monastic Body of Bhutan). The belief of forests having deities is still around to this day. So, to the Bhutanese, nature comprises of Yul Lhas who needs to be appeased which would mean that the deity will protect and bring good luck to one's family, if not then bad luck and sickness could befall ones family for example my grandfather always gives offerings such as milk to appease the deities around and make it a point that the forest area right outside our village home

Image by Pradip Kar from Pixabay

was clean at all times with the hope that nothing bad will happen to our family if he does that.

This religious belief that a tree or a rock might have a Yul Lha residing in them helps build the mindset in the Bhutanese people that nature must be respected and taken care. Before a structure is built in any forested area, we first have rituals to bless the areas and to ask permission from the deities to build on that specific area. This brings me back to my statement that the Bhutanese have a special relationship with the environment and the Bhutanese.

The advocacy that The Royal Family does for the conservation of the environment is also a driving force, according to me, that is encouraging the Bhutanese to protect the wonderful forests that we have. On June 2nd 2015 (the coronation anniversary of the Fourth Druk Gyalpo and also celebrated as the Social Forestry day of Bhutan), Bhutan set its very first Guinness World record with 'the most trees planted in one hour'. On this day one hundred volunteers came together to plant more than forty-nine thousand trees in Thimphu (capital of Bhutan).

This was dedicated to the 60th birth anniversary of the Fourth Druk Gyalpo. I feel that the love and respect that we have for our kings and the great work that they did for us and the country motivates the Bhutanese to work harder in fields that the great monarchs give importance to. Moreover, conservation of the environment is also one of the four pillars as well as one of the key indicators of Gross National Happiness (the concept that the Great Fourth came up with. I feel that doing what our King envisions for us, makes the Bhutanese feel accomplished which is why we strive to achieve it.

Climate change is a reality and everyone in the world is feeling the effects of it. With our sustainable policies and intelligent environmental laws Bhutan is a great example for every nation in the world. Pawo Choyning Dorji, a Bhutanese author and filmmaker told a story that tells us of the challenges that Bhutan is facing due to climate change. We believe that there are snow lions who stay in the snowy mountains of the Himalayas camouflaged by the snow who we think protect us and are a sign of luck. In one of Mr. Pawo's journey to the northern part of Bhutan, he spoke to a villager, who expressed his sadness due to the melting snow caps of Bhutan caused

by global warming.

He said that he was saddened by the fact that the mythical Snow lion would no longer be able to visit them with the snow melting which shows that the beliefs that the Bhutanese have is embedded in the way we think and the actions we take something that we tie even to the environment and forests that we are surrounded by.

Photograph by Nltesh Fatarpekar.



Indian Constitution: Unravelling the Historical Genesis

Nimrat Kaur
India

The Constitution of India which can be termed as the 'Grundnorm' of Indian society is reflective of the struggle and multifarious aspirations of the people of this country who were subject to the oppressive colonial rule of the British Empire. It is an outcome of suppression of over two centuries wherein the people of the Indian nation were not only deprived of their inherent rights and opportunities but were subject to inhumane treatment at the hands of the people who claimed to be the colonial masters. The journey of this sacrosanct code began much before the freedom of the nation from the clutches of British autonomy and the pre-mandated yet subsequent partition into two nations – India and Pakistan.

In 1946 when after enormous pressure exerted upon the British rulers resulted in the formation of the Constituent Assembly which was tasked with the job to draft Constitution for an independent nation. The Constituent Assembly was the Pre-independence Parliament of the nation which comprised members from parties like Congress and Muslim League and represented the interests of minorities like women and Sikhs via reservation of seats for them. It was through the various sessions of this Assembly that first, the Preamble to the Constitution, which can be taken as the foundational base for the Constitution, was adopted via passage of the 'Objective Resolution'

by the First Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru in January 1947. This Objective Resolution primarily laid down the guiding principles for shaping the Indian polity. It declared India as an independent sovereign republic and emphasised upon the guarantee of justice, equality and freedom to all the people of the Indian nation. The roots of democracy can be traced to this document since it vests the power of the government in the hands of the people of this nation.

In order to smoothly run the process of drafting the Indian Constitution, the Constituent Assembly appointed various Committees like Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights and Minority Rights, Union Powers Committee, Union Constitution Committee and Provincial Constitution Committee to look into and form a report on various aspects pertaining to the Indian Constitution. Based on these reports and deliberations in the Assembly, B.N. Rau who was the Constitutional Adviser to the Assembly prepared a draft Constitution which was ready by October 1946. For securing this end, B.N. Rau and his team including KV Padmanabhan travelled to the USA, Canada, Ireland, and the United Kingdom, wherein they had personal consultations with scholars, judges and authorities on constitutional law. It is from the Constitutions of these nations that the some

ideas were borrowed and enshrined in the Indian version.

During such cumbersome negotiations upon the Constitution, the Constituent Assembly undertook various other tasks as well out of which the adoption of the National Flag of the nation on 22 July 1947 is of prime importance.

It was at midnight on 15th August 1947 that independence dawned upon a nation which was divided into as many as 565 princely states. The challenge before the forefathers of the nation were manifold – securing the unification of the nation, establishing government at centre and the state level, countering problem of poverty and adopting a grundnorm which would be the guiding light for the Indian polity. Resultantly, so as to effectively tackle the obstacles and make way for a unified scheme of governance, a Drafting Committee was appointed on 26th August 1947 as a part of the Constituent Assembly under the leadership of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to:

“scrutinise the draft of the text of the Constitution of India prepared by Constitutional Adviser, giving effect to the decisions already taken in the Assembly and including all matters which are ancillary thereto or which have to be provided in such a Constitution, and to submit to the Assembly for consideration the text of the draft constitution as revised by the committee”

Towards the end of October 1947, the Drafting Committee began to scrutinise the Draft Constitution prepared by the B.N Rau, the Constitutional Advisor. While deliberating upon the draft Constitution, the Assembly moved, discussed and disposed of as many as 2,473 amendments out of a total of 7,635 tabled. Out of 165 sittings of the Constituent Assembly, 114 were spent debating upon the Draft Constitution. It made various changes and submitted the Draft Constitution to the President of the Constituent Assembly on 21st of February 1948.

Soon after this, the draft version was circulated amongst the public as a result of which various comments, suggestions, critiques were received. A Special Committee comprising members from the aforementioned Committees was appointed in order to review the same. After this scrutinization, the draft was tabled before the Constituent Assembly wherein each provision of the document was debated and discussed amongst the members. Voluminous debates took place wherein the 200 plus members proposed deletion and addition of clauses. After the same, the Drafting Committee took up the cause for including the agreed upon changes during the innumerable sessions and presented the updated version to the First President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad on 3 November 1949.

After two additional subsequent readings of the draft wherein some amendments were passed while others were negated, the Constitution of

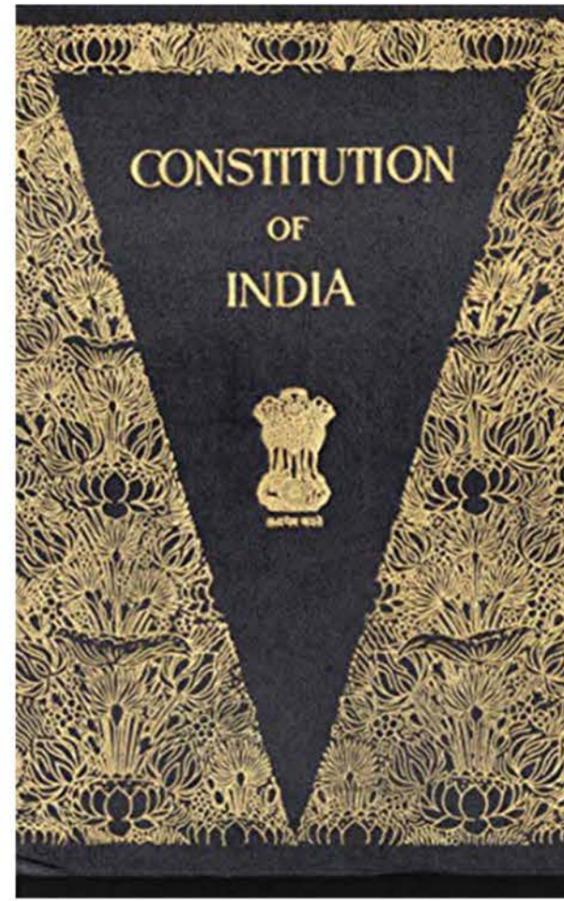


Dr BR Ambedkar is known as the Father of the Indian Constitution

India was adopted on 26 November, 1949 and around 284 members appended their signatures to it on 24 January, 1950.

Finally, the Constitution of India came into force on 26 January, 1950. On that day, the Assembly ceased to exist, transforming itself into the Provisional Parliament of India until a new Parliament was constituted in 1952. Presently, the Indian Constitution accounts to be the lengthiest written Constitution in the world with around 448 Articles in 25 Parts and 12 schedules. A total of 103 amendments have been made to the same since passed while the 124th Amendment Bill is pending in the Indian Parliament.

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Dr BR Ambedkar presenting the Constitution of India to Dr Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India.

Modernity of Bhutan & Gross National Happiness

*Kinley Wangmo
Bhutan*

Bhutan is one of the few places on earth where compassion is valued as much as capitalism and wellbeing is measured alongside productivity, this unique approach is summed up in the concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH). It is a philosophy that guides the government of Bhutan. GNH measures the collective happiness and wellbeing of the people and calls happiness and wellbeing as a fundamental human goal. According to the former Prime Minister of Bhutan, Gross National Happiness (GNH) is a development path that judiciously balances sustainable and economic development with environmental conservation, good governance and the dynamism and wisdom of our profound and ancient culture (Scotia, 2005). GNH emphasizes harmony with the nature, traditional values, physical, political and economic environment and it is expressed in the nine domains and four pillars. With modernization, the concept of GNH is facing various challenges. Modernization implies improvement and material benefit but at the cost of cultural values, environmental degradation, increased rural-urban disparities, income inequalities, and ethnic uneasiness and other ills that will undermine the concept of GNH (Walcott, 2011). This paper attempts to give a brief account the challenges of GNH with modernization, how Bhutan strives towards maintaining balance between modernization influence of modernization on GNH and policies formulated

by the government to combat the challenges of modernization.

Meadows, Randers, & Meadows (2004, p.238) suggests that it is important to change the ideas, goals, behaviors, deeply ingrained beliefs and practices. Four pillars of GNH plays important role in fostering developmental activities. However, such social structure can change with the influence of modernization. For instance, Frank et al. (2000) suggests environmentalism can spread globally through top-down process that results in the creation of protected areas, through emergence of environmental institutions and membership in international environmental organizations. However, such national and international institutions and policies affects the social norms about the importance of sustainable development, environment and culture despite the rapid development that it might bring. According to a GNH survey report, 48% of the respondents said that they would prefer a slower development approach than faster approach which have greater impact on sustainable development, environment and cultures (2015). GNH is an example of the kind of vision that Meadow et al. (2004) feels is essential for sustainable development of a country. But from my perspective, modernization is undermining the concept of GNH. For instance, majority of the hydro power projects in Bhutan are produced by

run-of-the-river dams that have less impact on ecosystem and local communities. Although studies found put that two recently announced projects will displace approximately 50 households. Another challenge is managing the rising level of consumption.

Bhutan faced a greater challenge to manage her slow and deliberate development approach in the face of increasing exposure to western consumer lifestyle through media, travel, and other forms of cultural transmission. The tension between the pull of modernity and the restraint required by GNH has become increasingly stark. Bhutan was criticized for enforcing certain cultural practices like traditional dress codes. Dress code illustrates our identity as Bhutanese and strengthens our social structure that are important for sustainable development. On one hand was the freedom of choice that contributes to wellbeing and on the other hand was the strengthening of cultural practices of GNH. Western dresses has become common, fashion shows have sprouted, there is a change in diet and exercise habits which have resulted to an increase in non-communicable diseases.

Apart from these, the freedom to dress as one chooses and the creativity associated with the designers have boosted the wellbeing (Brooks, 2013), but as mentioned before such activities are endangering the concept of GNH. For instance, I being a youth, I prefer wearing western cloths instead of Kira when I am at home or around the town. Similarly I prefer taking a taxi or a car as a mode of transportation around the city undermining preservation of culture and sustainable development. Likewise modernization is affecting all the pillars of GNH.

Modernization is a tool to accelerate processes, especially knowledge incentive processes. It is evident from the global experience that modernization can wield a transformative effects, if properly harnesses and can advance developmental agendas. Modernization has potential to enhance GNH in good governance, economic development, preservation of cultural heritage and the environment. Modernization has impact on economic development. For instance, Information Communication and Technology (ICT) has enhanced efficiency through its application across government and other industrial sector.

Tourism industry is benefited largely from the application of ICT, business process could be done more efficiently through the use of internet. Electronic payments system could be introduced to link overseas clients (Planning Commission, 2000). Adoption of such measure improved the efficiency of payment transition. In agricultural sector, influence of modernization such as use of radio to spread information have improved the farming techniques. Similarly, e-commerce can be one of the example which has allowed country like Bhutan to access developed nation markets (Planning Commission, 2000).

Modernization has also offered an expanding opportunities for preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. Bhutan is a society with strong oral traditions; digitalizing it and making it accessible through online can be helpful in preserving cultural heritage since, it is available to broader audience. Modernization has improved environmental efficiency in industrial sector, improved environmental information management and also helped to predict the effect of natural environment. Good governance is the last component of GNH in which modernization is most beneficial. Modern technologies has reduced the negative impact of distance and time by increasing the transparency of transactions, improved citizens' access to information, improved the efficiency of government services to citizens and citizens participation in decision making (Faris, 2004). Moreover, modern technologies has eliminated many opportunity of corruption.

Despite the rapid uptake of technology, democracy, and global trends, the government of Bhutan continued to take protective role in Bhutanese society. Every developmental project is examined for its impact on the local population, religious faith and environment. The tourism policy of "high-value, low-impact tourism" is one of the example of Bhutan's strict adherence. Tourist number are kept low to minimize the environmental and socio-cultural impacts by maintaining high tourist tariff that generates revenue (Clark & Choegyal, 2002). In addition, the goal of reducing rural-urban migration can maintain traditional cultural practices and sense of community. Other mandates of Constitution of Kingdom of Bhutan ensures Nation-wide ban on plastic bags, a monthly car-free pedestrian day in the capital and at least 60% forest cover maintained in perpetuity. Environmental

conservation on private logging and protected areas network and habitat corridors that covers 50 % of the land. From all these polices that government has formulated and goals that have been set and it can help generate the feeling of local ownership, promote good governance and provide more effective resource management. Religion and Buddhism is one social institution that I think can shape environmental values and perception and also promote sustainable development since Buddhism is an important component of Bhutanese identity and also a component of development approach. Thus, the government have enacted policies on conservation of traditional Buddhist cultural beliefs and practices. Moreover, Buddhist philosophy is referenced in many government planning documents (Gross, 1997). Many agricultural practices are organic but with modernization herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers came into picture and farmers are using such things for some crops which affects the health of the people. However, Bhutanese government recently announced their goal of 100% organic agriculture with a new national organic policy (Duba, Ghimiray, & Gurung, 2008).

To conclude, Gross National Happiness is the corner stone of Bhutan's development approach. Bhutan is beginning to feel the pressure of modernization and facing various challenges. Although modernity is posing thread to the concept of GNH, modernization has strong influence in achieving good governance, conserving the natural environment, preserving and promoting cultural values and sustainable and equitable development. Despite the rapid modernization and global trends, the government of Bhutan continued to take protective role in Bhutanese society by formulating policies to combat the issues and challenges with face of modernization.



Traditional metal work from UP, India.
Picture by Sejal Grover



A Dog in the streets of Thimphu.
Photo by Nitesh Fatarpekar



Is Changing Your Instagram Profile To Red Enough?

Anshu Saikia
India



June 2019 saw a spread in people turning their profile pictures to blue on social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. The hashtag #BlueforSudan started trending as people expressed their solidarity with the people of Sudan as the military took over the roads, killing dozens of protesters with open fire. This happened while Sudan faced a complete internet blackout. Shortly after, on August 5, central government of India announced the scrapping of Article 370 of the Indian constitution and thus removed the autonomous status that the state of Kashmir previously had. Many believed that this led to a dehumanizing effect towards the people of the state as there followed strict curfews, military takeover and blockage of speech and communication. Social media soon took a turn of red displays by many to protest against this.

Many debate if this really makes a difference. Is 'social media protest' a thing? Does it even convey anything? Or is it just an 'elite' concept that has no practical effect on the gravity of an issue?

I remember having a conversation with my friend who was studying in the U.S. at that time. She said that a few of her non-Indian friends changed their displays to red as well. However, she complained that they never dug deep on knowing more about the issue. They simply read a post or two and decided to express that they were aware enough. Not that my friend didn't stand by the protestors, but she expressed her frustration over the fact that protests on social media tend to actually be ignorant.

This is indeed a complaint by many. And to answer the above questions, I would say - 1. Yes, indeed 'social media protesting' has become a thing. 2. It does convey a few things, if not everything. Truth is, most of our generation tend to rely on Instagram more for their daily dose of what's occurring in society, than on any other news outlet.

To act, you need to be aware as it is the first step to tackling anything and this helps achieve that. The issue arises when misinformation gets spread. The new and upcoming term 'WhatsApp university' is often used to refer to the space of WhatsApp where all kinds of misinformation is circulated nowadays. The fact is that many are not aware of this.

Moving on, in an age where leaders, politicians, institutes and organisations release first hand statements, information, exchange dialects on

platforms like Twitter and Facebook, there is no question of the rising significance that is being given to the digital stage.

Now after awareness however, the next thing this ensures, is debate or an exchange of views and dialogue. We now have a platform where we can present our arguments against that of others. We can now express but also listen and try to understand different voices. We are exposed to criticism and support. But indeed, often we lose balance of whether we are controlling digital media or is the effect working in reversal.

Third, social media helps make movements gain popularity and have a wider reach. Greta Thunberg, a young environmental activist, gain massive popularity after the UN Climate Change Conference 2018 and UN Climate Action Summit in 2019. Many students came out on the roads to organise 'climate strike' within schools and universities. This spread massive awareness about the rapidly changing climate and the need for immediate attention that is required by this issue. These protests stood united mostly due to the support through the digital platform worldwide. Similarly movements like 'Me Too' and 'Times Up' had a similar effect.

I had recently watched the final episode of 'Patriot Act' for the present year, and the host - Hasan Minhaj, spoke on the phenomenon of 'overlapping of news'. He said that the continuous influx of information on diverse issues overlapping on top of the other, cause us to grow anxious. A lot of are left feeling confused on how we should divide our attention and help. Hasan went on to suggest that we needed to treat them like tabs and choose a few areas to focus first, while eliminating the rest.

With the recent widespread protests in the country against the Citizenship Amendment Bill, I've seen this platform also create a safe space for the community of on-ground protestors wherein people communicate vital information about protests, when and where they are taking place and other safety measures. This leads me to answer the third question - 'Is it just an elite concept?' Partially, yes. The very fundamental character of this platform is that its users have access to the internet - a tool not available to many. Around 451 million people have access to internet in this country and around 320 million use social media.

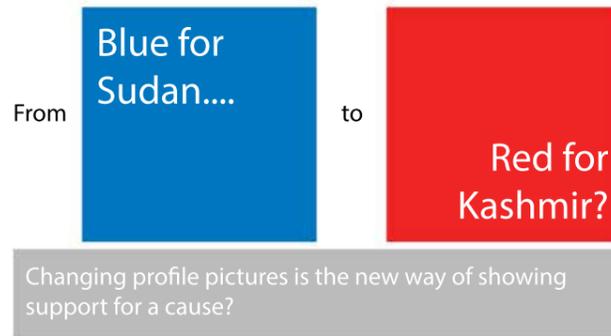
The very fundamental character of this platform is that its users have access to the internet - a tool not available to many. Around 451 million people have access to internet in this country and around 320 million use social media.

It's share is rapidly growing and will gradually show a shift from the category of a 'luxury' to 'necessity' as many are starting to call it. But the truth is, in our country, that seems to be a long road as we are to tackle and prioritise the extreme economic disparity that prevails between different sections of society.

Being ignorant and blatantly using this tool will definitely not serve any favours. However, in the present scenario as we see a huge shift to a governance of authoritative nature (world wide), tools like social media provide for also an opponent which when collaborated with the demography, call for an interesting time. This platform gives us the freedom to express, to create a community-bound space and to question. Though there is an eliteness factor to it, a total absence of this platform - wouldn't it be worse? Evolving times call for evolving forms of expression. Social media does just that. Blue for Sudan and Red for Kashmir may have layers of superficiality.

However, it did express to a sense of solidarity and awareness to many. It did question the authorities and it did raise a debate. It made a part of the 'elite youth' think about the issues prevailing in their world. It made many communicate and have an outreach. So maybe changing the colour of our profiles are not enough. There is a definite need for 'action' in any kind of act-ivism. We need to educate ourselves to filter the information we take in. We need to sign genuine petitions that are circulating to voice out the marginalised communities. We need to go out on the roads and protest for what we believe in, if we have the privilege to be able to do so. We need to volunteer.

And that's where social media falls short. As it is only a digital sphere - half a side beyond the screen.



An online protest raged against the measures taken in Kashmir to control the people.

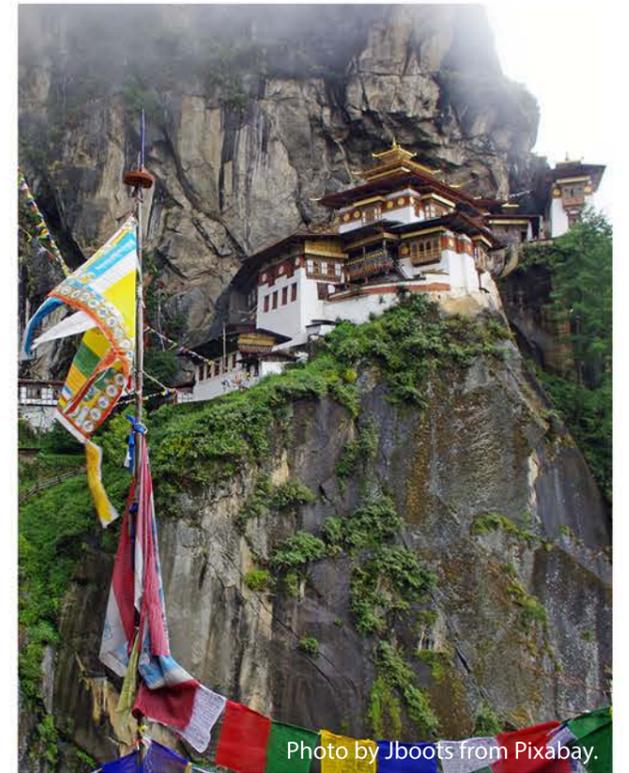
Folktales from Bhutan

Sonam Peldon Bhutan

Generation are changing, believes of people are changing and what remained with us from the past are the tales. A folktale goes without lifting a finger starting with one storyteller then onto the next. Since a specific story is described by its fundamental example and by account themes as opposed to by its verbal structure, it passes language limits without trouble (ideally around a popping fire). The spread of a folktale is resolved rather by huge culture territories. This customary story or legend that is normal to a particular culture can frequently contain an exercise to be learned, and can take numerous structures, fanciful stories, similar to tales, and even phantom stories. Thousands of folktales are told over this period of time to this day and I want to present a story that was told to me by my grandma when I was little.

Nyala Duem

Bukhari (traditional space heater) warming the small room in the mid of winter at my angay's (grandmother) place in Thimphu and my entire family member was surrounding that small room heater with keen interest in exploring a good amount of heat. That's where it began, when my angay saw the boredom present in the room. She initiated to entertain the family by telling a story, a folktale to be exact. This gained interest of everyone in the room. The tale began with a dramatic action from my grandmother.



Paro Taktseng or Tiger's Nest Monastery, Paro, Bhutan is a famous attraction as it is the place where Guru Padmasambhava meditated.



Photo by Lam Penjor from Pexels. A folk artist performing a masked dance at a festival.

Dangphu Dingphu (Once upon a time) around ninety years or approximately three ages back, on the way from Wangduephodrang to Trongsa, after passing the Jarukhashor Chhorten at Chendebji, one is greeted by a big forest called Nyalalum, there was a shaman called Kela Pao who was well known for his unerring divinations. He venerated and looked for asylum in the gods of Drangla Gonpa. At some point, he was headed to make offerings at the Gonpa. But on his way he met a moderately aged lady when he reached at Drangla Pokto. The lady enquired where he was coming from and where he was going. He revealed to her that he was originating from his hometown and was going to Drangla Gonpa to make offerings. The lady disclosed to him that she had a patient truly sick and implored him to go to her home and play out a divination. The shaman asked where her home was, the lady said it was more distant up and pointed at a dark house at the edge of a mountain. He consented to go and the lady led the way. They reached at the dark house and the lady climbed the stairs and led him into a room on the third storey.

At this point everyone in the room was so engulfed with my angay's story that the room was drop dead silent aside from my angay's voice. She stopped in the middle of the storytelling until she got the respond from me for stopping in the middle of the story. So she replied saying that, "there is an old saying that says if the perceivers of the story don't respond 'ong ong' during the storytelling process. It is said that the story will be taken by the ghost." Then she continued the storytelling making us aware about the beliefs.

At the point when the shaman glanced around, he saw that each individual's there looked darker than the other, each looked taller than the other and more frightful than the other. In the room, a colossal dark man with depressed eyes and a nose like beak laid breathing intensely. The shaman counseled his divinations and presumed that ailment was brought about by Sha Jen Jen (literally meat eater). The lady mentioned him to find a remedy and to play out the fundamental ceremonies as well. Kela Pao needed to oblige and went through the night there. They brought a mountain goat and butchered it. Kela Pao played out the custom and the man was cured. At the point when he was going to leave, to show their appreciation, he was given male dress and a female dress, a stuffed lunch and the nourishment contributions from the custom as a

splitting blessing.

When Kela Pao came outside he couldn't find his way. He returned into the house and requested a guide who guided him till the main route. After his guide had returned, he attempted to remember what the individuals were and where the house was. In any case, he couldn't recollect the area or the bearing of the spot. As he approached Drangla Gonpa he arrived at a little hill in transit. He rested there for some time and thought of having his stuffed lunch. At the point when he unloaded his lunch, he discovered leaves, twigs and sand. There was not much. At the point when he immediately opened his crate and checked, the male and female dresses had additionally transformed into tree rinds. He at that point realized that he had been to Nyala Duem's home. At the point when he came to Drangla Gonpa and shared the occasions, it was discovered that Nyala Duem's significant other had fallen debilitated and she had been out searching for a shaman to perform divinations to heal her husband.

The story ended leaving everyone in the room in awe. My angay continued telling that, one must never travel alone after the dawn or else it is believed that you might encounter with the dreadful demons and sprites who are wondering around (drae dha chae wong mae).



A lady passing through, while rotating a prayer wheel & prayer beads. Photo by impradip from Pixabay.

What is responsible architecture? What to learn from Bhutan?

Lakshya Sharma
India

The architecture of a place, is without doubt, a characteristic that is integral to the location's identity and how people perceive it. But besides that, the architecture of a place is also testimony to the history and geography of an area. The thickness and material of walls, hints at the quality of soil, at the climatic conditions, risk of natural calamity, etc. The paints and motifs may speak of the religious beliefs of the inhabitants, the social standing of the owner of the house, and much more. This is how an architecture, characteristic of a culture or region develops and besides aesthetics, architecture styles of various areas can teach us much more sustainable ways to build and be more responsible.

Dzongs are fortresses that tower into the sky and are a prime example of Bhutanese architecture, followed by monasteries and temples, these fortresses have long served as the administrative centers in the various regions of Bhutan. However the scope of this article will revolve around the home.

Bhutanese houses apart from the Dzongs, monasteries, temples and bridges have a distinct character from those of other Himalayan countries. Most houses are relatively spacious and

take advantage of natural light and because of the steep terrain, are usually built as scattered houses or in clusters rather than in rows. Timber, stone, clay and adobe bricks are typical construction materials. Family residences are frequently three storeyed with room for livestock on the ground floor, storage and sometimes living quarters on the second floor and on the third floor living quarters and a shrine. Between the third floor and the roof an open space is usually kept for open air storage. Boulders over lath are used to hold down wooden shingles on the roof truss.



Rammed Earth house in western Bhutan.

Bhutan, lies in the southern slopes of the eastern Himalayas, sharing a border with Tibet and a history of considerable cultural exchange too, therefore one can find similarities in the architecture of the two places. The topography of the various regions along with the climatic conditions is crucial to determining the kind of architecture that flourishes in the region and the socio-cultural influences play an important role in and are communicated through various motifs, symbols and the use of colors on buildings. The positioning of a certain building with respect to the surrounding hills, wind direction and the sun path determine the position of windows, courtyards and balconies.

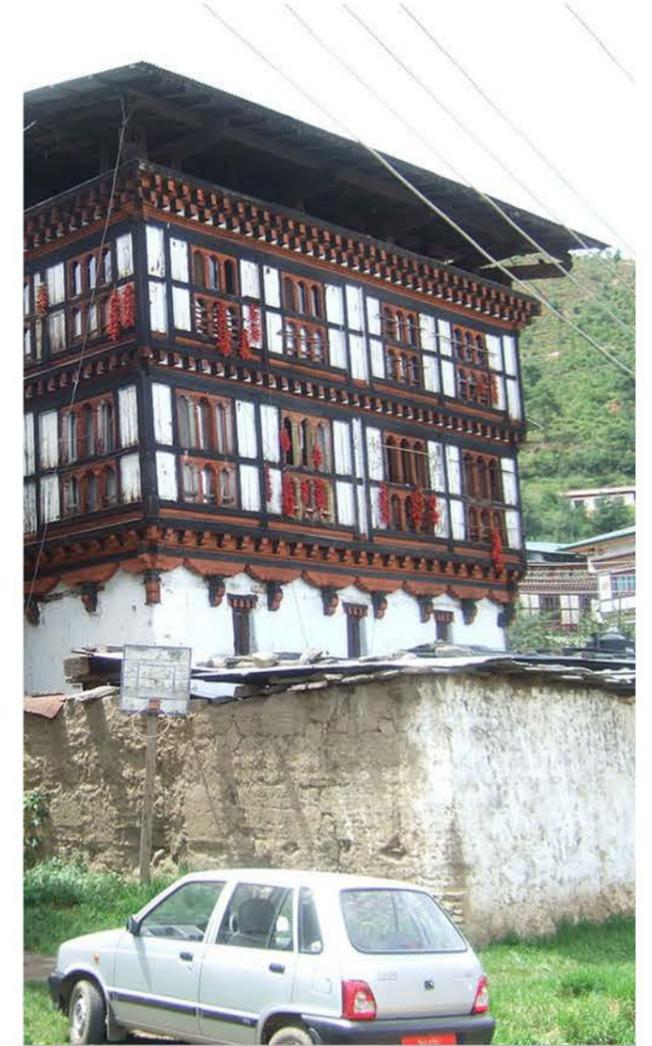
Thus we find a difference in the roof types and wall types of the architecture in western and eastern Bhutan. In the west the exterior walls are traditionally made of rammed earth, a technique in which a mix of earth, sand and lime is mixed and rammed into a formwork that forms the wall, whereas the Retaining walls, i.e. the walls that carry the load of the surrounding earth that is dug to build the foundation is made of stone, with earth mortar. In the eastern region, a landscape consisting of deep and narrow ravines, where settlements are often dug directly into mountainsides the walls are almost completely made up of stone and earth. The absolute benefit of having exterior walls made of earth is that they have amazing insulating properties, i.e. the temperatures inside the house don't quickly change with the fluctuations in the temperature outside, rather give way for a gradual change therefore creating a healthy environment inside and also contributing towards saving fuel and power required for maintaining indoor temperatures. In addition to this, using locally sourced earth to make rammed earth walls, results in one tenth the carbon footprint compared to that of concrete or burnt brick. Lime is another material used to paint exterior walls in Bhutan and in many other regions around the world. This material, unlike cement allows the walls to breath and allows for proper interaction between earthen walls or masonry walls done in earth mortar and the moisture in the earth, this free flow of air allows for gradual hardening for lime, thus making the wall stronger over time. I feel it important share a common saying among masons in North India, it goes like this "When cement hits old age, lime is at the peak of its youth."

The houses in Bhutan contain wooden frontages with arched windows, above these windows one sees stack like formations that support the weight of the wall above the window, this part of the opening/window is called a lintel. These wooden frontages and stacked lintels are the characteristic elements of Bhutanese Architecture. These are often accompanied with paintings of phallic symbols that are scene in houses in rural areas and are said to be symbols that represent Lama Drukpa Kunley, an esteemed teacher of Buddhist philosophy who adopted rather radical ways of teaching. Other motifs scene in Bhutanese and other architecture that has Buddhist influence are the eight symbols of Buddhism.

In Bhutan, it is royally decreed that all buildings must be built with wooden frontages, arched windows and sloping roofs. Thus, Bhutan makes it a legal obligation for its people to preserve their traditional architecture. As in today's world in many countries the traditional architecture of the region is disappearing either due to long colonial history and consequent influence, or due to a wish to follow European and American architectural trends or both. It is important to note that preserving a people's architecture is as important as preserving their language, clothing, cuisine and arts.

Construction is an activity which involves extraction of resources, treating them industrially or otherwise and applying them as per the use. Today's mainstream construction involves the use of burnt bricks, cement and steel bars, these materials have a considerably high carbon foot print and often when we convey our disdain for products that have a negative impact on the earth we often miss out on how much of a catastrophic effect the construction industry has on the climate. Researchers, engineers and architects from around the world have found many alternate construction techniques that push the use of materials like earth, waste plastic, etc. in order to replace the materials that harm the environment. More often than not, the research into the development of such sustainable construction techniques is based on variations of these techniques used throughout history as a response to the availability of resource. The aim of this article was to raise awareness towards alternate construction techniques that are less

harmful towards the climate, how such techniques have always been part of the architecture of our ancestors, considering the example of Bhutanese Architecture and to understand the efforts of the Bhutanese government to conserve Bhutan's traditional architecture. Readers can find out more about alternative construction techniques and earth construction techniques on the internet.



An old house in Kawajangtsa, Thimphu.

CC BY-SA 3.0



National Secretariat Complex of Bhutan designed in traditional Bhutanese style by Indian Architect Christopher Charles Benninger.

APOLLO MOON LANDING

Cyril Cherian
India

Can you love me, and still choose,
Whispers that I cannot hear?

Late to love, how can I bear to lose
Content for some inconsistent sphere?

Take my silence, though intended;
Fill it with the joy you feel.

Take my courage, now pretended –
You, my love, will make it real.

Excerpts from 'To a Husband Who Must Seek the Stars, a poem by Pat Collins, wife to Michael Collins, a day before he embarked on the historic moon landing mission.

Fifty years ago, while the world slept, two astronauts set foot on a dusty ball of rock up so high in the sky; a remarkable feat that changed the course of mankind forever.

The Apollo moon landing started off as a promise made in the early 60's by the then US President John F Kennedy, who declared his country would perform a manned landing on the moon and return safe to the earth before the end of the decade.

No fewer than 4,00,000 people were involved in the this mammoth mission of the century, where the president plucked out a portion of time from the distant future and neatly inserted it into a decade that saw major advancement in the field of science and technology, a phenomenon that had only happened previously in the face of a war. He had his reasons for this proclamation. When Kennedy became president in January 1961, Russia had sent Sputnik 1, it's first artificial satellite, already into space. Further on in the April that followed, Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first man in space even before the US had started an astronaut program. Many Americans now thought that their country was losing the space race to the Soviets.

This new-found deadline required a workforce that was capable to deliver his promise. NASA hired quickly, risking it all by avoiding interviews, and evaluating employees based on only their output.

The engineers at the Mission Control in Houston were incredibly young, their average age being just 26 years. This was exactly what the ambitious mission needed. A fearless bunch of young men capable to risk all odds. In fact, a leap into the unknown.

The landing on the moon, as we know it, was not an ordinary feat. It were the crucial, decisive moments before landing that balanced the 'Eagle' over the thin line of victory.

Inside the Lunar module, Edwin Aldrin and Neil Armstrong were seeing unfamiliar computer codes. With just minutes to land, bells and whistles blared with flashing lights beaming off the tiny buttons.

"It's a 1202," the astronauts relayed the error message to an equally clueless group of engineers down at Mission Control.

"Give me a reading on the twelve-o-two" repeated Neil Armstrong through the crackling transmission. A vital 15 seconds had passed ever since the two had spotted the alarm, while the team on the ground were scrambling for a response to the glitch informed through the transmission. From the many simulations that the module had been put through before the actual flight, they were certain that the risk-it-all situation would not hamper the moon landing mission; at least that's what they'd hoped so.

The computer system aboard the craft that had coordinated the entire mission from blast-off to splash, and had codes that had lesser prowess than those running in today's smartphones. But the sheer volume of data had caused an unprecedented overflow of information, which led to the 1202 error.

Bracing all odds in the midst of dilemma, they quickly had an answer.

Mission Control : We're a go on that flight.

The eagle shakily descends.

Mission Control : You're looking great to us, Eagle.

Eagle, Houston, you're a go for

landing, over.

Aldrin : Roger, understand, go for landing.

But the uncertainties of the mission hadn't ended there. The crew aboard the Eagle were aghast when they'd seen that the pre-planned landing site in a crater, charted before take off was indeed ridden of boulders the size of large cars.

Armstrong leapt to take control of the module, swiftly flying past the crater, manually manoeuvring for a safer site.

Mission Control : Thirty seconds.

This meant that they had a meagre 30 seconds left before all the fuel that remained on board exhausted. It was either an abort, or a final leap of faith.

Aldrin : Mode Control, Descent engine command override.

Radio Crackle.

Mission Control : We copy you down, Eagle.

Silence.

Armstrong : Houston, Tranquility base here.

The Eagle has landed.

And that was it. Humanity defined history. We finally conquered the moon. Armstrong went on to say the legendary line, which in all reality, was a giant leap not only for the space race, but for every piece of technology to further evolve on Earth.

From tiny cameras on our cellphones, fire resistant uniforms, shock resistant buildings, sealed food, to scratch resistant glass used in corrective glasses and airplane windows, the contributions of every succeeding space programs were endless.

Back in New Delhi, Smt. Indira Gandhi deemed the spectacle as among the most exciting and significant moments in the history of man. "The irrepressible spirit of man," she said, "leaps from one celestial body to the next, in a small vehicle of its own making."

Today, exactly fifty years after man had called the moon his home, everybody wants to go up to the shining globular rock in space.



Chandrayaan-2, India's ambitious moon mission after a hugely successful Chandrayaan-1, had blast off from Satish Dhawan Space Research Centre at Sriharikota to answer those questions left behind by its elder sibling, when a glitch in its internal software led to the lander deviating from its intended trajectory, eventually crashing a few kilometres off its designated landing site.

NASA plans to revisit the moon once again in its Artemis program, named after the Greek goddess and her twin sister Apollo. The mission, scheduled for 2024 plans to put a woman on the moon for the first time. It was 'one small step for man' after all. Why should boys have all the fun, eh NASA?

The Apollo moon landings were for certain one of humanity's most ambitious attempts to circumvent the limits of space and time. They required centuries worth of knowledge and understanding of the universe and its every being, combined with the skill and effort of millions of people, united for a single cause. It is also a reminder to the inevitable realities that humankind faces today, that need desperate answering.

In the words of Indira Gandhi herself, "Has man who seeks heavenly suburbs, made his own Earth more habitable, friendly and beautiful? Let us direct this power of man which soars starwards into strengthening the bonds of peace and brotherhood on Earth."

Role of Food in Bhutanese Celebrations and Beliefs

*Karma Yeshi
Bhutan*

The country of Bhutan, nestled in the Himalayas, in between India and China is truly a magical place. Its landscape matches the varied cuisine which is as mystique as the land itself. The people of Bhutan love to eat, as does every person, and every region have its own specialty with a story and tradition to tell. Bhutanese affinities for Yak meat is higher than any other meat in the country and Bhutanese are passionate about chillies. Therefore, traditional Bhutanese foods are splendidly spicy. Another important feature of this exotic cuisine is rice which is the staple food of the country. Traditional beverages include suja, rice wine or changkoe, ara and bangchang. There are many other traditional foods that are still cherished and enjoyed in Bhutan but it would be too long a list. Bhutan's exotic cuisine has been named as one of the most significant aspect of its heritage and culture. It is a part of tradition which has been presented to the next generation in the form of the most treasured gift. In Bhutan, it is believed that food can heal the body and soul.

The best thing about Bhutanese traditional food culture is not just the food itself, but the way it is treated and respected. The children are always taught to respect food with the saying "Don't throw away rice. If you throw away rice, someday in future rice will throw you away." The foods in past were served in wooden bowls called 'da-pa' or bamboo bowls called 'bangchungs,' though now it is a cherished sight. The foods have been

always eaten with fingers to feel its texture and to build a bond with the food. This practice still prevails though eating by spoon is co-existing.



Suja tea



Ara, local alcoholic beverage.

However, the role of food in Bhutan is not only filling ones' stomach or healing ones' soul but also carries a very important role of celebrating certain festivals and occasions. Preparation of a local, traditional food can either mean that it is festival time or a very important occasion for that household. Bhutanese celebrate Losar which is the Bhutanese New Year. Every individual looks forward to this day with new clothes or new possession as a form of tendrel (token). This day is marked with special red rice porridge often with meat and bones, and chunks of Bhutanese cheese for vegetarians in the morning and ends with traditional Yak sha paa, jasha maru, jaju soup, ema datsi and many more for dinner with both traditional and modern Bhutanese beverages. It is on this day that a whole lot of traditional foods are prepared and enjoyed unanimously by the family.

Bhutanese celebrates Ngenpa Guzom (The day of nine evils). While most of the people celebrate it by partying and playing, people from eastern parts of the country celebrates this festival just like one celebrates Losar, with special red rice porridge with bones and meat in the morning. As positive forces are believed to be at a low point and the negative forces are strong, people do not engage in wholesome and meritorious activities and spend the day resting and relaxing as said by Dr. Karma Phuntsho of Loden Foundation. (Kuensel, 2015)

Similar to Losar, the Bhutanese people celebrates Blessed Rainy Day starting with special red rice porridge and suja with zaw and khabzeys. At lunch and dinner sumptuous varieties of traditional Bhutanese dish is served with red rice and the night ends with local beverages like ara, changkoe and other modern expensive drinks. This day is also celebrated like Losar.

In a household, if there is a preparation of the special red rice porridge there can only be four reasons; a) Losar, b) Ngenpa Guzom, c) Blessed Rainy day and d) if there is a sick person who is unable to eat solid food. Therefore the red rice porridge with meat and bones indicates celebration of Losar/Ngenpa Guzom/Blessed rainy day.

In western parts of the country, particularly in Haa and Paro, they celebrate Lomba which is their version of a new year. people of Haa celebrate their new year with Hoentey. Hoentey is a dumpling made of sweet buckwheat flour and the filling is made of turnip and turnip leaves.

Hence preparation of Hoentey in Haa indicates the celebration of Lomba in the Dzongkhag. Similarly, in Paro, people prepare Jomja for their New Year feast. Jomja is the Bhutanese version of pizza which is made of rice flour topped with a paste made of walnut, red chilli powder, ginger and onion. Like Hoentey in Haa, preparation of Jomja in Paro carries the message that the people are celebrating New Year.



ZowShungo, a vegetarian dish.

In Paro, the Bjawops also celebrate their local festival called Naru with a cake made from roasted rice mixed with butter and honey. The preparation of this cake in this locality indicates the celebration of Naru. (Kuensel, Thinley Zangmo, 2015).

In Thimphu, Punakha, Wangdue, Haa and Paro, they celebrate another festival named Nyilo (Winter Solstice). The western parts of the country celebrate Nyilo with a rice cake garnished with ezzay and/or followed by a feast of traditional Bhutanese foods and beverages just like they do while celebrating losar. Therefore the preparation of this cake or other sumptuous feasts indicates the celebration of Nyilo. During Nyilo celebration, children go around singing Loley to neighbors and they receive various gifts like rice, meat, butter, eggs and cheese. They collect such gifts and go for picnic.

In southern parts of the country, they celebrate the festival of Dassain by preparing Shelroti. It is made from the paste of rice flour that is fried in oil in the form of rings. They prepare Shelroti in lavish amounts for the prime purpose of self consumption and gifting relatives and friends. During this festival, the families also prepare Kheer and Dakani, both of which are made of white rice and milk.

Pema Wangmo (a mother of three) said that, "Food symbolizes abundance and prosperity. That's why they are vital part of offerings on special occasions." (Kuensel, 2015). Formal ceremonies in Bhutan begins with the offering of Zhudey Phuensum Tshokpa and Marchang, which is an offering of rice/desi, suja, fruits, nuts and local alcohol. Other offerings like shamdray and droem dizang are also prepared during special rituals. Offering food without expectation is also an essence of Buddhism and compassion, which is most of the Bhutanese practice, Pema Wangmo said. (Kuensel, 2015).

Traditional Bhutanese food does not only carry the role of messenger of what festival or occasion and ritual the people are celebrating but Bhutanese traditional food also carries the role of holy food and are used as offerings to the local deities. Though Bhutan is on the surge of moving towards modernization, the age-old pre-Buddhist practices involving worship of nature spirits is still prevalent in some parts of the country which are mostly remote. This practice is termed as Bonism.

It is mostly during falls that attracts people of western part of the country to make annual offerings to their gods. In Haa, at the break of dawn, worshippers haul bags filled with an assortment of grocery items along with rib bones of yaks, oxen, pigs or strands of pork. After reaching their destination, Bon practitioners firstly shape an elaborate offering of dough called torma and colored butter (mostly red) and put it atop a roof or elevation as a treat for the ravens. They then spend a few minutes repeating mantras for the wellbeing of all sentient beings and prayers to offset natural disasters. (Business Bhutan, 2019).

Similarly, in Haa again, the native residents are seen making the offerings with the male of the family carrying ribs and local alcohol (chang phue) followed by recitation of mantra by the elder male of the family.

The prayer or hymn starts with the praises to the local guardian of Haa that is Ap Chundu, followed by the household deity Jow Pham and then the neighboring deities.

It is also believed that if crow appears while the offering is being made, it is a good sign indicating that the deity is pleased and the family can plan for their endeavors peacefully. Now instead of people butchering animals, people offer joints and cuts of meat (Sha-Nga).



Ema Datsi with rice.

Similarly in Kheng regions, the traditional Bhutanese beverage Changkoe or rice wine is served as an offering. The people of Kheng in Central Bhutan observe various festivals and rituals as a part of their tradition. Roop is a traditional communal ritual of villages in the middle Kheng under Nangkor Gewog. The villagers of Goleng celebrate Roop to worship deities who, in turn provide them protection, happiness, good harvest and productive livestock. During this ritual, Changkoe is prepared and filled in Kaktong (bamboo container) and offered as one of the libation offering.

In Bhutanese culture, the Bhutanese traditional beverage Ara is much needed for offering to the protective deities as "Serkem" (wine offering ceremony) with recitation of prayers in any activity that we carry on to be successful and fruitful. This culture of wine offering was said to have started by Guru Rinpoche at Tibet when he offered serkem to all protecting deities to support and complete the construction works.

Even during auspicious days, in every household, the families prepare a tshog and serkem and offer in front of their altar to earn merits, for the wellbeing of all sentient beings and to seek



Jasha Maru

protection from their god and protective deities. They offer khabzeys (Bhutanese biscuits originated from Tibet), snacks like chips and packaged ready-to-eat foods, juices, traditional beverage like ara along with Taengma (Bhutanese cornflakes) and Zaw.

Even while eating any of the three meals daily, the Bhutanese toss some morsels of rice in the air before eating, as an offering to the deities and spirits. This only shows how important food is in Bhutanese tradition and culture that it has imprinted its importance within our day-to-day daily activities which are as simple as eating a meal.

The traditional food of the Dragon Kingdom of Bhutan serves as a vital part of its tradition and culture. The exotic cuisine is not only used for filling empty stomachs, it serves as soul healing and self healing too. And it also serves as messengers for protection, good health and merits to gods and protective deities.

The most distinctive characteristic of Bhutanese cuisine is its spiciness. Hence chillies have always been an integral part of any Bhutanese food. Almost all of the exquisite Bhutanese traditional food has chilli in it in small amount or as the main star of the dish and each and every one of the dishes are loved, cherished and treasured by all Bhutanese.

But it is not only chilli but the whole dish which makes up traditional Bhutanese food context that is important for the country's ever so radiant tradition and culture. Food in Bhutan signifies the celebration of festivals, sumptuous offering to god and deities for protection which includes the small morsel of rice people throw in air as offering while eating a meal to the local deities seeking for merits and protection. Therefore one can easily comprehend how and why the role of food is important in upholding the country's unique tradition and culture.



Bhutanese red rice with Chicken and spinach.



Khur le, buckwheat pancakes.



Bhutanese buckwheat noodles



Jaju soup



Kewa Datsi

5 Reasons Why VCs are interested in Indian Startups

Vidhi Bubna
India

Startups in India have budding potential in technology and innovation which is attracting higher investments from VC's. A supportive environment created by the government and a rising potential for businesses in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities is attracting VC's to fund startups in the country. With immense potential for growth, both within India and internationally, startups have a positive environment with lesser risk factors and higher certainty to attract a keen eye of investors. Moreover, many startup founders have good industry knowledge and prior experience in the field which makes them reliable entrepreneurs that can win the trust of VP's as potential investment candidates. Here are 5 reasons why VC's are more interested in the current startup culture of India:

The Indian government gives strong support to the start up environment which creates more certainty for VC's - With policies like Start up India where the government provides mentoring and facilitates legal requirements for start ups, there is a boost in the start up scene in India. The government has tried to encourage startups in India by providing easy compliance norms, relaxed procurement norms, incubator support and tax benefits to start ups. Atal Incubation

Centers (AIC) are launched by the government to provide mentoring to build sustainable start ups. Trade related entrepreneurship assistance and development (TREAD) aims to provide funding to underprivileged women from diverse backgrounds. This push from the government and the environment created is attractive to VC's because startups in India have less regulations that startups abroad. This reduces the regulatory fees and the time taken for startups to operate in the country and the push from the government comes with an added benefit of increased interest by investors.

Potential for growth of Indian startups in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities - The per capita GDP in India continues to grow and development in India is on the rise. The Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities need many more facilities to improve their standards of living and people have the disposable income required to buy the products. However, very few brands and companies operate in these cities currently. This has created a situation where startups can enter these markets and explore the potential in these cities. From the VC's perspective, these startups require lesser capital to operate because of lower fixed costs and this improves the rate of return on the company. Moreover, talented youth

are flexible to move to these cities because of fewer opportunities available in Tier 1 cities and this provides startups with better human resources. Hence, VC's are keen to invest in Startups in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.

More Indian startups are going global - VC's are interested in the increased potential of Indian startups which are going global. Startups which seek better infrastructure and higher capital returns per sale are extending their operations to countries like Australia, China, Great Britain and the US. Oyo, India's most successful startup will put majority of \$800 million in overseas expansions and Ola cabs is also planning to expand operations to more parts of Australia. Smaller startups are also looking to expand in other countries to explore the potential in international markets. VC's are keen to explore opportunities with Indian startups going International and test investment in the sector.

Investing in Indian start ups is less risky - Because of an increased support by government to empower startups, there is a 3-5X times capital arbitrage and a 2X time arbitrage for startups that are present in India. Lower regulations and easier access to manpower makes the startup ecosystem more investor friendly with a greater certainty in the business environment. Most startups in India seek investor support in the middle and latter stages where startups have already been tested in the incubation stages and their performance data is available for analysis. The US and the UK have more early stage startups seeking funding where the risk is higher because of limited test runs on the market.

Another reason why VC's prefer investing in startups in India is because bad startups are easy to identify. Some startups are simply trying to duplicate models abroad without testing their validity in the Indian business environment. Such startups lack entrepreneurial potential, research, innovation and local expertise. VC's can identify these startups with some background information about Indian markets.

VC's are willing to take the leap because of the deep tech background of startup founders - More VC's are investing in a small number of startups with larger ticket sizes and they have keenly been eyeing the deep tech startup market in tech hubs

World Trade Centre, Bengaluru
Bengaluru, India is famous as a
hub for entrepreneurs working
in various fields.

Image by Sudhir Achari from
Pixabay.



in India. Bengaluru is the third largest startup ecosystem in India and most founders come with a vast knowledge of deep tech. The prior experience and expertise of startup founders is the backbone to winning investors trust. Innovation in the healthcare sector is especially on the rise in Bengaluru with companies like Mitra Biotech, Zumuter, Oncostem and Nirmai among others. All their founders have a wide experience in the industry and are leading industry experts and this creates more certainty for VC's.

Zero Point, Sikkim
Photograph by
Nimrat Kaur



Consecration of a Bhutanese House, Tsatsi

*Kinley Seldon
Bhutan*

Bhutan is widely known for its unique tradition and culture. Even as Bhutanese, there are many traditions in various parts of Bhutan, that are unheard of. An old tradition that still exists in Tsatsi, is quite fascinating. Tsatsi, is a small village which is 3 hours ride from Pema Gatshel, one of the remote places in eastern part of Bhutan. The consecration of house (drub) is quite famous around Tsatsi. The ceremony is quite grand and most of the people attend it without fail. The preparations are in the kitchen and in the alter room.

The kitchen is prepared separately outside by the cooks. The cooks on the other hand are 3-4 people who are asked to help out by the host. All the rations are handed over to the cooks and the store keeper the day before.

On the other hand, the lay monk start making the symbolic ritual cake and alter. One of the symbolic traditions is the wooden phalluses, which is huge outside the new house. It is prepared by the carpenters before ceremony. The consecration ceremony begin early in the morning the next day. Rituals are performed for the well being of the people and particularly for the family members. Meanwhile cooks remain busy in preparing the meals.

The ritual is followed by making three rounds whereby lay monks and the family carry the two wooden phalluses to get finally hung on the roof.

Before really hanging it, a traditional game is played in which women try to hide the wooden phalluses and the men snatches from them to hang on the roof. After a challenging war between men and women, the two lucky wooden phalluses are hanged.

Furthermore, it is believed that these lucky symbols will avoid bad luck and bring happiness and good fortune to the family and the society. After the game gets over, people wishes the host good luck and happiness in the form of money. As a token of love and gratitude, host serves them with a bowl of cooked rice with pork slice, varieties of Bhutanese cuisine and local ara. Finally the day ends with songs and dances in the evening.



A Bhutanese house.

Memorial Chorten, Thimphu.
Picture by Nitesh Fatarpekar



Marine drive, Mumbai
Photo by Nimrat Kaur



Electric vehicles industry to see a glorious future in India

Vidhi Bubna
India

electric drive

With pollution on the rise, industries which tackle pollution and provide sustainable innovations are booming in the country. The future is bright for companies which focus on recycling, increasing sustainability, reduce the carbon footprint and tackle climate change.

Image by Marilyn Murphy from Pixabay

Reduced energy consumption and a switch to renewable energy is an important focus of the government in the 2019 budget. Amidst rising pollution concerns and worsening air quality in the country, the government is supporting innovations which tackle sustainability. Road transport is the second largest contributor to carbon emissions in the country. 90% of urban air pollution worldwide is contributed by road transport. The government of India is planning to be an only electric vehicle country by 2030. Each EV saves 28 tonnes of carbon emissions a year. A switch to EV's will be a major factor in reducing the carbon footprint of India.

Pollution in India is on the rise since 14 of the world's most polluted cities are present in India. Pollution in Northern belt of India is much higher than pollution in Southern cities with places like Delhi, Varanasi, Lucknow, Faridabad, Kanpur and Gurgaon topping the pollution index. The government has introduced various policies to target increased pollution like banning crop burning in northern states of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana. The EV industry has been a key center of government attention for policy making to tackle pollution because EV's are 3-3.5 times more energy efficient than other vehicles.

The move towards increased adoption of EV's in the country will also play a role in easing the pressure of Forex. This is because 22.2% of the import bill of India comes from crude oil and most of this is used by the transport industry. A switch to EV's will also ease the balance of payments of the country and will reduce the deficit. The increased scope of EV's in India is not just a result of rising pollution but also a solution to easing forex and balance of payments in the country. This motivates the government to give an even stronger push to EV's for consumers. In the 2019 budget, the government focused on reducing GST from 12% to 5% for EV's to encourage more consumers to adopt them. Moreover, the government has also assured an income tax deduction of Rs 1.5 lakh on loans to purchase EV's in India to push consumers towards the adoption of sustainable innovations. The electric vehicle industry is receiving increased government support with programmes like NEMMP (National Electric Mobility Mission plan) which aims to provide fuel security by promoting hybrid vehicles in the country.

Other government programmes include FAME (Faster adoption and manufacturing of hybrid and electric vehicles) which provides financial support for companies innovating EV's. An increase in government policy making reflects a better future for companies which want to enter the EV industry in India as it comes with a promise of government support. This also reflects in the stable and steady rising growth rate of EV industry in India at 5% per year. International companies like Kia Motors and MG motors also have plans to invest in the EV market in India because of the potential growth rates.

Despite government support, a major challenge to the EV industry is ensuring sustainability in waste disposal. Lithium batteries used by EV's do not have appropriate recycling units in India. A rise in the EV industry shall be ensured by a rise in the recycling and disposal sector for Lithium batteries as well. The government shall focus on policy making towards reducing the carbon footprint of EV's further.



BMW i3 is an electric car with an optional range extender gasoline engine.
CC BY-SA 4.0

Hence, the EV industry is gaining significant momentum in India due to rising pollution concerns. The industry also eases the pressure on forex and trade deficits and is beneficial to the economy on multiple fronts. The government has been engaging in policy making to incentivize the production and consumption of EV's in India, but it also needs to focus on making EV's more sustainable. Adequate waste disposal for old batteries is essential to reduce carbon footprint and more efforts need to be taken by the government on that front. Overall, EV's have a bright future in India and increased investments in this sector are most likely in the coming years.

MUSIC !!!

What's popular in Bhutan?

Yoezer Choki
Bhutan

"Music is the greater uniter. An incredible force. Something that people who differ on everything and anything else can have in common." Sarah Dessen. Music ages to the ancient period where from the existence of human beings, people has created it and celebrated it. It is indeed the oldest culture to exist which I believe is. As such, Bhutanese Traditional Music which are composed with blesses from the ancestors, content the theme of words praising the god and goddess, heroism, idolism and patriotism. Some of the ancient songs flows the love, some unrequited and some in praise and pride. Song which according to Bhutanese is called as 'Lu' by in Bhutanese context is define as when as after human beings are being born in this world, are bound to mixture of emotions, despair and desires ultimately leading to joy and grief, which is outburst through words in the flows of melodies.

Among the different genre of Bhutanese traditional music, the most popular are the Ballad 'Lo-zey', Zhung-Dra, Boe-dra and Rigsar. 'Lo-zey' are on instant composition from the individuals' intellectual poetic innovation, competed between two or more groups of people based on different kinds of brief position that they share such as opposition or in same bash. And sometimes it is a composition beyond that platform where the composer shared the epic and legendary stories such as, Ballad of Pemai Tshewang Tashi and Ballad of Gyelong Sumdar Tashi.

'Zhung-dra' are the song that are sung in high pitch which basically shares the stories of great ancestors and their accomplishment, which was actually performed during the Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel's era, on the inauguration of Punakha Dzong.

'Boe-dra' are the song the song sung during those period, where government official known as 'Boe-grabs' visited for the official visit in the villages across. Unlike, 'Zhung-dra' it doesn't have long melody, but are performed more with dances especially in circle.

'Rig-sar' are the modern song sung with their innovative compositions, especially among the young people. Those were the days, where Bollywood and Indian music had influence the older version of 'Rig-sar' song, where in those times had an easy access to its influence being the neighboring country.

However, with the country getting globalized with new technologies and doors to rest of the culture, youths have been adopting western and other styles of composition in their music, among which the most popular are the rap and K-pop culture. It is said, to be a great rapper, you need to be a good story-teller, and youths are trying to tell their stories through their rap, most of it are on the social issues.

Nonetheless, rapper has started the most popular element of hip-hop culture, which is the diss culture, where they diss each other on pride and prejudice of each other. And it is no wonder, K-pop has taken the globe in storm, with fan-base increasing magnificently and enormously. And Bhutan is one of that effected countries of their culture, with their Asian looks, youths tries to adopt in their culture. Their dance moves showcases the K-pop touch, and their composed songs somehow has the slightness of K-pop tunes and melodies.

Therefore, in facts, modernization has been a dominance over the tradition with higher number of population among the youths. There are more numbers of youth who can play guitar than 'Dra-nyen' a traditional guitar, which were famous among the young males before late 90's. Rig-sar has replace the traditional songs in gathering. But has Bhutan forgot its traditional music, absolutely not, though with fine revolution in the music in Bhutan, Bhutan has an academic dedicated in preserving the ancient performing arts. Even so, as mentioned above, individual interest does matter, for if there are people singing 'Rig-sar' in gathering and celebration, and among all the occasions, it is especially during the match of national sport, archery, there are people who prefers the traditional song. Bhutanese believes, singing the traditional songs brings the blessing of the ancestor, thus making the old habit die hard.



Image by Jacob Morch from Pexels

BOLLYWOOD REVIEW !

Zainab Kasimi
India

Hindi cinema that is often known as Bollywood, is the Hindi-film industry of that is formally based in Mumbai. Bollywood is currently the world's largest film industry in film production, with an annual output of almost 1,986 feature films. It is now one of the largest centres of film productions in the world. Considering this, Bollywood plays a very major role in influencing majority of the population of the country. Especially the youth, who engage really deep and get influenced quickly with the kind of movies and the messages that are portrayed in the movies.

Every year, there are hundreds of movies that are released, some are extremely great and have an amazing message for the audience to take away. There are many movies that really help with bringing about change change and contribute towards a social cause

Reviews of some of the movies that has either positively or negatively contributed in the society in the year 2019

1. KABIR SINGH

Kabir Singh is one of the most controversial movies of this year. A lot of socialist and feminists have raised their voices against the ideologies and the making of the movie.

Synopsis: The movie is the remake of a Telugu movie "Arjun Reddy". In the movie, the main lead, Kabir, a genius yet hostile house surgeon, falls in love with Preeti, a first-year student. When Preeti's father spots the couple kissing, he opposes their relationship and decides to get her married. He gets heartbroken when his girlfriend is forced to marry another man. Already struggling with anger issues, he falls into a self-destructive spiral.

Review: Kabir Singh can be labelled as an attempt to recreate misogyny in another widely spoken language and earn crores by not just glorifying but also justifying violence, addiction, stalking, and abuse. The movie has received a lot of backlash on social media, which sparks a debate on the representation of women on the silver screen and the accountability actors, directors, and scriptwriters must have towards the kind of content they produce. From the very first scene, the androcentric nature of the film is evident.

Kabir Singh's grandmother is reminiscing with her friends about the time when young Kabir lost his beloved doll and kept looking for it in an obsessive fervent. When the grandmother tries to explain to young Kabir to let go of his doll, Kabir replies with a decisive no, saying that it is his doll and he must find it. The group of old women laughs at the tale of this masculine obsessive nature, inability to hear and comprehend no and boys-will-be-boys justification. Sadly, the tale of the lost doll is basically the script of the movie. Kabir Singh looks at Preethi, played by Kiara Advani, a demure and submissive first year medical student and decides that she is his new doll, I mean, his bandi (his woman). Unfortunately, Preethi has exactly as much agency in film as the poor unanimated doll would, and thus, is subject to abuse and toxic 'love' which is romanticised and glorified.



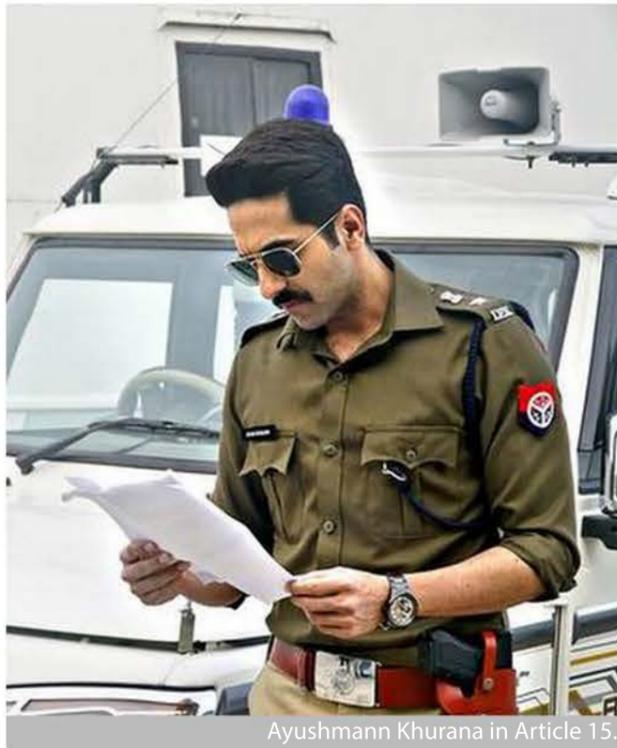
Image by ManukM from Pixabay

2. ARTICLE 15

Synopsis: An upright city-bred police officer launches an attack against the caste system after caste-based discrimination and crimes are dismissed in rural India.

Review: Article 15 has proved to be the weapon that breaks the barriers of the upper caste and lower caste. Article 15 actually is an article that acts as an extension of Article 14 which talks about the fact that every person should be equal before law and should be treated equally by the law.

In spite of the fact that India has Articles like these in the constitution already framed and written, there is a genuine lack of awareness and a lot of corruption happening. The movie Article 15, has actually worked on getting the reality of the situation of those areas that are extremely proven to be dangerous in terms of discrimination. Hence, it almost worked as a weapon to alarm people about the realities though the fact that only a very few percentage of people in the authority gets affected by such movies remains constant.



Ayushmann Khurana in Article 15.

3. BALA

Synopsis: Bala is the story of a young man who is struggling with premature balding. Bala is like the Shahrukh Khan of the school and loves to attract attention through his mimicry skills. He is so proud of his hair and good looks that he doesn't hesitate to make fun of his bald teacher by calling him takla and humiliating his dark-complexioned classmate in front of the entire school. Later, all that pride breaks when he struggles with premature balding.

Review: This is one of the movies that has actually contributed in adding a factor of confidence in the youth and a factor of sensitivity in every person. This beautifully works on breaking the stereotypes of discriminating and making fun of people who on the basis of their physical features. There are a lot of people who already a victim of getting bullied or discriminated on the basis of their physical features like their colour and body shape, this movie helped them to overcome their restrictions made by themselves in their heads, stretch their boundaries to understand who they are and just feel proud of however they are.



Ayushmann Khurana in Bala.

So, Bollywood has a great power of influencing and changing a lot of social things and the minds of the people, especially the youth.

This year particularly, was an amalgamation of a lot of different concepts. A lot of movies like Manikarnika, URI, Kesari, etc. focused on a lot of movies that showed the historical reality to encourage patriotism and build the level of pride. Some of the movies like Bala, Ek ladki ko dekha toh aisa laga, etc. focused on making some genuine contributions for the encouraging people to just strengthen their personalities. And some of the movies like Kabir Singh and Article 15, were blast of controversies.



Shahid Kapoor in Kabir Singh.



Picture of a stepwell in Gujarat by Sejal Grover.

Are people from North India more patriotic than the rest of India?

Vidhi Bubna
India

"The top 5 states where most army officials in India come from are Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Bihar and Rajasthan". As soon as I read this line, I saw a pattern, all these states are in North India. I instantly found myself asking "Is North India more patriotic than the rest of India?" To answer this question, I will first dive into the reasons why more people from North India enrol in the army than other parts of the country.

Reasons why more people from North India are present in the army

Though this is a political and a sensitive question, I will instantly dive into the reasons why more people from North India enlist in the army than other regions.

There are many reasons why people from South India do not enlist in the army. The most common language used in the army is Hindi and most of the population of South India is not well equipped with the language. This prevents them from being selected at the "jawan" level of the armed forces.

It has been tradition in North India for citizens to enlist in the army. Hence, most families know someone who is in the army and the children grow up with a role model. However, since the pattern has lower citizens enrolling from other parts of the country, the future generations do

not find the profession relatable and they do not enlist. Growing up in Mumbai, I myself had no one I knew in the army and would have never imagined that as a profession.

North India is also closer to all the international borders of India. Uttarakhand shares a border with both China and Nepal, Punjab and Rajasthan share their border with Pakistan. Uttar Pradesh also shares its border with Nepal. Hence, most of the people living in these areas have heard first hand stories of wars happening close to them. Moreover, war is closer to their homes than to other parts of South India and it would affect them faster. Hence, people from North India also join the army to protect their close families in their states.

Since ancient times, the North has seen multiple invasions which created clans like Rajputs, Gorkhas and Sikhs who have closely been associated with the armed forces. Joining the forces is a way of upholding family traditions in the North and is a matter of great pride for families. Since, many people from other regions of India have not been associated with the army in the past, there are no family expectations for them to enter the army professions. Moreover, the glory attached to the profession in other regions is not as

much as in North India.

Here are a few interesting statistics which show that the overall population of people enrolling in the army is really low. Though Uttar Pradesh is the state with the highest number of people enrolling in the army - 3,48,642, it is only 0.17% of the population in the state. The lowest percentage of people enrolling as compared to the state population comes from Andaman and Nicobar islands at 0.02%.

Would I say that the army is more patriotic than other citizens?

A patriot is defined as a person who supports their country and is prepared to defend it from external enemies. In this world, we not only face threats from physical war or from other countries. There can be many problems in the country itself which the country needs to be defended from. According to Yuval Noah Harari, the biggest problems faced by the world today are obesity, depression, economic wars, threats due to globalization among others. Countries fear economic war much more than physical wars today. Hence, joining the army or government forces is not the only way in which someone can defend their country.

Would you call JRD Tata, a Parsi businessman from Mumbai a patriot? He surely did not enlist in the army but he defended India in other ways. In the 1960's when India had a huge debt trap, the World Bank lent India money on one condition, that JRD Tata should be made to sign the contract and not the Prime Minister of India. This shows that in the modern world, institutions can trust reputable businessmen within countries more than the Prime Minister himself. A patriot like Ratan Tata helped India to come out of its debt trap in the 1960's, thereby defending its reputation in the long run.

Many innovators in the country do not only defend the country but also take ahead its reputation in the international arena. Mansukh Prajapati, a "Jugaad" (flexible) innovator defended poor people in the country from unaffordability of essential appliances. He created a cheap fridge made out of mud which improved the lifestyles of many poor people in rural India. He protected the poor population from evils of discrimination and

eased their affordability into a better lifestyle. Would we call him a patriot? He did not enlist in the army.

"Are people from North India more patriotic than the rest of India?" Patriotism can be expressed by people in multiple other ways than joining the army itself. Because the problems faced by countries today are modern, patriotism in the homeland by solving problems faced within the country is as important as defending the border. What would safe India do without having a better India within? Yes, more people from North India join the army. But, are they more patriotic than other citizens? I surely wouldn't say so.



JRD Tata or Jehangir Ratanji Dadabhoy Tata (29 July 1904 – 29 November 1993) was an Indian aviator, entrepreneur, chairman of Tata Group



IBYS 2019 camp at Uroli, Uttarakhand
Image by Vidhi Bubna



Dharamkot, Mcleodganj,
Himachal Pradesh
Photograph by
Nimrat Kaur

