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EDITOR'S NOTE

GOOD EDUCATION IS OUR RIGHT

The country is busy these days with CAA, NPR, protests, and the coming elections in Delhi. Everything about politics has created so much noise that no one is even thinking about how education is going to fare in this year's budget.

This year's budget is vital. I am not sure of what this year's budget has for education... but the way things have happened in the preceding year does not fill me with a lot of confidence. Education sector has traditionally been traumatized by fiscal allocation slashes. This, despite the fact that the education sector in India is estimated at US$ 91.7 billion in FY18 and is expected to reach US$ 101.1 billion in FY19. We have more than 660 universities and institutes of higher education, more than 35,000 colleges and more than 13,90,000 schools and this should ideally make things look so much better. But this is far from the truth that is staring at us.

The truth that surrounds the education sector is that out of 82 countries ranked, India is 77th in education quality and equity, 75th in work opportunities, 79th in fair wage, and 76th in social protection. These figures are from a video clip by Quint. This means that we are actually in the bottom 10 in most categories. This definitely doesn't make me feel proud of the way things have gone about.

I believe that it is time for our politicians as well as all civil rights activists to understand that an educated nation is the only way ahead. We need to stay away from the dramatic sounding bytes that have been reverberating throughout the mainstream media for these past few months now. I don't want to know if poha or flattened rice is a staple food of Bangladeshi immigrants. I don't want to see agitators blocking roads and preventing people from doing their daily work in peace. I don't appreciate public property being vandalized for serving the interests of the left or right or anyone else. I don't like to log on to my social media platforms only to watch helplessly people getting into virtual slanging matches. Un-friending has become a norm. This isn't the India that anyone had ever wished for.

We, the people of India must know that we are not puppets prancing about to cater to political whims. We, the people of India must be aware of what the preamble to our constitution tells us. For those who do not have the time to access it, I quote:

"WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:

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EQUALITY of status and of opportunity;

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IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION."

Let me add that words are fragile baubles with multiple layers of thin glass that can explode into smithereens if mishandled or misinterpreted. We need to read the preamble carefully like a sapper dismantling a bomb and never fall for smart handlers who keep throwing connotations that can destroy what we have built over decades. This is important because real education is understanding the truth that surrounds us… and this is why we need the advantages of education to be equally spread to every individual in the country. Good education is our right.

Arvind Passey
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EDITOR
Arvind Passey

ART & GRAPHICS
Brij Mohan Singh

PHOTO
S.P. Singh

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Dr. Monika Vishwakarma

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Rimli Bhattacharya

LET US EDUCATE OURSELVES ABOUT ODISSI

Odissi previously known as Orissi is one of the major prehistoric Indian classical dance form. Its origins are traced in the Hindu temples of Odisha an eastern littoral state in India. The Sangeet Natak Academy discerns classical status on the major eight Indian dance forms: Odissi emanating from Odisha, Bharatnatyam from Tamil Nadu, Kathak from Northern India, Kuchipudi from Andhra Pradesh, Manipuri from Manipur, Sattriya from Assam and Mohiniattam and Kathakali originating from Kerala.

Odissi is a typical female prepotent dance form enacted mostly by women. The dance is based on religious narratives with Vaishnavism in particular where we identify Vishnu as Lord Jagannath. The rich heritage of Odissi is exhibited from Odisha Hindu temples and various platforms of prehistoric gravity that are analogous with Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. The sculptures of these embellish the dance postures of this art form. A semblance of explicative reminiscence of mythological, religious and spiritual ideas executed by the dancer with a stupendous combination of body movements, assertions, spectacular Mudras, sign languages and Navarasas; its staging repertory includes citation, Nritta (pure dance), Nritya (expressive dance), Natya (dance drama) and Moksha (liberation or spiritual release). The theme of this dance form revolves around folklores from Vaishnavism and others analogous with Hindu gods and goddesses such as Shiva, Shakti, Vairavi and Surya. Odissi is executed as an amalgamation of basic dance monograms called the Bhangas (uniform body bends). The dance involves coalescence of lower (footwork), mid (torso) and upper (hand and head) as three origins of ameliorating countenance and audience rendezvous with diametrical symmetry and rhythmic musical fullness.

The nuances in Odissi

Odissi is divided in two major techniques – the first is honed by women and enthralled on ceremonial, sacred temple dance (maharis); the second ameliorated by boys dressed as girls (gotipuas) which permutated to include athletic and acrobatic moves. These were performed during festive occasions in temples and also as rustic entertainment. Each dance form has its own invocation and Odissi is no different. It starts with an intercession known as Mangalacharana. Mangalacharana is a hymn sung in praise of God and the meaning is expressed by the dancer by his/her Abhinaya (action). This next step is followed by Pushpanjali (offering of flowers) and Bhumi Pranam (obeisance to mother earth). The intercession also encompasses Trikhandi Pranam (three fold salutation) to the Gods, to the Gurus and to the fellow dancer and audience.

The fundamental characteristic of Odissi dance is the Tribangi. The concept of Tribangi divides the body in three parts – head, bust and torso. The stance dealing with these three sections are called Tribhangi. Mudra is also an important element in Odissi dance. The term Mudra means 'stamp' and is a hand gesture describing things. An Odissi theme is practically spiritual in nature and mostly revolves around the stories of love and devotion for Lord Krishna.

Odissi – the mudras

The Mudra system of Odissi is derived from the "Abhinaya Darpana" by Nandikeshavara and the ancient Natya Shastra of Bharata Muni.

In Odissi the basic units are known as bhangas. The bhangas are further made up of eight belis, or body postures and movements, combined in different varieties. The motion is uthas (rising or up), baithas (sitting or down) or sthankas (standing). The gaits or movement on the dance floor is called chaalis, with movement tempo linked to emotions as mentioned in the classical Sanskrit texts. Burhas or quick pace suggest excitement and a slow confused pace suggests dejection. For aesthetics, movement is centered on

a core, a point in space or floor, and each dancer has her imaginary square of space, with spins and expression held within it. The foot movement or pada bhedas too have basic dance units, and Odissi has six of these, in comparison to four found in most classical Indian dances.

The three basic dance postures in Odissi are Samabhanga, Abhanga and Tribhanga.

More about mudras in Odissi

Mudras or Hastas are hand gestures meant to manifest the meaning of a given act. The emotions, feelings, moods in the dance drama are conveyed through the Mudras. Odissi comprises of 63 Mudras with names closely matching with those in Abhinaya Chandrika. As mentioned earlier the Mudra methodology has stemmed from "Abhinaya Darpana" by Nandikeshavara and also from Bharta Muni's ancient Natya Shastra.

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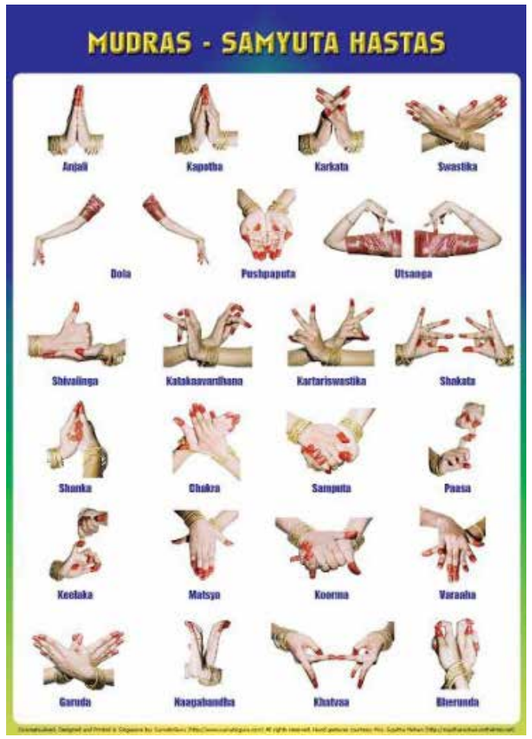

reed crown symbolizing Lord Krishna. The male dancer wears a dhoti neatly pleated in front and folded between the legs covering the lower body from the waist till the feet. The upper body remains bare. The elaborate belt or bengapatteya is tied to the waist.

The music style in this dance form is distinctive as it integrates Indian Ragas from both North and South India. The principal ragas of Odissi are 'Shokabaradi', 'Karnata', 'Shree Gowda' 'Dhanashri', 'Panchama', 'Bhairavee', 'Nata', 'Baradi' and 'Kalyana'.

Role of costumes in Odissi

Costume plays a very prominent role in Odissi dance. The female dancers wear a beaming/blazing silk garment like Bomkai Saree or Sambalpuri Saree. The Saree is nicely pleated downwards for flexible movements of the dancers and also to exhibit the excellent footwork. Head, neck, ear, nose, arms and wrists are embellished with silver jewellery. The musical anklets called ghunghroo are tied to the ankles and an intricate belt is adorned in the waist. Like all other dance forms here also the feet and palms are colored with Red Alta. A tikka is worn on the forehead. The eyes are contoured with Kajal for proper display of eye movements by the dancers. The hair is neatly tied in a bun gilded by Seenthi. The hair may either be adorned by a moon shaped plume of white flowers or with a Mukoot that is a

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The Navarasas

Odissi is a very ancient dance form which dates back to 6th and 9th century CE. Since then the dance form has seen several upheavals but finally has emerged as the one of the toughest form of Indian classical dance. The rich choreography and elaborate collusion of Eyes, Mudras, Navarasas, Bhangas, Footwork and Ragas conveys nexus chronicles of sacrifice, love and humankind's relationship with God. The prodigies who resuscitated this art form during late 1940s include Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, Raghunath Dutta, Deba Prasad Das, Pankaj Charan Das and Gangadhar Pradhan. The instrumental role played by Guru Mayadhar Raut saw the dance form achieving classical status. Other famous exponents include disciples of Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra namely Sanjukta Panigrahi, Sonal Mansingh and Kumkum Mohanty; Aruna Mohanty, Anita Babu and Aadya Kaktikar to mention a few.

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According to "Dance and Architecture: Body, Form, Space and Transformation" though the new form of Odissi had its roots ancient and celebrated yet it had commutated to conform to the changing cultural trends of the people during the 1950s-60s. Previously this dance form was confined only within the religious doors of the Hindu temples. Upon its revival by the Gurus it is now more of a secular dance form performed on stages worldwide. ■

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Arvind Passey

REIMAGINED CURRICULUMS NEED ART AND DESIGN

The first time I saw a short clip of a walking bicycle, I was not just surprised but also confused. The rear wheel in this contraption was non-existent and one could see a metal skeleton with four legs in its place. This was inspired from Theo Jansen's kinetic Strandbeest sculptures. What if I now tell you about interiors where materials, light, and fabric create the right minimalist architectural effect? Or remind you that there are episodes of Black Mirror that bring in dog-like drones. The days aren't far when bio-bots like solar-powered insects will be in use. Sustainable architectural design is already up and running and there are people talking about housing where modular, mass-customization, and sustainability converge seamlessly. We are living in a world where innovation, imagination, and intuition work together in harmony and help intellectual and perceptual skills reach a level where creating new-age solutions becomes possible.

New-age solutions

Solutions matter. It isn't difficult to imagine that solutions today are created, fashioned, executed, or constructed when multiple forms of art decide to harness each other's strengths. Thus visual, literary, and performing arts are often seen attending to each other because this kind of coming together creates communication messages that are both easier as well as effective. An apt example is of street plays that make use of poetry, music, dance rhythms, and even art to make socially relevant communication reach the right audience. Art and design aren't just about some narrowed down academic disciplines or concepts that only a few profess to be interested in. Just like science today. Or history. Or the languages. Almost every subject today comes no longer with limited vision or value as an interactive force. Life itself has become inter-disciplinary.

Design, for instance, isn't about cardboard packaging or window displays but also about architectural blueprints, business processes, diagrams for circuits, patterns for sewing, engineer drawings and the line goes on. Both art as well as design are no longer happy to remain in the confines of a gallery where a few kindred souls clinking champagne glasses and munching canapes meander through a maze of amazing colours and objects weighing auction budgets in their minds. I guess this still goes on in certain circles but the radius of such circles has reduced and both art as well as design have decided to win more territories.

What do art and design really do these days?

Those who specialize in art and design today do much more than just dabble with visual styles in magazines, newspapers, product packaging. movies, TV shows, and layouts for award nites and so on. These specialists need to have a deeper understanding of the human psyche and must connect needs, desires, and wants to the way the social matrix has reshaped over time. Some people may even go on to say that it is a reshaping with the future in perspective. We are already at a stage when people the world over are talking about voting by apps… quite obviously, besides the technology involved, it is the ease of the user that is going to be paramount and this is where the right design enters. For quite a while now everyone has been mentioning and singing praises for the way UX or user interface has evolved. The design student looks ahead and asks: What after UX? Both art and design are about futuristic views.

The new world, I must admit here, is constantly looking at creating space for 'Hair Guru', 'Brand Warrior', and 'Content Hero' according to Lydia Dishman in a posting on the internet. This year has also dived into an euphemistic state of creative interpretation and has seen HR Managers called Chief Heart Officers, Fundom in place of marketing, and rockstars at almost every nook of the corporate world.

Relevance of art and design for other streams

What is important is to understand that art and design isn't just about some structured course. Yes, those who are interested in the fine arts are certainly looking for focused courses in streams that include painting, sculpture, architecture, landscaping, product design, technical design, auto desig. India has specific courses for all these streams in every region and these institutes have already made a name for themselves in the global arena. What matters more is that a sensitization to the elements of art and design needs to be introduced and pursued in other streams and this includes engineering, management, and even other degree courses in science and humanities.

The obvious question of sceptics will be: How is this relevant to, say, automobile engineers or students of computer science? Why must a B.Sc student be introduced to the creative elements of design?

We know that nearly 80% of our engineering graduates are not employable and many of them ultimately go out to find jobs in non-engineering fields or remain unemployed. One of the reasons for this is that they are simply not being taught things that the industry today is looking for. These students are neither industry-ready nor are they taught the fine art of conceptualization of ideas. Thus the decision-makers in product manufacturing as well as the service sectors tend to bypass them all. Recent statistics published in a leading newspaper revealed that 87% of B.Sc graduates too remain unwanted because of somewhat similar reasons.

Design, let me unequivocally say, is a business skill. If this makes you restless, you have not probably understood that design isn't about creating something just because it may look good or win you accolades. Design is successful when people go ahead and adopt it in their daily lives, accept it for what it is, and benefit because something relevant to their lives has been created and given to them. There is business linked to it whichever way you look at it. This is just one of the dynamic things that modules on art and design will teach all those students who are already being taught hard-core technology. Thus design is about problem solving. Design education is learning how to apply practical methods, prior knowledge, and natural talent to solve new problems. It is also referred to as Creative Education. Creative education is what the country needs today.

For long now, education has tended to go off the main track under the guise of undiluted focus on the things that matter. I have heard a lot of engineers sneer at the inclusion of mathematics in engineering streams. These are precisely the sort of people who do not know that mathematics is at the heart of every design effort. Mathematics teaches a student the art of asking the right questions… and this is also what art and design do. Art and design are all about the mathematics of mixing and matching the right moves out of an infinite number of options to reach the desired output. Have you thought about what Nek Chand has done? This engineer who has given us the Rock Garden of Chandigarh is a master in the art of completing a project with available resources. He asked the right questions when he looked at what society had junked. He applied the basic tenet of design that wants to walk hand-in-hand with business skills and creative analysis, using all the current day technology that was within his grasp.

Design helps a student go about following his dream by harnessing the power of creative interpretation. He knows through his study of art and design that being critical is essential so long as it is for the sake of enhanced productivity. This kind of aware student understands that it is also equally vital to say no to an idea that isn't willing to be tested by thorough research.

Design adds value to learning

One fact that has stood the test of time is that those students who have managed to develop both the hemispheres of their brain and are both right and left brained, tend to perform better and give society

the right ROI that it searches for in its new professionals.

This isn't hard to achieve for any institute or college. My suggestions are included in the listing below.

Create the right resources. These include availability and access to the latest computer programs that aren't always narrowed down to subject relevance, photography studios and libraries to aid documentation and reach for research, and a place where they can not only create projects but also be able to communicate them to audiences not necessarily within the institute. This is what makes the environment full of creative energy where relevance to society is prime.

Mentors are essential. When one talks of mentors one obviously means finding and inviting professionals from even the art and design streams as they are the ones who can add value to the sort of learning that an engineer indulges in.

Creative community and colleagues: By no means is school the only place to make friends in the industry, but the shared experiences and growth while studying can build long-lasting—and fruitful—relationships among peers.

Understanding restrictions. When students understand what restrictions are they tend to develop immunity to real-world obstacles that they would anyway have to face. Restrictions format time and space in ways that transform knowledge from books into a creative flow of ideas that is relevant to what the society may need in the times to come. Foresight obviously is an important by-product that our engineering and management student need to develop. This is one aspect that interaction with art and design can do seamlessly.

Destroying barriers of traditional thought is what teaching art and design to students of all other streams aims at. Many of you may be unaware that **Indira Nooyi**, the former CEO of Pepsico at one time worked under her director of design and understood how vital this was for business decisions. By the way, even **Airbnb** was an idea that came out of minds that had understood the value of design.

You must read on if you're still not convinced

We are living in times when environmental architecture and nanotechnology must be taught to design students… and even the reverse is equally true. After all, the microeconomics of setting up an engineering unit or the anthropology of literary genres no longer sounds alien, or does it?

Curriculums need to be reimagined. This is because the world now is too complex and inter-connected for any stream of study to want to exist in isolation. An article that I read recently quoted Don Norman, the father of UX who stated that 'to deal with today's large, complex problems, design education needs to change to include multiple disciplines, technology, art, the social sciences, politics, and business.' What this also means is that the change must be sought with equal zeal by other disciplines as well. Technology student anyway understand that 'design is not about interacting with a computer; it's about interacting with the world.' We are living in times when it isn't just about job profiles having become innovative… this has happened because the industry looks for innovative definitions of job profiles. This means that our colleges and institutes must wake up and follow an inter-disciplinary approach to education. Why restrict a student to just the elements and principles of just the subject of his choice?

You would know the level of innovation that has entered teaching at every level. The Waldorf school ensures that 'certain maths principles are taught through knitting, languages are practiced during games, and storytelling plays a central role'… and we know that such things are no longer isolated trends in fashionable places. These trends have already become the norm in most institutes abroad… and Indian educators have a lot of catching up to do.

It is time to realise that being curious and having a hungry mind is what learnability has evolved into and this is what is going to be a key indicator for career potential. Art and design make this transition easier.■

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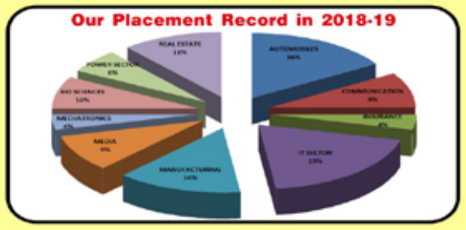

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Ms Aarzu, Topper in Ch Charan Singh University, Meerut getting Vice Chancellor Gold Medal

Mr Shivanshu Kumar, Topper in Ch Charan Singh University, Meerut getting Vice Chancellor Gold Medal

Ms Prinyanka Garg, Topper in Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Tech University, Lucknow getting Medal from Hon'ble Governer of UP

And many more .....

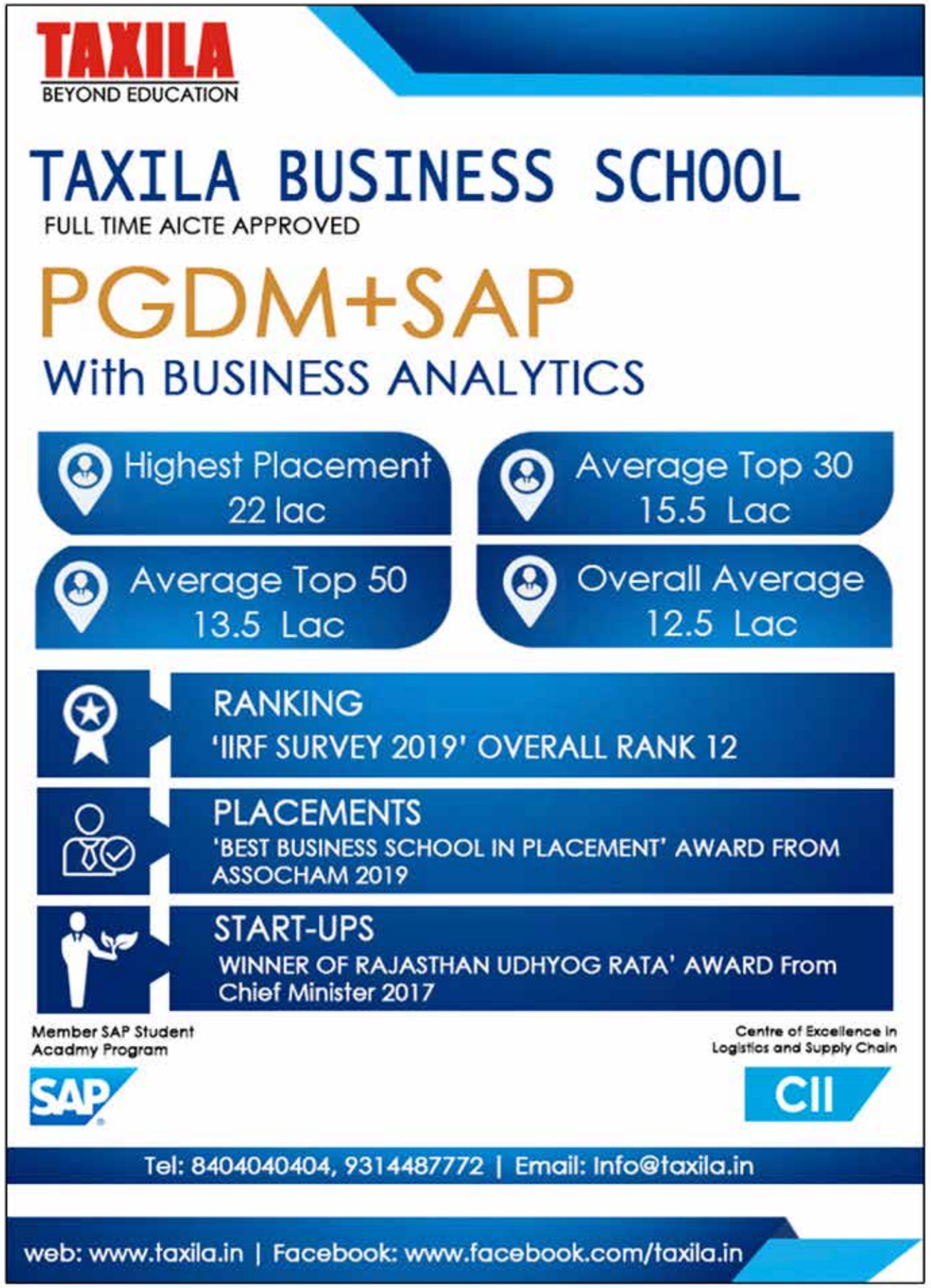
Jyoti Arora

Things that you never knew about self-publishing

Do you know what's common between Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, Stephen King, Virginia Woolf, Mark Twain, William Blake, Walt Whitman? They are all literary giants who self-published at least one of their books. So self-publishing is nothing new, and it is not for inferior writers only. It has been there since ages and numerous great writers have used it to kick-start their literary career. And now technology has given it a new spurt and expanded its reach and popularity.

What is self-publishing?

Self-publishing is where the author takes complete ownership of a book's publishing and distribution process. The author is

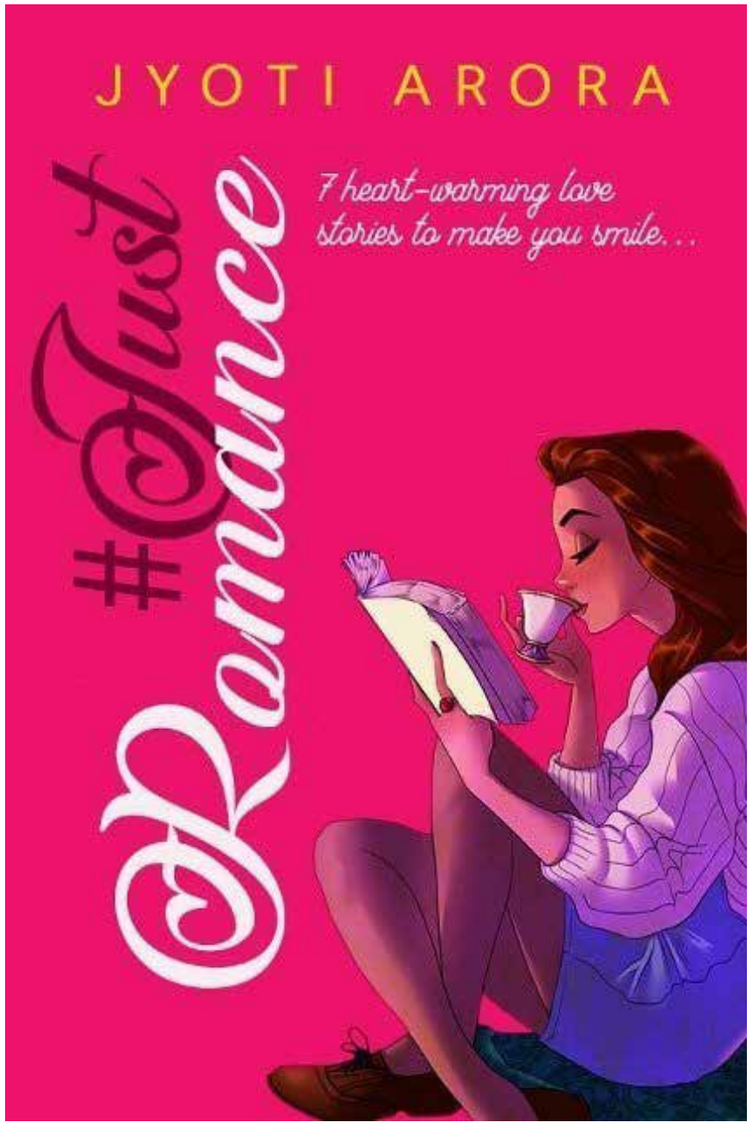


responsible for every aspect of book publishing. Editing, proofreading, book designing, cover designing, distribution, etc. are all done by the author or professionals hired by the author. This gives authors the freedom to develop, design, and price their book as they want. They are not only directly responsible for the book production expenditure, but also get a greater share of royalty.

The rising popularity of self-publishing

In recent times, self-publishing is proving to be the fastest-growing segment of the publishing industry. A study in 2014 found that 30% of eBook sales come from self-published authors. This number has increased significantly now. A report also found out that self-published authors are now earning nearly 40% of all eBook royalties on the Kindle store. And over 30% of Amazon eBooks are self-published.

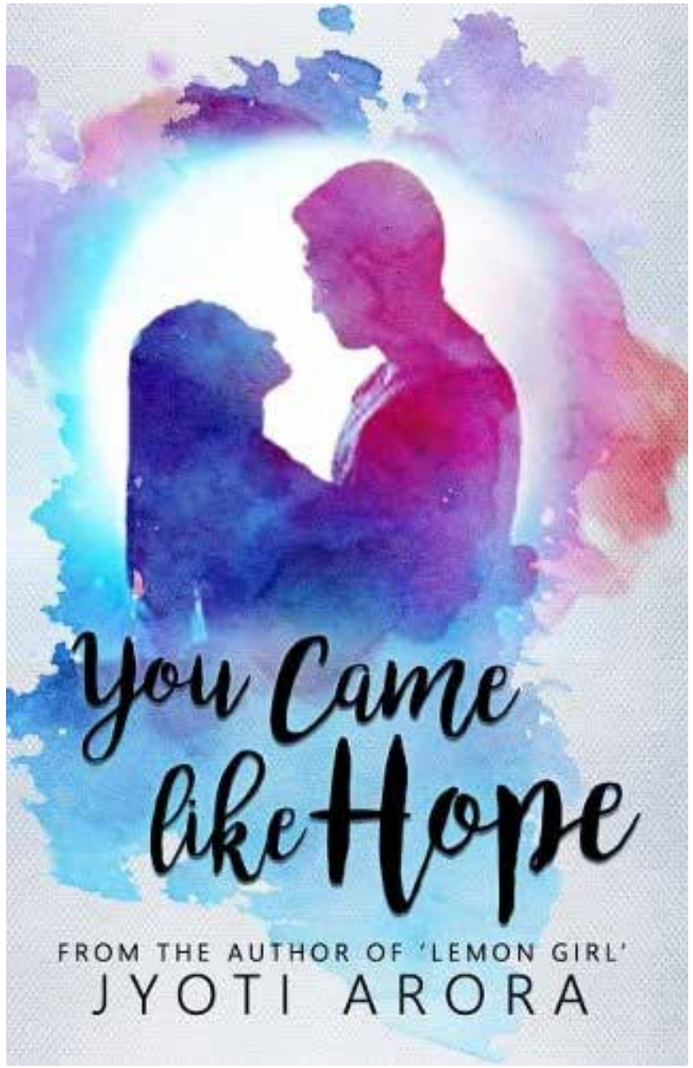
Till some years ago, people looked down upon self-published books. It was a common perception that books are self-published because they are not good enough to be traditionally published. But with the rising popularity of indie books, that perception is dwindling now. If you scroll through the romance books bestseller list on Amazon, many trending titles would be independently published.



Self-publishing is no longer 'the last option' for authors. Many authors take this route by choice. Believe it or not, some successful indie writers have rejected million-dollar deals in favour of self-publishing! Many have even made self-publishing their business.

Why is self-publishing becoming so popular?

There are many reasons leading to the rise of independent or indie



publishing. Self-publishing takes less time. You don't have to wait for months or years to see your book in the market. You earn bigger royalties and can edit the book, change its price, put up discounts whenever you wish. You have complete ownership of the book and complete creative freedom. Whether you have a one-page story or an epic-length book, you can publish it.

The easy availability of self-publishing services is another reason for the rise of indie publishers. With just a few clicks, you can upload your book on Amazon and become a published author.

Is self-publishing better than traditional publishing?

Self-publishing is no longer only a last resort. It has become a matter of choice now. Of course, many of the independent authors would love to be traditionally published. Traditional publishing means less hassle and more prestige. And achieving success through the Indie route is still harder than the traditional route. Yet, as I mentioned earlier, there are also authors who rejected lucrative publishing deals to stay independent. Because success through self-publishing is possible if you have the skills to achieve it.

There's too much competition in traditional publishing. And many good writers may never get published if they don't go indie. Also, while self-publishing can be expensive if you hire professionals for cover designing, editing etc, traditional publishing often costs money too. Many publishers in India now ask money from the author to publish their books. Whether it's in the form of buy-back copies or 'partnered publishing' or other 'helpful suggestions,' the author may have to pay money to get published. And I have seen that traditional publishing is no guarantee of error-free book. Also, traditionally published authors have to market their books by themselves too because the publishers spend promotional money only on their star authors.

The traditional publishing does have some advantages over

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the indie route. The author does not need to bother with the publishing process. This includes getting the book edited and proofread. It is said that a book which is not already famous has less than 1% chance of being stocked in an average bookstore. The traditionally published books have a better chance of winning this precious shelf-space.

How to self-publish?

The most popular service to self-publish eBooks is Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP). It is free, easy to use, and makes the eBook available on the Kindle store. Other services like Smashwords and Draft 2 Digital (D2D) make the eBook available at other retailers like Kobo, iTunes, etc.

Self-publishing can be as cheap or as expensive as you can afford. Technically, you can create an eBook without spending a rupee. You can edit and proofread the book yourself and design the cover using any of the cover design services available online. Most self-publishing services have cover designing tools too. However, a professionally designed cover and professional editing and proofreading ensure better quality. Of course, that costs money too. Once you have your book and cover file ready, just upload them, add the relevant details, and hit Publish.

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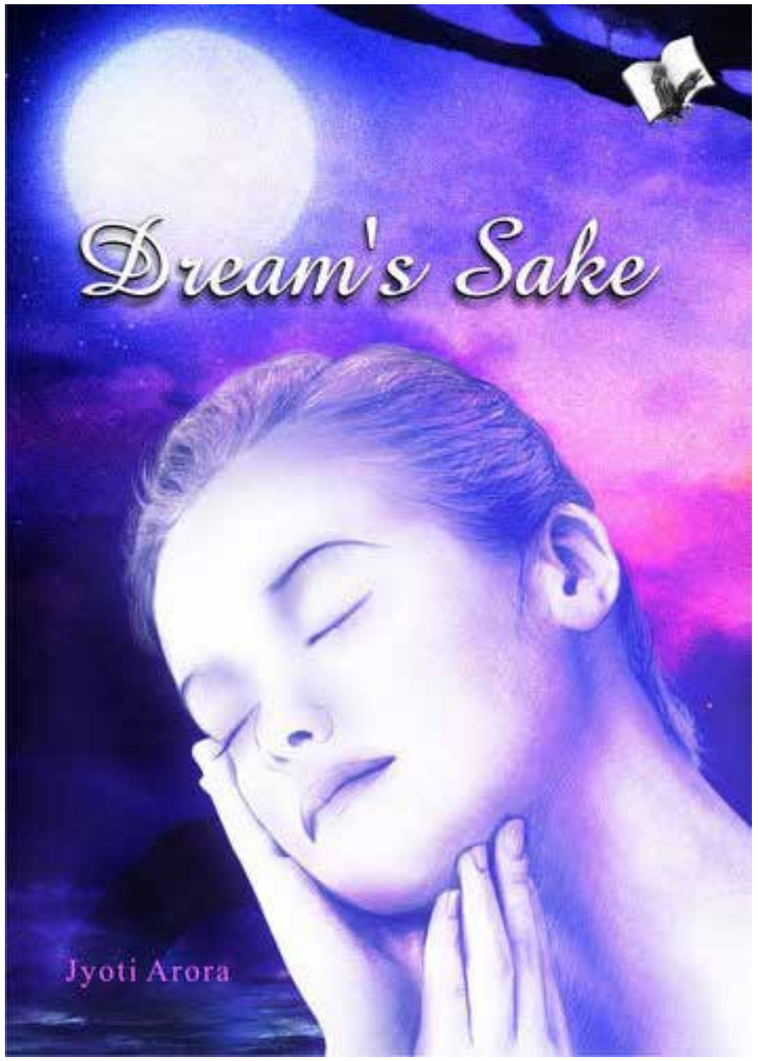


is more difficult. You can get your book printed at a local printer, pay money to vanity publishers (many available now) or publish through a Print On Demand service. This POD service is the cheapest alternative as it requires no investment. The POD services like pothi.com earn their profit by taking a cut from the sale price.

How to be a successful self-publishing author?

While self-publishing is easy, becoming successful as an author is a different story. I've read that an average U.S. nonfiction book is now selling less than 250 copies per year and less than 2,000 copies over its lifetime. The competition is even tougher for fiction. The availability of thousands of free eBooks has made selling a book even harder. Why would anyone buy a new, unknown book when there are numerous free options available?

Ultimately, success depends upon the author's marketing skills. A best-selling indie author I know states it clearly that success as an author is '20% writing and 80% marketing.' Marketing for author involves social media, blogging, guest posting on other blogs, seeking book reviews, reading sessions, and more. The harder you can work at marketing, the greater are your chances to succeed. Otherwise, even a literary masterpiece would fail if nobody knows it exists.

The rise of author promotion industry

The trouble is that most authors are not good at marketing. But they all are desperate for success. They need marketing help. And this has given birth to a huge industry offering 'help' to authors. Some of these help-givers might be genuine, but most just prey on the authors' desperation. These include vanity publishers asking a huge amount of money and delivering poor service, fake book awards, dubious digital marketeers, bulk review providers, social media influencers, and so on. Even many young readers have now joined this bandwagon to pull free books and 'reading money' from the authors in return of brief and often generic reviews. I've even had Instagram accounts dedicated to fitness, parenting, and celebrity fan clubs asking money with offers of promoting my books. The authors need to be careful in using such services or they end up wasting their money.

So, is self-publishing the shortcut to fame?

Self-publishing is a shortcut to becoming an author. But achieving fame takes a lot more than a published book.

My first novel Dream's Sake is traditionally published. My other books Lemon Girl, You Came Like Hope, and #JustRomance are self-published. So, I've experience of both routes. Traditional publisher put my first book in bookstores and book stalls at airports, railway stations, bus stops. But it had taken me six years to get that book published. So, I decided to try self-publishing for my next book. I've self-published three books till now. My indie books are only available online. But they don't lack in quality, have received great reviews, and are performing as well as my traditionally published book. In fact, my second novel Lemon Girl is even listed in an international wiki list of '9 well-written books that put women front and centre.'

Self-publishing is a quicker process than traditional publishing. It saves you from the heartbreak of rejections. It gives greater freedom and bigger royalties to the author. The number of best-selling indie authors is steadily rising. But becoming a famous writer is a hard battle no matter which publishing route you choose. The competition is immense and the interest in reading is dwindling. Even Ruskin Bond said in one of his interviews, "I think with so many people writing now, there is a danger of having more writers than readers." To be a successful author, it takes a lot of hard work, great marketing skills, and that mysterious magic called good luck. And, of course, good writing helps too.

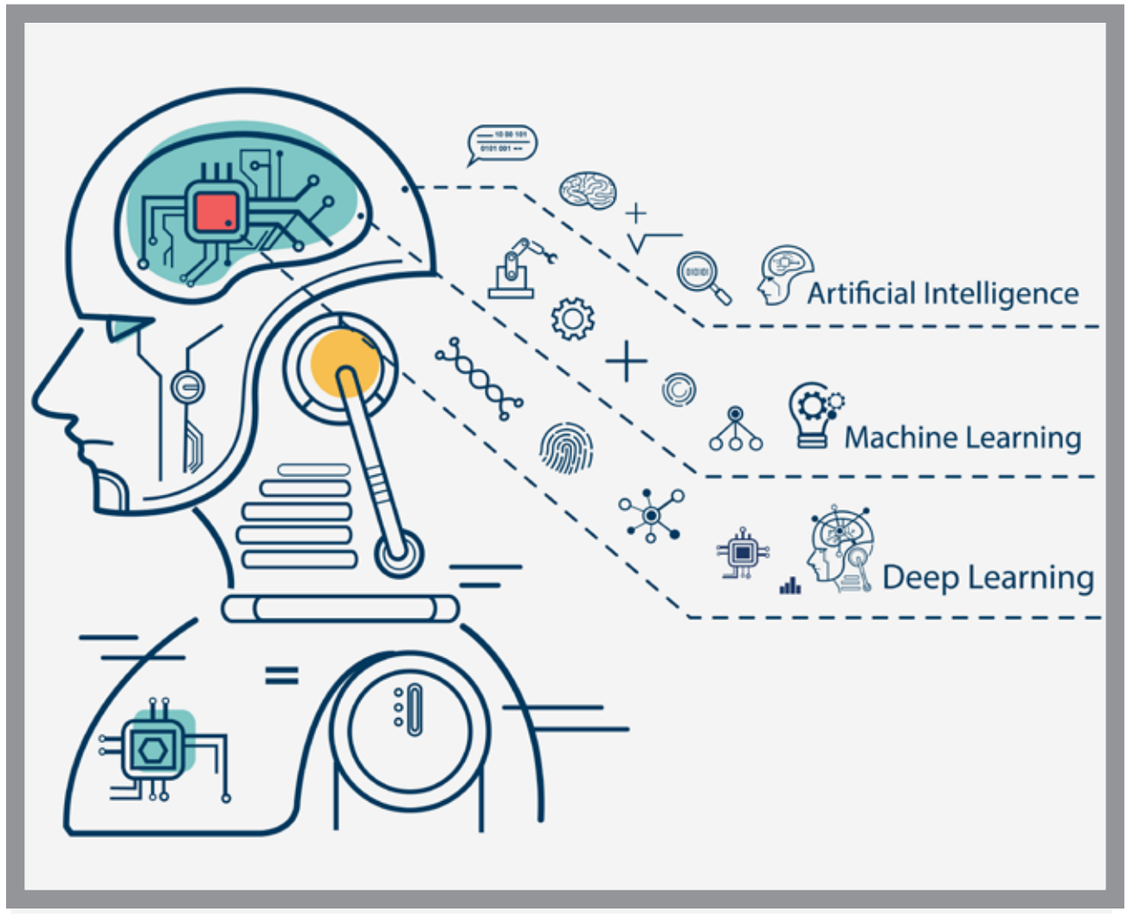
Connect with Jyoti Arora or check out her books and blog at jyotiarora.com ■

Dr. A K PURI

CAREERS IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Soon the way we navigate our way to reach a destination, driving a vehicle or by walk will change for the better. From asking strangers the way, installing GPS and eventually using satellite monitored maps we have come a long way in trekking unknown paths and arriving at new addresses on the dot, including completely unseen, unknown foreign cities or countryside. Technology is on the horizon with an animated pet, may be of your choice, guiding your way on the road- moving a bit ahead with all the landmarks on the path physically visible on mobile phone's screen in real time so that there is no chance of a wrong turn or entering from wrong side of a one-way road.

Coming out from work, your driverless car may confirm the destination through a voice conversation. After dropping you at the home or market it will go for self- parking. You need not search for key to main door of the house as the face detection device opens the door, lights get switched on, air conditioning having been switched on in time for the indoors temperatures being maintained to your liking.



These illustrations are not figments of imagination or part script of a futuristic fiction movie. Professionals in Artificial Intelligence are working assiduously to make it happen. Artificial intelligence is the buzz word today for a completely new, unexplored world with imagination and creativity bordering on fantasy. Artificial intelligence is being applied to all spheres of human knowledge and application. While some sectors may be at the start of their AI journey, others are veteran travelers. The impact artificial intelligence is going to make in our day to day lives will be tremendous with hardly any aspect of life left untouched.

With such a vast potential of applications a vast field of output is open to explore for career seekers as professionals to come up with disruptive technologies. According to published sources much headway has been made in sectors that affect our daily life. Some of the illustrations are:

In agriculture new AI advancements aim to improve yield and to increase the research and development related to all aspects of growing crops. With an increase in population, growth of demand for food will require at least 70% increase in crop yield to feed the future generations. Adaption of AI can help reach that goal.

AI based software is being developed which can enable a damaged aircraft to continue flight until a safe landing zone can be reached. The software will compensate for all the damaged components by relying on the undamaged components.

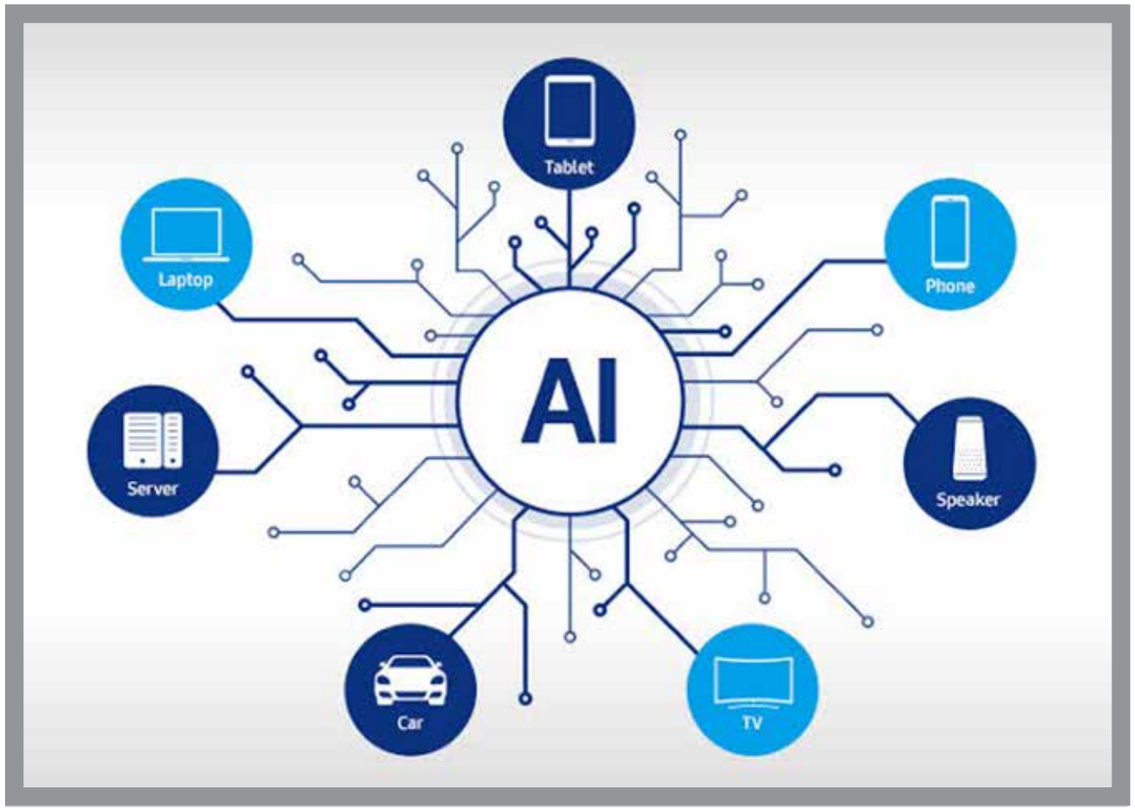
Researchers have created many tools to solve the most difficult problems in computer science. AI can be used to create other AI. A program has been developed that can animate face of a target person, transposing the facial expressions. The technology has been demonstrated animating the lips of people including Barack Obama and Vladimir Putin.

AI developers have been working on a way to detect tampered documents by analyzing movements of the eyelid. This can help journalists to detect fake documents.

AI is working on developing study devices that can create lessons, problems, and games which are tailor made to the specific student's needs on individual basis. This will take the learning process to a much higher level of efficiency and apptness.

An AI based app has already been developed that automatically helps consumers track and manage their spending and savings based on their own personal habits and goals. The app can analyze factors such as monthly income, current balance and spending habits, then make its own decisions and transfer money to different types of accounts.

AI tools are also being developed to bring healthcare to new levels of efficiency so that it can



In financial sector AI systems have made forays in to investment, trading of securities and credit analysis to an amazing level. By applying algorithm Trading using machines it is possible to make trading decisions in stock exchanges and currency or commodity markets at speeds several multiples of magnitudes greater than any human is capable of. These machine aided trades often make millions of trade transactions in a day without any human intervention. Many banks, funds, and proprietary trading firms now have entire portfolios which are managed purely by AI systems.

reach to a larger number of beneficiaries. Diagnostics have been taken to an unexplored level of predictive application.

In the arena of business management tools are being developed that help job searchers and prospective employers taking human resource management to a new level of relevance and effectiveness.

In marketing stream analyzing consumer behaviour and providing most apt knowledge about products and

services can bring in a new order. Artificial intelligence is being implemented in automated online assistants that can be seen as human beings on web pages assisting customers on enquiries and product choice. Major companies are investing in AI to handle difficult customer in the future. AI application can analyze language and convert speech into text. The platform can identify angry customers through their language and respond appropriately.

Some AI applications are geared towards the analysis of audiovisual media content such as movies, TV programs, advertisement videos or user-generated content.

The main military applications of Artificial Intelligence being developed are to enhance Command and Control, Communications, Sensors, Integration and Interoperability. Artificial Intelligence technologies can enable threat detection, It can lead to identification, marking of enemy positions, target acquisition, coordination and de-confliction of distributed Joint Fires between networked combat vehicles and tanks.

While the evolution of music has always been affected by technology, artificial intelligence has enabled, through scientific advances, to emulate, at some extent, human-like composition. Computer made music has been generated to entertain the masses.

Artificial Intelligence has been combined with many sensor technologies, such as Digital Spectrometry which enables many applications such as home water quality monitoring.

AI in transportation is being applied with an expectation to provide safe, efficient, and reliable transportation while minimizing the impact on the environment and communities.

Development of Artificial Intelligence applications is opening up new vistas of career and business opportunities. There is hardly any domain of knowledge for its application in business which does not have potential to apply AI for innovative use- opening new vistas of utility. Development of AI needs a large number of skilled manpower, competent in both computer science and the domain to which it can be applied. Billions of dollars have been committed to growth of AI as the future of technology in all walks of life. The World Economic Forum's The Future of Jobs report predicts that there will be 58 million new jobs in artificial intelligence by 2022.

Automation, robotics and the use of sophisticated computer software and programs characterize a career in artificial intelligence. Those interested in pursuing jobs in this field require specific education based on foundations of math, technology, logic, and engineering perspectives. The most successful AI professionals often share common characteristics that enable them to succeed and advance in their careers. Working with artificial intelligence requires an analytical thought process and the ability to solve problems with cost-effective, efficient solutions. It also requires foresight about technological innovations that translate to state-of-the-art programs that allow businesses to remain competitive. Additionally, AI specialists need technical skills to design, maintain and repair technology and software programs. AI professionals must knowhow to translate highly technical information in ways that others can understand in order to carry out their jobs. This requires good communication and the ability to work with colleagues on a team.

Some of the top careers in Artificial Intelligence are

Data Analytics, requiring education on data science. AI primarily functions on using data analysis in a meaningful way to interpret useful outcomes from the analysis.

User Experience job involves working with products to ensure that consumers understand their function and can easily use them. In terms of AI, responsibilities may include understanding how humans are interacting with these tools in order to develop functionality that better fits those humans' needs down the line.

Natural Language Processers are individuals who have both the language and technology skills needed to assist in the creation of these tools. Natural language processing is applying machine learning to language. AI researchers focus on discovering ways to advance the technology itself. The AI field relies on traditional computer science roles such as

Software Engineers in a big way to develop the programs on which artificial intelligence tools function. Software Engineers are part of the overall design and development process of digital programs or systems. In the scope of AI, individuals in these roles are responsible for developing the technical functionality of the products which utilize machine learning to carry out a variety of tasks.

Careers in Artificial Intelligence are high on demand, challenging in performance with potential of a high growth and creative satisfaction. Those looking for a career full of creative adventure the future is calling now for exploration as a contributor to disruptive changes in technology and life.■

Dr. B. B. Das

THE LAND OF HAPPINESS

Bhutan, a small and very beautiful country on our northern border has been recognised as the land of happiness. In today's materialistic world when everyone is longing for peace and happiness, it is inspiring to know how Bhutanese have been able to live so happily.

On 07 Nov 2019, in a small group of 13 couples,we visited Bhutan for 06 days. Around 12:45 am, we landed at Paro international airport, the most difficult air corridor for manoeuvring aircrafts during landing and take-off. Therefore very few pilots are qualified to operate on that airfield.

VIEW POINT | TRAVEL

After getting down from the aircraft, we were thrilled to inhale fresh air under the blue sky of Bhutan. We were highly enthralled to see Paro airport decorated with colourful art work, paintings and display of models, depicting their architectural marvel.

From highly polluted atmosphere of Delhi, to absolutely clean air in Bhutan was an incredible change for us.

Outside the airport the guideTashi was waiting enthusiastically to receive us. While interacting with people at the airport, we could sense the overall behaviour of Bhutanese, highly imposing and pleasant.

Our journey started in a bus. It was very impressive to see the way Bhutanese respect the law of the land. No one can stand in a running bus. The country has no traffic lights, yet vehicles run smoothly on the road without overtaking or honking. Pedestrians can only cross the road at zebra crossings. Even for one person, the vehicles are to stop and allow the person to cross the road. Their sense of discipline was clearly visible everywhere.

On the way we enjoyed the scenic views of the mountain ranges of the Himalaya. Throughout the journey the guide was giving running commentary about his country as well as the landmarks coming on both sides of the road. We travelled a distance more than 50 kmto reach our hotel Gakyil at Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan,a beautiful city situated at an altitude of 2334m.

The hospitality of hotel staff was amazing. They made our stay extremely comfortable. In

next two days, we visited number of monuments such as King's Memorial Chorten, Tashichoe Dzong, Buddha Point, National Library, Folk Heritage Museum, and Changangkha Monastery.

Everywhere we were admiring their unique building design, colour scheme, display of fine arts on wooden doors, windows, pillars, ceiling and pelmets.

It was fascinating to look at cluster of houses built on top of the hills and in valleys, from Sangaygang view point situated at an altitude of 2685m.The multi-coloured houses surrounded by lush green trees on the back drop of mountains, were like master strokes of famous painters.

Thereafter we travelled to Punakha valley, 77km from Thimpu and at an altitude of 1242m. On the way we reached Dochu – la- pass at an altitude of 3100m to behold the beautiful Himalaya range of mountains covered with white veil of snow. It was a wonderful experience for us to witness the magnificent panoramic view of snow covered Himalaya. We then visited the longest suspension bridge and Punakha dzong the most beautiful dzong amongst all dzongs in Bhutan. Dzong

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architecture is a distinctive type of fortress in Bhutan.

At Punakha,we stayed in a beautiful resort, Damchen on the bank of Puna-Chhu, the ever flowing river with crystal clear water. People of Bhutan pay highest respect to rivers and therefore they have been able to maintain river waters very neat and clean. However,the industrialisation is causing threat to river waters. Even then, all five major rivers of Bhutan are maintained very clean throughout their flow.

Next day we travelled back to Paro a distance of 125km. This was the last leg of our trip. Here we visited Paro Dzong, Kyichu Lakgang, and Tiger's Nest View point.

We had a wonderful exposer during our short stay in that colourful and happy country. Butall the time we were trying to fathom out the hidden secretof Bhutanese happiness.

The people of Bhutan follow the path of nonviolence and peace, preached by Gautama Buddha.They believe that desires are the main cause of unhappiness. Hence rise in desires, upsurge unhappiness in life.They, therefore, leads a very simple life to instil inner happiness.

People are religious, peaceloving and value oriented. Even being a Buddhist country, people from different religions live together in peace and harmony without harming national pride.

The life style of Bhutanese has been aligned with the nature so as to realise the gift of God. The environment of the whole country is maintained exceedingly neat, clean and pollution free,which ultimately makes the country so beautiful and attractive.

They hardly get involved in argument, quarrel, fight and criticism. The country has very low crime rate due to strong and honest legal system and peoples' respect for the guidelines to be followed. Men and women, boys and girls proudly wear national dress during working hours. Education and healthcare are free for all. However, everyone

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has to work to earn his/her living and to maintain their life style. They marry early by selecting their life partners and lead a blissful married life. Having strong social moral code and respect for humanity, people are friendly, highly contented and lead a stress free life.

The country has a dedicated ministry of happiness to ensure everyone is happy and comfortable. The government instead of trying for GNP is concerned for achieving GNH (gross national happiness). People are motivated to have deep love for each other and their motherland. So the focus is for all-out respect for human relation and their welfare.

What is the purpose of our ambition for developments, if at the end, we are unable to achieve real happiness? We can only achieve happiness and peace by creating a world embedded with love, affection, sacrifice and mutual understanding and compassion.

We can learn from Bhutanese how to achieve peace and harmony in life to live happily.■

Arvind Passey

MUST WRITERS SHUT-UP AND SHUT-OFF WHILE WRITING?

These days when I pick up a work of fiction I am literally dragged into a net of words where characters seem comfortable with Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and sometimes even Instagram and I find this strange. Plots hover around villains communicating on Gmail, heroes are Whatsapping poetry to their girl-friends, and long-distance conversations are happening on Google Hangouts… and I find all this rather disconcerting. Extra-marital affairs are exclusively online. Ten second videos are flying from one social media platform to another and lols are transmitted as immediate pay-offs. Even fictional characters seem to have moved inside what the world calls the internet. Both solace and restlessness use the broadband almost like old-fashioned men used a hammock in a garden where a real breeze blew. The entire world seems to have shrunk and gone deep inside a laptop, or worse, inside a smartphone screen. Real conversations over real coffee are now just one more addition to the idiotic exchange of words in similar sounding episodes on Netflix. If this is what is being written then I am certain that this is where the real inspirations of the present day are. The internet is the real world now. Inspirations too then have found a way to exist between audio and video bytes. Reading between the lines is dead and probably extinct.

If this is what is real, then writers too need to dive deep into the magical world of routers and servers. Solitude is no longer wandering off into the woods or packing a bag and moving away from the bustle of a big city into the arms of a rustic setting but simply switching off the smartphone or updating on the social media: 'Busy writing my third short-story in the new year. Need your encouragement in the form of likes.' Strange times indeed!

Don't be a Dodo

You're smiling and nodding your head in agreement now. If yes, you're a perception-challenged dodo. The truth is that the kind of inspirations that a social media interaction gives is similar to stale fumes of burnt-out thoughts. There are no real ideas out there on the 4G highways, only caricatures. There are no truths there but clever-looking masks. Even the cats are actually copy-cats. Social media interactions travel back and forth between over-hyped sets of wrongly spelled emotions and insincere and cosmetically enhanced philosophies. Every idea sprinting at a blazing speed is, in reality, similar to a tourist who gets himself clicked at a sea beach standing in knee deep water and waving a scuba gear, announcing to the world, 'I've just had an experience of a lifetime! Muah!' Come on, everyone knows the person cannot even snorkel and wouldn't spend money needed for a scuba dive.

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Truth is quite real

The truth is that writers need real interactions with both people and books simply because no is ever born knowing it all. There are inspirations waiting patiently on every nook in the real world. The real world experiences are similar to stepping out of home to breathe in polluted air to understand what it means to live a life without even knowing that air purifiers exist. Move out and peer closely at the wrinkles of the old man who can barely move but who is still sitting on the pavement selling peanuts. Talk to your maid and listen to her stories. Visit the lanes and by-lanes where she lives and see for yourself that single dark room with no light and no ventilation where eight people spend hours fighting it out. Ask students from the deprived segment what it means to get admission to a computer engineering course without ever having worked on one and with no hope of ever buying a machine. No, everything isn't so deeply creased with dismay… there are faces freshly painted with live enthusiasm out there, lovers who can tell you more about emotions than pout on Roposo ever will.

Real experiences lead to real attachments and a really stubborn wish to write about them. Once a writer has had enough of hobnobbing with reality, it is then time to write.

The writer needs to shut off anything that causes a thought miscarriage

The writing process, some believe, needs a writer to be cloistered with just himself and his thoughts. Correct. This, however, does not mean he needs to impose a ban on every interaction. This is because writing isn't depending entirely on the interactive research done but is constantly changing and evolving… writers need to get back to the research lab (read society as well as social media) to mix new ingredients. And anyway, a writer may lock himself up but cannot possibly put fetters on the mind. Virginia Woolf has written: 'Lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind.'

The search for the right thoughts and sometimes even the right expressions needs a writer to go back and forth between his writing desk or laptop and the real as well as the world that exists on the internet. The world inside his imagination isn't happy to be left all alone though it does need solitude.

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I have realized more than once in my writing sojourns that even interacting with other writings can be useful. It is true that an over-emphasis on reading while the writing process is going on can lead to influences that may not be what a writer desires but, as Stephen King once wrote: 'If you don't have time to read, you don't have the time (or the tools) to write. Simple as that.' But yes, as I have said earlier, writers do need to shut off the external world for long periods during the process of writing and, as Ray Bradbury wrote in Zen in the Art of Writing, 'You must stay drunk on writing so reality cannot destroy you.' Let writing be foremost on your mind even as you, the writer, jumps again and again into the pool of real world and online conversations. ■

Dr. Kulneet Suri
Sr. Director, IMS Noida & IMS DIA

TECHNOLOGY ENABLING TRENDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Data and big data have been buzzwords — rightfully so — for the last several years. Universities are making great progress when it comes to using data to help with retention and student success. However, there is still much room for improvement to take advantage of data-driven decision-making across the entire campus.

For instance, data can be used to determine if classrooms are being utilized optimally before new construction projects are kicked off. It can and should be used to determine if aging computer labs should be renewed or transformed into something that is more useful to the university. Efforts like these can not only streamline campus operations, but also ensure that we are making most of the resources we have in the service of teaching and learning.

Another area where data can be used more is GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data. Historically, GIS data has primarily been used in the hard sciences — but that same data could be analyzed in practically any class on a college campus. Think history, political science, criminal justice, urban planning — there is so much data out there, and we can all do a better job of using it.

The future of any innovation in teaching and learning is almost always a combination of all — or at least most — of the following: academic discipline, pedagogy, learning environment, data and educational technology. And data-informed research and formative evaluation are the key to avoiding just chasing shiny new objects on the one hand and just staying with what we've always done on the other. The foundational blocks for making any headway in analytics, particularly learning analytics, are:

a) institutional (rather than vendor) ownership of data generated by teaching and learning activity;

b) transparency of data models created through our data (rather than being proprietary); and

c) data and integration standards.

Virtual reality and gamification is a very powerful tool whose application is much more than just first-person-shooter games the challenge of this technology is how fast it is moving. Another is that it crosses conceptual boundaries. Is it like watching a movie? Is it like playing a game? Is it like wandering an online landscape without constraint or direction? It has all of these components, which makes it harder to integrate into an educational experience. I'm also interested in how we are exploring other senses — touch, smell and taste — in the context of virtual reality.

YouTube began in February 2005, and 12 years later, Wikipediareports 1 billion hours of content watched on the platform each day. The sheer volume of educational video creates challenges for faculty in creating new content, as well as finding and reusing content. During the busy academic semesters, faculty do not have time to watch, curate and clip videos! The cognitive overload of video use can be significant, leading us to look for specialized collections such as Ted Talks and Khan Academy. Harvard's DART initiative is one recent effort to try to help faculty and instructional designers make full use of open access assets created for edX MOOCs.

As we increase dependence on instructional videos, we also need to focus on issues of accessibility for people with a range of needs.

Digital education is generating new learning opportunities as students engage in online, digital environments and as faculty change educational practices through the use of hybrid courses, personalized instruction, new collaboration models and a wide array of innovative, engaging learning strategies. Furthermore, a 21st century view of learner success requires students to not only be thoughtful consumers of digital content, but effective and collaborative creators of digital media, demonstrating competencies and communicating ideas through dynamic storytelling, data visualization and content curation. As instructors create assignments and develop rubrics for assessing new forms of student work across academic disciplines, faculty and students would benefit from access to new collaborative spaces with the technology and consulting expertise to successfully complete media-rich assignments and projects. One example at Oregon State is in general biology courses, where Senior Instructors Lesley Blair and Mark Lavery infuse their own lectures with media-rich components and have their students include their own media elements in assignments and social media postings. You can follow their journey in changing biology education at vividscience.org and @ VividScience on Twitter.

At the technological level, institutions are increasingly looking at video holistically. It shouldn't matter where your video was made, what equipment or device was used to make it, or where you're going to use it, because everything should be connected. At the same time, we mustn't conflate everything being connected with needing to buy into one single product. What we should look for is modularity, compatibility, adherence to standards (for formats and integrations as well as data), accessibility and ease of use. We exist in a world today where video equipment and tools are becoming modular and compatible, and the capabilities of consumer smartphones, action cameras and even drones have attracted amateurs and professionals alike. The demand for support for digital fluency is growing; everyone has video tools in their pocket; and communicating via DIY media is increasingly commonplace. An enterprise-wide video strategy can help people throughout the institution convey their work, research and creative activity.

At Oregon State, the College of Agricultural Sciences is developing a precision agriculture curriculum, which is all about generating and using data that will allow farmers to make the best decisions possible. Faculty members in the Department of Biological and Ecological Engineering expect IoT to play a significant role in the generation of data that, when matched with the power of the cloud and scientifically validated algorithms, will allow producers to make smart decisions. Assistant Professor Chet Udell, a faculty member in the department, is developing a multi-term curriculum (funded in part by an Information Systems Learning Innovation Grant) which aims to teach students how to build and develop sensor packages and interact with the cloud, thus putting theory into action. In addition, Professor John Selker runs the Open-Sensing Lab, which focuses on developing environmental sensing projects and research using solid-state sensors of water, atmosphere and soil status. Through the Internet of Agriculture (IoA), the technology for sensors and communication could potentially play a critical role to ensure our ability to feed the human population in 2050.■

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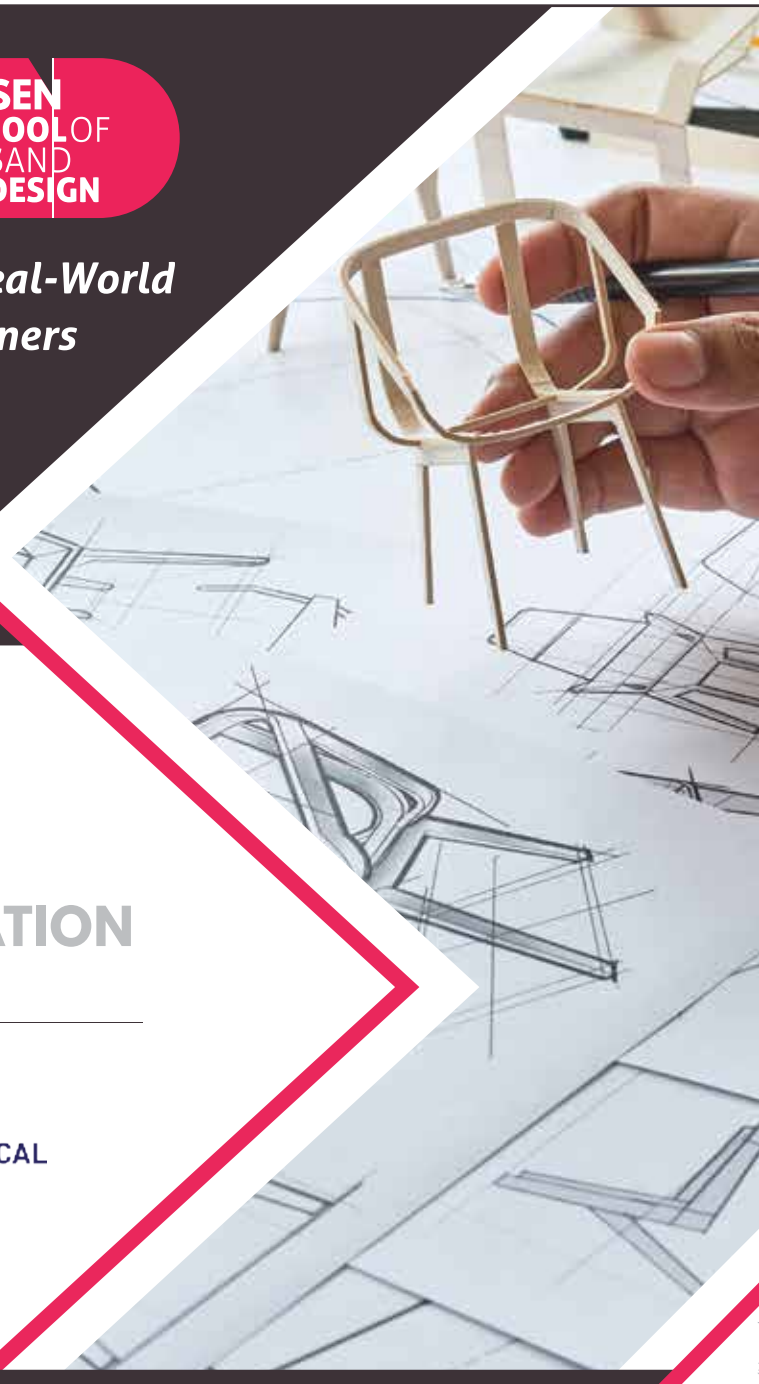

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