

LOCKDOWN

EDITION 33.0

23RD MAY 2021

COVER STORY

Entering College
from behind the
screen

Where
Liberty Dwells

Wanna be a Software Engineer at
Google ? Go to Algo..

NFT
Wisdom Tree



ENTERING *College* FROM BEHIND THE SCREEN

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Main udna chahta hu, daudna chahta hoon, girna bhi chahta hoon, bas rukna nhi chahta...

When you are an incoming fuccha, everyone tells you that **college will be one of the most exciting periods in your life**. New friendships forged over canteen hangouts, meeting cool seniors, and an unsaid yet understood homesickness —every 18-year-old looks forward to this journey where they know they'll make mistakes and **learn lessons that last a lifetime**.

Even as coronavirus loomed over us, the JEE exam finally happened in September 2020 after months of tiring postponement. Any time resembling normalcy, however, was still far off. With all the delays in admissions, colleges set up an accelerated first semester and **our hopes of a 'normal' college life fell prey to the online experience**. On the first day of college, instead of fretting over making new friends, or wandering around on the campus, I was waiting for the lecture to begin in the pixelated confines of Google Meet. One envisioned posing in front of the fountain that would serve as a backdrop for photo-worthy memories. Such hopes were dashed when freshers found themselves part of a classroom dynamic where **WhatsApp groups were formed in a flurry, socialisation took place over Discord servers, and waking up to attend classes at 8 o'clock was a constant struggle**. 2020 had failed to be our entrance into the 'real college world', all the while challenging our ideas about college life.

THE EDICT OF TAPASYA

Hey, Bollywood, newsflash, aerial shots of college, dance floors straight out of five-star hotels, college students breaking out into songs and dance, is a **utopian, unrealistic student life that sells no more in India**. Let all the Indian parents know that 'tapasya' doesn't end when you reach college. You have to **complete loads of assignments**. Your phone notifications keep reminding you of **upcoming weekly short tests, long tests, and viva** in an endless frenzy of upcoming exams.



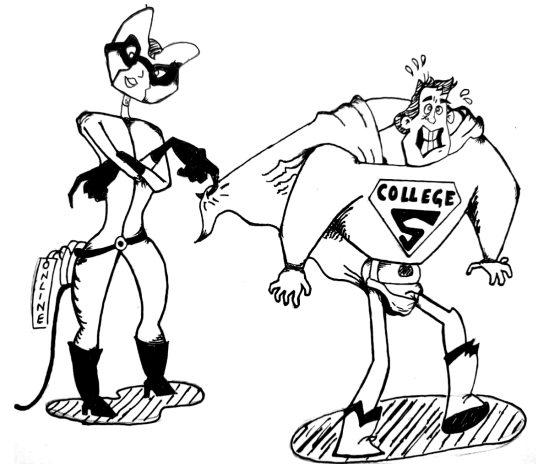
SENIORS: THE FABLED CREATURES



Movies like 3 Idiots and Chhichhore have set up a very stereotypical image of seniors. **Creatures who are supposed to be addressed with the customary greeting of Sir or Ma'am**. Even an iota of disrespect shall beget their wrath. Initially, questions like if they are approachable, if they will get you into some 'XYZ drug addiction', or if these are the people '**joh sadak se utha kar star bana denge**', came to mind. In reality, seniors turned out to be warm and welcoming. **Their word is the gospel, especially before the end sem exams**. If you hesitate to approach them, they go the extra mile to initiate a conversation. Trust me, they'll help you survive these 4 years of college, from being the invaluable inventory of information to empathizing with your conundrums.

I'LL BE THE COLLEGE SUPERSTAR

Expectations of winning all the college events and becoming college royalty might end with you sitting in the crowd clapping like a dying walrus. A CROWD? **Hello, darkness, my old friend...I welcome you again!** The pandemic has led to these superstars sitting behind the screens waiting, **kyunki abhi toh college mein naam karna hai.** You just go from **Honey Singh lite** to **Patrakar Popatlal** of Tarak Mehta.



FINDING "THE ONE"



They say love is temporary, but your college's name written on your resume is permanent, so study hard. Even so, the fantasies creep right in along with all the belly fat you've been gathering while sitting around. You imagine **you'll bump into him at a football game where your dazzling smile and fun personality will win him over.** Or when you look up shyly, he'll ask, "Is this seat taken?" It tends to distract us from the grinds of ordinary life. **In reality, no shy glances or flirty smiles are needed to start a chat with somebody; all it takes is a mutual right swipe.** There are some over-zealous boys, (better known as simps) drooling over BFTech or BBA girls forgetting their distressed EEE end sem exam, and then there are friends to remind you, **ladki kya milgayi bhai ko bhool gaya?**

MOKSHA'21: AN EPISODE LACKING ECSTASY

The panorama of Nescii lawns decked up, set for a DJ night, every corner sees a stall of savoring food. An unexpected gust of wind, hundreds of hands waving in the air, the sun is setting and you are vibing to the songs, probably dancing your night away. **The euphoria in the crowd, the contagious smiles of your friends, everything fills us with so much glee with just a thought of it.** In an attempt to fill the void of the real-life experience of a fest, it was organized online. Alas, **the idea of the fest to run against the monotonous and dreary academic schedule was ruined as it was accompanied by short tests and loads of assignments.**



What one realizes after visiting the college is that an online semester won't give you the happiness of spending a few minutes **laughing in the breezy Nescii lawns or sharing the next cheese sandwich with cold coffee at the Amul with your gang.** As the anxiety and excitement gradually precipitate, the woes and pressure of university life start setting in. **Life took a 360-degree turn** from expecting to play football matches with your friends to asking them to join you for Among Us matches, from spamming stickers in the groups to 100-200 zyada lelo par offline end-sem cancel karado. As we await the results of the end-semester exams **(for which most of us were woefully underprepared)** and the next online semester, we need to realize that there will be moments of self-doubt and regret. After all, what else can we do but follow Rancho's advice? **Trick your heart and say, "All is well."**

WHERE LIBERTY DWELLS

BY: APURVA MISHRA AND BHAGYASHREE DAS

CARICATURE BY: ARPIT JUNEJA

Democracies around the world have been fighting for their soul. White supremacists are taking to the streets in America, neo-Nazis are once again seen in Europe, and right-wing nationalism is on the rise in India. All around the world, tyrants disguised as 'elected leaders' partake in unprecedented abuses of power. Whether we talk about India or Europe, they all have the same story to tell, stories that follow the identical pattern of democracy gradually being uprooted. These countries have digressed from the notion of democracy and are now labelled as 'illiberal democracy' or 'partially-free democracy'.

So, as we lurch into a future of petty and wrathful tweets by celebrities (rings a bell?), and protestors being labelled as 'anti-nationalists'; where does that leave democracy and its ideals?

Adverse shifts in the bedrock of a democracy are induced by pre-existing cracks in the society. These wounds compound over time, spawning a conducive environment for instability to fester.

Although the causes may be varied, there exists a devastating sameness in the repercussions. Political corruption erodes the public's faith in the ruling class. Rhetoric resonating with anti-community-X sentiment gnaws at the institutions established to protect minority rights. Security issues, specifically due to ethnic conflict, chafes hopes of safety, and muscle power emerges as the 'solution'. External pressure by autocratic neighbours stretches a nation's structures into unrealistic dimensions. These pitfalls are a precursor to strongmen who claim to hold the mandate of the people, but surreptitiously consolidate power.

Power begets the desire to get more power. To avoid such cases where the power rests only in the hands of a single person, decentralization of power maintains the balance within political institutions.

But if one were to look at the majority of the countries undergoing a democratic decline, one would notice that their leaders exercise control over all or most of the political institutions.

The pattern that emerges suggests that these leaders gradually attain control by appointing judges or chief justices that align with their welfare and purpose. Further, media outlets are often intimidated, censored, and coerced into materializing a truth favourable for the government.

Here is an example. In what marks a dangerous turn of events, a political leader from the current ruling party of India brazenly stated in a public speech that villages in India would be 'graded' according to which have voted for their party in the greatest numbers, and they would be rewarded in terms of development. In a very precise manner, they have openly stated that the party has access



to confidential voting information. They are aware of who has voted for the party and who hasn't. With access to such sensitive information, they are in control of the electoral system and are capable of sabotaging the elections and democracy itself.

Those with all-encompassing authority are also at the helm of transforming community dynamics. In most liberal democracies, there is an acceptance of the fact that society consists of several, often cross-cutting divisions that generate conflict. It functions on the principle that these factions must seek common ground to reach political consensus. Such a state of affairs is subverted when leaders pit groups against each other in an effort to appeal to their support base. Let's consider the case of Turkey. Past policies disconnected from the East and headed towards the Western way of life. Some regulations were seen as hindrances to religious practice, such as the ban on headaddress. Therefore, pious Turks who long felt excluded

by an old secular elite, are emboldened under the current conservative presidency. They are framed to be 'in opposition' to those troubled by the repeal of women's and minorities' rights, justified because of being in accordance with traditional family values. A country that thrums with animosity develops a strain that can have disintegrating consequences.

One's worldview is molded by the opinions they are exposed to, thus cultivating a unique perception of the truth. Stories that don't conform with one's narrative are dismissed as 'fake news'. Thus, political dialogue reduces to pejorative allegations against the 'traitors' who disagree with prevailing ideologies. Such intolerance impairs conversation, unleashing a profoundly destabilizing effect. The motive of democracy is progress — for all. Difference of opinion adds value to this discussion. Democracy is free as a kite, swaying with the currents of ambition. We must hold on to the string of solidarity, lest our kite will be lost into the unknown and descend with a finality.

Member of European Parliament

Amplified anti-immigration sentiment, running elections on emotion instead of progress

Member of Parliament (India)

She said "The villages will be 'graded' on the basis of number of votes their party gets and will be rewarded by development accordingly"

President of Turkey

Pocketed power and pit groups against each other



DEMOCRACY

“SO YOU WANNA BE A SOFTWARE ENGINEER AT GOOGLE? GO TO ALGO-”

Written by: Joy Mary

Yes, go if you want to; I didn't want to interrupt your ad-watching experience prior to the unlocking of the video titled “The resume that got me into XYZ...” The link of which before getting redirected out of mindless bedevilled scrolling on LinkedIn at 2 AM on a Monday, posed you with the question of affirming consent to a VR experience of self-burdening your career anxiety.

There is this ultraviolet presence of a culture cloud of up-streamed advertising that caters to the job essaying millennials. It claims to further upskill even those who haven't nested the void of college life, those whose gleaming FAANGs are premature and called out for caressing services in exchange of commenting #interested in fake recruitment posts on LinkedIn. To weigh these wide-eyed interns and employees as influencers more than contributors to the work force wouldn't be wrong, and that probably competes for the bummock of an online token professional-nuancing fraud. When the target demographic has seeped into the crevices where it doesn't serve the purpose and professional outlaws lay contradictory resume requirements, influence takes up the space comparable to that of a huge coffee table book.

Were humans ever this tongue-in-cheek?

In a society that feeds off, ‘a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush’ pedagogy of brainwashing academic toddlers into choosing a line that offers job security first, we are manipulated into believing in white-collar supremacy. And while many walk the line, more often than not we're reminded that this is, in fact, a stampede. Ambitions are gaslit as career trajectories systemically grow mundane. The first morning of a white bowl of cereal served would seldom be expected to change colour one day; the promise made of foreseeing the fulfillment of desires — is later found to have never been a part of the full-time prenup anyway. Our work lives are reduced to projects that treat skills as static entities. Lamenting and escapism from work motivation have thus become commonplace.

Even then, the case of ‘who takes the cherry on top’ is



adjudicated in favour of an overly opinionated dystopia on the social web. The parenchyma ranging from Tech to Non-Tech, FinTech to FoodTech, and EdTech to MemeTech have been remarkably fuelled by garden gnomes on social media. For instance, interview prep is presented as a whole genre of jargon on its own, and whiteboard approaches are pitched as if questions can only ride a set linear trigger of thought. The attempts to calculate the professional space under a purview devoid of a psychosocial environment are blasphemous to me. What runs deep in this neural network of an emerging industry of giving back online is the underestimation of consequence; laden on the backs of money-minting eyes, searching for a sense of guidance and trust. It is unclear who ultimately holds more stake in this business, those conquering these platforms and spaces today or those who land here tomorrow after paying good riddance to look through these rose coloured glasses. In a similar midst of it, lest all who wear their company or firm badge, with leverage to inevitably sabotage their future subordinates' roadmaps with referral links, the silver lining is held by genuine referrals and unbranded guidance offered, in times of pandemic and otherwise by the crème de la crème —at the house where conceptual bucketing of advice doesn't rest.

Lastly, bidding on the side of dreams that happen to be under the tutelage of big intercontinental name tags, inherently costs blood, sweat, and virtuosity. Why then, these online posts defining critical points of guidance should only be attendees in the video of your career graph! Who will tell them that while sites like LinkedIn offer the facility of being standby Christmas trees to decorate certificates on, the by-encouragement to do so is embossing a distracting image, far from the reality of the working sector. That they're only an entrenchment of the manifested social waters of the professional sector, along with, of course, being enigmatic pillars of an alternative job-seeking roster. Just like there is no substitute for working hard and slipping in between the rungs of the ladder on occasion, could there be such a thing as professional doom, even deterministically so, based on the statistical singularity of experience that isn't fundamentally applicable to all?

THE VIVA CONUNDRUM

By Arpit Juneja



NFT

The Imminent Future of Digital Market.

WISDOM TREE | BY NAMAN AND DEEPTI

The Nyan Cat, an animated flying cat with a Pop-Tart body leaving a rainbow trail, has been viewed and shared across the web hundreds of millions of times.

In February 2021, Chris Torres, its creator, put a one-of-a-kind version of it as an NFT up for sale, which led to a bidding war for the digital art piece in the last hour of the auction. Nyan Cat was sold for roughly \$580000.

Even with the ever-rising potential for digital media, there exists a prevailing notion that it doesn't consist of collectible assets. This is essentially because digital media has not been commodified on a large scale yet. The sudden popularity for NFT or 'Non-Fungible Token' is an immense leap towards the same.

An NFT is a unique digital token minted, recorded, and traded on a blockchain that can be used to adjudge the authenticity and ownership of a particular asset (an artwork, a music album, a tweet, and possibly even a tangible property). It is important to note that an NFT does not have any intrinsic value, unlike land, gold, etc. Its value is entirely based on what a person pays for it.

Understanding NFTs requires one to know what fungibility means. Calling an object 'fungible' means that it is interchangeable with any identical object. This can be illustrated by a situation wherein a group of friends each put a coin of the same denomination in a bag, shuffle them and take a coin each. The 'fungibility' is demonstrated by the fact that there is absolutely no difference in any of the coins which anyone got, even if the shape and the year it was minted in is different now.

Each NFT is managed and recorded on a blockchain. To date, most NFTs are minted on 'Ethereum', a blockchain renowned for its cryptocurrency 'Ether', which additionally supports decentralized applications, though any blockchain supporting smart contract programming can manage NFTs.

Relevance of NFTs

Unlike physical assets, artists have always found digital assets challenging to monetize due to the facile access to the Internet and the vast amount of content available.

For digital artists, gamers, game designers, etc., NFTs can be the golden opportunity to make a quick buck. They get access to a global audience to showcase and sell their work. As for the collectors and art enthusiasts, NFTs are rare assets that can be purchased from anywhere in the world within seconds with just a click.

Future Prospects

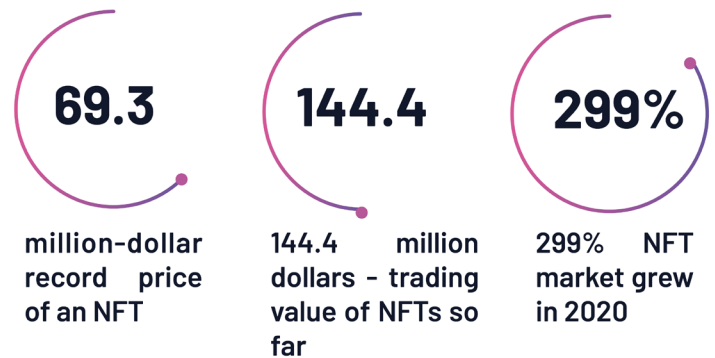
A rational argument against NFTs and blockchain, in general, is the carbon footprint generated by the transactions on the blockchain, for which Ethereum is working sedulously on a 'Proof of Stake model' (Ethereum 2.0), assuring to reduce the carbon emission by 99.98%.

NFTs are posed to have broad applications as digital assets and real-world assets. The main advantage being its non-fungibility which fabricates the ability to charge the online economy and build an entirely new digital market. All critical documents can be minted as an NFT, making them highly secure and impossible to tamper with.

Even though NFTs are still in their infancy, they are poised to have a significant impact on art, photography, music, and other creative industries. Just like every new technology, it will take time to realize the advantages posed by NFTs entirely. It is essential to draw clear objectives for the adoption of NFTs and to understand their capabilities. All we can say is that if you have ideas related to NFT, now is the right time to implement them while they are on the rise.



Hype Stats.



How is ethereum different from other blockchains and why is it the only one dealing with NFT?

Few years after Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, Vitalik Buterin realised that the blockchain technology should not only be limited for decentralized payment. Thus, Ethereum was launched with the purpose of not just a blockchain for cryptocurrency but also as a platform for decentralized financial contracts such as bonds, insurance, loans and decentralized applications.

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