

“If you have knowledge, let others light their candles in it”



## **EMERGING THOUGHTS**

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Chartered Accountants

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## Foreword

We, at SURESH & CO. are extremely glad to release the series “EMERGING THOUGHTS”. This publication is a consolidation of events occurring all around the world and ideas put together by articulated assistants (Interns undergoing Chartered Accountancy course) who will be emerging as Chartered Accountants in near the future and employees.

It's with immense pleasure for us to publish this series of “EMERGING THOUGHTS”, after concluding an overall of more than 2000 topics from our beloved articulated assistants. It's astonishing to understand how constructively the articulated assistants dedicate themselves to publish such creative topics every day. The updates are a diligent involvement by the articulated assistants. It is a distinctive process and it occurs solitarily. Even the team that monitors the releases of the updates keeps transitioning dynamically. This is plausible and attainable only because of the profuse system and the serene resolve of the writers.

Learning new things has always been empowering for all of us. It is not about the subject or topics, it is about the way it expands our worldview and provides us with new ideas. Learning something new forces us to keep our mind active and pushes us to try new things. Our love to learn about different cultures and seeing how different people go about their lives empowered us to develop new perspectives. Learning something new is not only educational for us, but it has improved everything from confidence and creativity to mental health and life satisfaction.

We appreciate the response and the support of all readers, of people who actually don't mind reading the mesmerizing things on mere mails.

“The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man” and at Suresh and co. every individual strives to become unreasonable man in every aspect.

We at SURESH & CO., wanted to share these gems of initial thoughts as conceived by these young minds. It is to be noted that these updates may or may not have been reviewed by any senior or a technical expert and thus these should be used only to kindle thoughts in certain positive direction. Readers are advised to do further research and analysis on the topics which they find interesting.

**“One should always strive for knowledge so that ignorance never touches him.”**

**“Knowledge has to be improved, challenged, and increased constantly, or it vanishes.”**

## Update for the Day # 1531 | Can India kick its tobacco habit?

India is addicted to tobacco. We have over 267 million people consuming tobacco products. In fact, as a country, we are the second biggest consumer of tobacco in the world. And it's not a statistic we can brag about.

Nearly 1.35 million Indians lose their lives every year to chronic diseases directly linked to tobacco consumption. Think cancer, lung disease, and other cardiovascular maladies. If you further dissect this data, you'll see that smoking is responsible for 1 in 5 deaths in men and 1 in 20 deaths in women between the ages of 30 to 69. Chewing tobacco meanwhile is the leading cause of oral cancer in the world. And India has the highest incidence of oral cancer anywhere in the world—not merely because of the size of our population but also because Gutka is a popular alternative here.

And it imposes a huge cost on our people.

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And it imposes a huge cost on our people.

For every ₹100 worth of tax tobacco products seem to generate, the state (and the society) incurs a cost of ₹816. There's the cost associated with lost productivity. There're the ecological costs. There's the burden on the healthcare system. And it can all add up very quickly.

So, the government has been trying to do something about this. And according to news reports, it seems they are now planning to add Nicotine Replacement Therapy products (NRT)—chewing gums, patches, tablets, oral strips and lozenges to the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM).

Nicotine is a chemical compound found in tobacco. It releases neurotransmitters that regulate your mood and behavior. It's what gives you that distinct tobacco feeling. But it's also highly addictive. If you've ever tried to quit smoking, you know how hard it can be. You inevitably relapse after a few days and you start puffing or chewing tobacco again.

Well, Nicotine replacement therapies of course. NRT works by delivering low doses of nicotine through lozenges and patches. The object here is to slowly ramp down your nicotine cravings and eventually wean you off of it entirely. Also, NRTs are a popular alternative since they don't contain over 250 harmful chemicals. You don't have to breathe in carbon monoxide and hydrogen cyanide like you do with tobacco smoke. So, they're a pretty useful alternative.

For starters, NRT products don't come cheap. Take nicotine gums for instance. According to an article from 2018, one piece of gum contains around 2mg of nicotine while a cigarette contains nearly 5mg of nicotine. And that means a person on NRT needs 8 to 10 pieces of gum a day. That adds up to about ₹5 to ₹6 apiece. And considering these therapies can last anywhere between 12

weeks to six months, you can see how these products can cost a fair sum of money.

Also, they carry a GST rate of about 18% and this pushes the price up some more.

But if these products were more affordable, maybe Nicotine Replacement Therapies would see more uptake. And that's why they are planning on introducing NRTs to the "essential medicines" list.

For the uninitiated, this special list contains over 350 "essential" medicines that the government hopes to make more accessible. And they do this by imposing price caps. So as of today, there's a list of drugs that include paracetamols, antibiotics and diabetic medications whose price can't move beyond a certain threshold.

Unfortunately, the list is updated once in 5 years. And it contains a few drugs that people don't even consume anymore. For instance, a drug used to treat hypertension (Methyldopa) actually had zero sales in the past 3 years. Yet, when the NLEM list was updated in 2021, they were still classified as "essential medicines".

**By Rakshith R Ammati**



## Update for the day # 1532 | Phool

Phool is doing its part to clean up the river Ganges by recycling flowers from temples and mosques. Over eight million tons of flowers are discarded in the river every year for religious purposes in South Asia. This is contributing to the pollution of the river Ganges, which provides drinking water for over 420 million people. Phool has come up with what it reports is “the world’s first profitable solution” to the monumental temple waste problem: flower cycling. Women working with Phool collect floral-waste daily from temples. The waste is up-cycled to produce organic fertilizers, natural incense, and biodegradable packaging material.

### Key facts

- 11,060 metric tons of temple-waste has been flower cycled to date;
- 110 metric tons of chemical pesticides that enter the river through temple waste have been offset;
- The income of 73 manual scavenger families has increased at least six-fold;
- 365 families have been impacted by Phool through increased living standards and stable incomes;
- 1,260 women have been supported through Phool to date;
- 19 children whose mothers used to work as manual scavengers have started going to school.

### The problem

Across the country, people bring flowers to temples daily—gifts for the gods, blessings for life, for celebrations—to the tune of more than 800 million metric tons per year. These flowers are thrown into the Ganges and India’s other sacred rivers, a beautiful religious ritual that is having an unfortunate effect. As the flowers rot, they fill the rivers with waste, dumping toxins like arsenic, lead, and cadmium from pesticides, thus causing pollution and enormous levels of water-borne diseases.

Flowers, incense, and other religious items come in plastic packaging adorned with images of the gods. Devotees do not want to throw away this packaging, so they either leave the packaging under trees or immerse it into bodies of water.

### The solution

Phool is solving the problem of flower and packaging waste. They have created a compostable packaging using seed paper infused with Tulsi, or holy basil, seeds, and ink made from vegetable dyes. After using the incense or flowers, all the user must do is unfold the paper, bury it in a pot with dirt, water it regularly, and watch the seeds sprout into a Tulsi plant.

A QR code on the pack sends users to a microsite, where they can share photos of their plant and get discounts on products.

Phool is dealing with flower waste by providing clean, safe jobs for manual workers. Because the flowers have been used for worship, they are seen as sacred and cannot be sent to a landfill. Phool works with local women to collect the flowers from the rivers and then upcycles them into compost and useful products such as incense sticks, soap, and vegan leather goods.

## Helping the planet

Phool collects flowers directly from the rivers to create vermicompost called “Mitti”. “Mitti is a power-packed shot of mineral-rich nutrients and enzymes that energizes the soil. From its source to the end, ‘Mitti’ is made using natural processes, has zero carbon footprint, and remains free from all forms of chemicals and carcinogens.

Soon after launching Mitti, Phool expanded the product range to include incense sticks and cones made of flowers instead of the traditional coal.

## Helping people

Phool's products are handcrafted by women who used to be manual scavengers. India's 1.6 million manual scavengers collect human excreta from dry latrines and sewers daily, load it into cane baskets or metal troughs and carry it away on their heads for disposal at the outskirts of the settlement. For centuries, manual scavengers have dealt with massive social and health risks. There are about 4.5 million dry latrines in India where the human excreta are cleaned manually.

Now, these women are employed with Phool, earning over INR 7,000 per month. These women now have secure bank accounts, access to health insurance, clean drinking water, and toilets.

## Spillover effect

Phool can be easily replicated in any city. It currently works in four cities in Uttar Pradesh, with plans to expand to Bangladesh, and Nepal. New products are in the works (including a biodegradable Styrofoam alternative) and they are in talks with the government of India to scale up across the country.

## By Vishnu M S



## Update for the day #1533 | Hyundai vs Hyundai

The Curious case of Hyundai vs Hyundai

The Indian government is dead serious about EV adoption in the country and it wants to make India a production hub for the battery component of EVs. So, it launched a production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme worth ₹18,100 crores to woo companies to set up their manufacturing units here. And in March, the government announced the successful applicants to the scheme. Newspaper headlines proclaimed, “Reliance, Ola, Hyundai in first battery storage PLI list”.

But in July, it turned out that Hyundai Global Motors Co. Ltd. (HGM) who was one of the applicants wasn't actually Hyundai, the maker of the popular i20. HGM was a completely different entity. As a result, Hyundai made an announcement saying, “Hey, we didn't actually apply for the PLI scheme!”. It seemed as if HGM used the trademark name of ‘Hyundai’ and its logo to apply for the PLI scheme.

Isn't it illegal?

It is. But HGM claims that it acquired the trademark rights to use the name “Hyundai ” and the logo through a contract with Hyundai Motor. It also claims that HGM was set up under the approval of Hyundai Motor and has business dealings with the latter from 2011 until the end of 2020.

Anyway, the matter went to the Indian courts which asked HGM to stop using the name and logo by the 16th of September. The Indian government also started reexamining the proposal. So finally, last week, HGM withdrew from the PLI scheme. It knew its hopes were crushed.

However, this entire incident begets a larger question—Weren't enough checks done by the government before shortlisting HGM for the PLI?

**By Shreelakshmi Nair**





## Update for the day #1534 | Can 3D printing solve the world's housing crisis?

Can 3D printing solve the world's housing crisis?

Let's look at how 3D-printed houses work in the first place.

First, you get your desired design ready using special software. Then you connect it to a huge 3D printer, a 15-foot-high machine. Then, a special concrete mix is fed into the printer. Typically, this mixture is much thicker than regular concrete. It sets better and faster. Now say, you want to build a rectangular room, the machine can pipe concrete in a rectangular motion, line after line to build a room.

It's quite obvious that this process saves time. And you don't need as many hands-on decks either.

See, the construction industry creates almost 30% of the world's overall waste. It includes things like packaging materials, excess cement, wood, bricks, and other materials left behind. With a 3D-printed house, builders only need to print exactly what they need. And you could minimize waste this way.

For instance, in Malawi, 3D printing reduced construction waste by almost 10 times and even cut down CO2 emissions by up to 70%.

So, if it's faster, cheaper, and more environmentally friendly, what's stopping the world from embracing this to deal with the affordable housing crisis?

Well, the first problem is scale. Although 3D printing has been around for a couple of decades, it hasn't set the stage on fire. Take for instance the US. There are probably around 10 companies seriously dabbling with 3D printing. In India, the numbers look even worse. Also, companies looking to enter the industry have to make a massive one-time investment and unless they get mass construction orders for 3D-printed houses, it isn't a viable enterprise.

While many companies have been able to leverage massive 3D printers to build one-off structures, they haven't been able to consistently print functional buildings so far. As one article notes, "Conventional buildings are not made by extrusion or casting or any other single manufacturing process; they are accretions of dozens of different techniques from cast-and-pour concrete to spot-welded steel extrusions to laminated glass. How could one process replace the dozens of others that we currently use? Yes, that is part of 3D printing's promise, **that** it's versatile enough to do the work of multiple machines, **but** current printed buildings are either minimally functional, if gorgeous, pavilions or houses that are basically dumb printed boxes with traditional bric-a-brac tacked on."

The third issue is incentives. The government has rightfully recognized that 3D printing could be used for very specific use cases. Perhaps even the "affordable housing project." But unless they can incentivize manufacturers to make massive investments, things aren't exactly going to pan out the way you expect them to.

And finally, affordable housing needs more than just cost-effective building methods. You need affordable land. And since land is in short supply, you can only make this work if you start printing multistoried homes. However, 3D printing machines haven't yet been deployed to build such homes.

So yeah, there's a long way to go before we can all start 3D printing homes. But hopefully, we find a solution for affordable housing one way or another.

By **S H L Vasavi**



## Update for the day #1535 | Cultivating Happiness

### The key to happiness

Do you, like many people, have a mental list of things you think you need in order to be truly happy? There are many externals our society teaches us to chase: success, wealth, fame, power, good looks, romantic love. But are they really the keys to happiness?

The research says no, at least when it comes to long-term happiness. A prestigious award, a big raise, an exciting new relationship, a fancy new car, losing weight, these things can make us feel great at first, but the thrill doesn't last very long. Human beings are quick to adapt to new circumstances—a quality that has helped us survive and thrive. But it also means that the positive things that initially make us happier soon become our new normal and we return to our old happiness baseline.

However, researchers in the field of positive psychology have found that you can genuinely increase your happiness and overall satisfaction with life—and it doesn't require a winning lottery ticket or some other drastic change of circumstances. What it takes is an inner change of perspective and attitude. And that's truly good news, because it's something anyone can do.

### Myths and facts about happiness

There are a lot of myths out there about what will make you happy. So, before we embark on a tour of the strategies that do work for boosting happiness, let's dispense with the things that don't.

**Myth:** Money will make you happy.

**Fact:** It's stressful when you're worried about money. In order to be happy, you do need enough of it to cover your basic needs: things like food, shelter, and clothing. But once you have enough money to be comfortable, getting more money isn't going to make much of a difference in how happy you are. For example, studies of lottery winners show that after a relatively short period of time, they are no happier than they were before their win.

**Myth:** You need a relationship in order to be happy.

**Fact:** Being in a healthy, supportive love relationship does contribute to happiness, but it's not true that you can't be happy and fulfilled if you're single. Indeed, singles who have meaningful friendships and pursuits are happier than people in mismatched romantic relationships. It's also important to note that even a good marriage or romantic partnership doesn't lead to a permanent, intense happiness boost. Expecting your partner to deliver your happily-ever-after may actually harm the relationship in the long-run. You—not your partner or your family members—are responsible for your own happiness.

**Myth:** Happiness declines with age.

**Fact:** Contrary to popular belief, people tend to get happier with age. Study after study confirms that seniors experience more positive emotions and fewer (and less intense) negative emotions than young people and middle-aged adults. Generally, older adults are also more satisfied with their lives, less sensitive to stress, and more emotionally stable. Even with the losses that come with age, it is the happiest time of life for many people.

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Myth: Some people are just happier than others and there's nothing you can do to change that.

Fact: Genetics do play a role in happiness. Current research suggests that people are born with a certain happiness "set point." But that only accounts for about half of our happiness level. Another 10% is due to life circumstances. That leaves 40% that is determined by your actions and choices. That's a lot of control!

Tip 1: Train your brain to be more positive

Our brains are wired to notice and remember the things that are wrong. It's a survival mechanism that helped keep our cave-dwelling ancestors safe in a world where there were many physical threats. But in today's comparatively safe world, this biological predisposition to focus on the negative contributes to stress and unhappiness.

While we can't change our nature, we can train our brains to be more positive. This doesn't mean putting on a smiley face and whistling a happy tune no matter what's going on. You don't have to ignore reality or pretend things are wonderful even when they're not. But just as dwelling on negative things fuels unhappiness (and plays a big role in depression and anxiety), choosing to notice, appreciate, and anticipate goodness is a powerful happiness booster.

Express gratitude

Give sincere thanks to others

Keep a gratitude journal

Count your blessings.

Tip 2: Nurture and enjoy your relationships

Relationships are one of the biggest sources of happiness in our lives. Studies that look at happy people bear this out. The happier the person, the more likely that he or she has a large, supportive circle of family and friends, a fulfilling marriage, and a thriving social life.

That's why nurturing your relationships is one of the best emotional investments you can make. If you make an effort to cultivate and build your connections with others, you will soon reap the rewards of more positive emotions. And as you become happier, you will attract more people and higher-quality relationships, leading to even greater positivity and enjoyment. It's the happiness gift that keeps on giving.

Tip 3: Live in the moment and savor life's pleasures

Think about a time when you were depressed or anxious. Chances are, you were either dwelling on something negative from the past or worrying about something in the future. In contrast, when you focus on the present moment, you are much more likely to feel centered, happy, and at peace. You're also much more likely to notice the good things that are happening, rather than letting them pass by unappreciated or unobserved. So how do you start to live more in the moment and savor the good things life has to offer?

Tip 4: Focus on helping others and living with meaning

There is something truly fulfilling in helping others and feeling like your actions are making a difference for the better in the world. That's why people who assist those in need and give back to others and their communities tend to be happier. In addition, they also tend to have higher self-esteem and general psychological well-being.

Tip 5: Take better care of your health

You can be happy even when you're suffering from illness or bad health, but that doesn't mean you should ignore the aspects of your health that are in your control. Exercise and sleep are particularly important when it comes to happiness.

**By Sanmathi**



## Update for the day #1536 | Towards a better work life balance.

### TOWARDS A BETTER WORK-LIFE BALANCE

In today's highly competitive environment people are giving more importance to their work by working hard, spending more time at the office, learning and adapting to the changing business environment to stay relevant.

But we tend to forget that we need time for self, family & the society to stay happy & satisfy our own needs.

The time we spend with friends and family helps us stay calm and sane in this insane work life. It helps us to relax, refocus & get better at our jobs.

Work life balance is a situation where you prioritize between work & your personal life.

Work life balance doesn't mean an equal balance but a healthy balance. A well-balanced life is when we put equal efforts into all the important areas of our life. You cannot let your work consume your life.

### What are the causes of Work life imbalance?

- Work overload & long working hours.
- Too little control over work.
- Increased responsibility at work.
- Over prioritizing work.
- Cannot let go of perfectionism.

### Tips to improve your work life balance:

- Exercise & meditate: Even when we're busy, we make time for the crucial things in life, we eat, we sleep, we dress up, we socialize. And one of the most important needs- exercise – it is an effective stress buster.
- Limit time-wasting activities: identify what's important in your life. This list might differ for each one of us, so make sure your list reflects your priorities & choices. And be wise while deciding where you want to invest your time.
- The structure of your Lifestyle: Lifestyle plays a very vital role in one's life. Having a healthy lifestyle is very important. Take a birds-eye view of your life and ask yourself: What changes could make your life easier & better?
- Start small. Build from there: we've all been here: when we make New year's resolutions that we forget by February. It's the same with work-life balance when we take on too much too quickly. Make small changes that builds the bridge towards a better life.
- Manage your time: Give yourself enough time to get things done. Don't overschedule yourself.
- Care for yourself: A healthy Lifestyle is essential to coping with stress to achieve work life balance. Eat well, include physical activity in your daily routine and get enough sleep.

**Know when to seek professional help**

If your life feels too chaotic to manage and you're spinning your wheels worrying about it, talk to a mental health provider. If you have access to an employee assistance program, take advantage of available services.

Creating work-life balance is a continuous process as your family, interests and work life change. Periodically examine your priorities — and make changes, if necessary — to make sure you're keeping on track.

**By MEGHA JAIN**



## Update for the day # 1537 | Why Musk denounced Bitcoin?

In February of this year, Tesla announced that it had purchased \$1.5 billion worth of bitcoin while also suggesting that it intended to accept Bitcoins as a mode of payment from people looking to buy its vehicles. This was a show of confidence by all accounts. And the value of the cryptocurrency soared.

But then, just last week, Elon Musk broke his promise. After selling about 10% of the company's bitcoin holding, he announced that Tesla had suspended purchases using bitcoin amid concerns surrounding the use of fossil fuels in mining. The price of bitcoin crashed and investors were up in arms. And while you might question the timing of the announcement, Musk was indeed pretty accurate with his assessment.

Mining bitcoin is expensive. Each participant in the network solves a mathematical problem to keep the network secure. And these computations are carried out using sophisticated computers that use inordinate amounts of energy. Reports allege that the bitcoin network consumes as much electricity as a medium-sized country (Like Egypt). And since miners predominantly operate in countries that offer cheap electricity by burning dirty fuel, it's been a source of concern for many people in the ecosystem.

The only problem however is that Elon Musk knew all of this back in February. So why would he make such a public announcement only to retract a few months later? It doesn't make any sense. In fact, many people now believe that he's dabbling in market manipulation. That this was a deliberate ploy to affect the value of Bitcoin. However, considering Tesla has promised not to dump their bitcoin holdings yet, maybe there's a different explanation.

One theory, in particular (from a Twitter user), is gaining interest. Unfortunately, it's a bit difficult to wrap your head around this one. So, we will have to take a minor detour before we get to the meaty bits.

Let's start with Tesla and America's environmental initiatives. Many states in the US mandate automakers to produce a certain number of clean energy vehicles or in other cases reduce CO2 emissions. If they don't, the state penalizes them. So, if you're a traditional automaker who's still struggling to put together the infrastructure needed to pump out energy efficient vehicles by the bulk, then you're in for a rough ride. Thankfully, however, you do have a "get out of jail" card. If you can't meet your quota, you can go to somebody who does.

For instance, consider Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs). These certificates or credits, as they are often called, prove that you've done your fair share in reducing the carbon footprint. And if you generate excess credits, beyond your mandated quota, you can sell them to others, who have trouble meeting their targets. You can make money off of this scheme if somebody is willing to pay up. Tesla, as you may have already guessed is in the business of renewables and since they're a market leader of sorts, they get access to boatloads of RECs. RECs, they can sell to traditional automakers like Fiat-Chrysler and General Motors.

And this works well for stakeholders involved. The old companies now have to pay the likes of Tesla to avoid harsh penalties and Tesla has an added incentive to keep producing more energy-efficient vehicles. And if the old guard doesn't fall in line and make the transition to EV, then they'll have to keep paying their biggest competitor boatloads of money each year. It's a huge disincentive.

In fact, Tesla made \$428 million from selling RECs between April and June 2020. And while that may pale in comparison to the \$6 billion, they made in total revenues that quarter, you have to



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remember that the RECs come at no cost. They are pretty much pure profits. So, it's kind of a big deal. Unfortunately, for Tesla, traditional automakers are catching up. They're trying to meet the clean energy quota themselves and they may no longer need Tesla to sell them the coveted RECs. So, analysts have been skeptical of Tesla's prospects on this front.

But then in April 2021, something changed.

The White House asked the Environmental Protection Agency to study whether electric vehicles can generate renewable fuel credits. This is a bit different from the RECs that we just talked about. Since 2005, the US has also had a plan in place to reduce energy emissions. Under the U.S. Renewable Fuel Standard, oil refiners were expected to blend a certain number of biofuels into their fuel mix. If they didn't meet the quota, then they were expected to buy tradeable credits from those that did. These credits were called Renewable identification numbers or RINs. It's like RECs, only in this case, it's supposed to aid progress in the renewable energy market. And as of today, this market is dominated by ethanol producers who sell these lucrative credits to oil refiners across the US.

But with the White House now seeking a review, it might pave the way for the likes of Tesla to participate as well. The company already produces electricity from biogas. And a recent report from Reuters alleges that Tesla has an application pending with the Environment Protection Agency. If it goes through, Tesla could potentially start generating and selling RINs while also mustering billions in revenues. It's an opportunity you simply can't afford to pass up. So, the story goes that Musk disowned Bitcoin in an attempt to reinforce his commitment to the environment. That this was all an elaborate ploy to sway the regulators at the EPA. It's an interesting theory.

However, knowing Elon Musk, maybe he's just trolling people for the laughs. So yeah, those are the two explanations, and if you have a hot take on the matter, don't forget to let us know on Twitter.

**By Namratha D V**



## Update for the day #1538 | Nomophobia

Do you have trouble putting down your smartphone or feel anxious when you know you'll lose service for a few hours? Do thoughts of being without your phone cause distress? If so, it's possible you could have nomophobia, an extreme fear of not having your phone or not being able to use it.

Most of us depend on our devices for information and connection, so it's normal to worry about losing them. Suddenly not being able to find your phone probably sparks worries about how to deal with losing photos, contacts, and other information. But nomophobia, shortened from "no mobile phone phobia," describes a fear of not having your phone that's so persistent and severe it affects daily life.

What are the symptoms?

Emotional symptoms include:

- a) worry, fear, or panic when you think about not having your phone or being unable to use it
- b) anxiousness and agitation if you have to put your phone down or know you won't be able to use it for a while
- c) panic or anxiety if you briefly can't find your phone

Physical symptoms include:

- a) tightness in your chest
- b) trembling or shaking
- c) feeling faint, dizzy, or disoriented
- d) rapid heartbeat and increased sweating

What causes this phobia?

Nomophobia is considered a modern phobia. In other words, it most likely stems from increased reliance on technology and concern over what might happen if you suddenly couldn't access needed information. Existing information about nomophobia suggests it occurs more frequently in teenagers and young adults.

A fear of isolation may, understandably, play a part in the development of nomophobia. If your phone serves as your main method of contacting the people you care about, you'd most likely feel pretty lonely without it.

Another cause might be a fear of not being reachable. We all keep our phones close if we're waiting for an important message or call. This can become a habit that's hard to break.

Your risk for developing nomophobia may increase if you have a close family member who has a phobia or another type of anxiety.

Living with anxiety in general can also increase your risk for developing a phobia.

How is it diagnosed?

If you recognize some signs of nomophobia in yourself, it can help to talk to a therapist. Frequently using your phone or worrying about not having your phone doesn't mean you have nomophobia.

There's no official diagnosis for nomophobia yet, but trained mental health professionals can recognize signs of phobia and anxiety and help you learn to cope with symptoms in a productive way

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to help overcome their effects.

The bottom line:

Nomophobia might not yet be classified as an official mental health condition. However, experts agree this issue of the technology age is a growing concern that can affect mental health.

Nomophobia appears most common in young people, though many phone users experience some degree of symptoms.

If you regularly use your phone, you might experience a brief moment of panic when you realize you don't have it or can't find it. This doesn't mean you have nomophobia.

But if you worry so much about not having your phone or not being able to use it that you can't focus on what you need to do, consider reaching out to a therapist for help.

Nomophobia can improve with treatment and lifestyle changes.

**By Raki Saha**



## Update for the day #1539 | One Nation, One Charger!

“Hey, can I get a Type-C charger?”

You've probably done it once at least. And it's annoying, isn't it? Especially if you're with your friend who only carries an iPhone charger.

But luckily, this may become a thing of the past.

Because the Indian government is considering a “single charger policy” for the entire country. In a recent meeting, folks from the Consumer Affairs Ministry set up a meeting with device manufacturers to discuss the matter. And it seems they are asking all electronics manufacturers to conform to a certain standard. And no, we're not just talking about mobile phones. It includes the entire gamut of portable e-devices—mobiles, tablets, wearables like watches, and laptops.

But why is the Indian government keen on imposing such a policy you ask?

Well, it probably boils down to electronic waste (e-waste). According to a Mint report, urban homes have 10 to 14 unused chargers lying around. And these old and dusty chargers create a lot of waste. To put things into perspective, India had 22,700 tons of e-waste in FY17, but that figure has surged to a staggering 350,000 tons in FY21. Now mind you, these are just official figures. Some people estimate that 90–95% of e-waste makes its way into the informal sector. So, you could be looking at around 3 million tons of e-waste every year.

And that's a big problem.

Anyway, India isn't the first country to have this brainwave. The EU has already introduced a similar mandate. In 2 years, the USB Type-C will become the common charging port for all mobile phones, tablets and cameras across the European Union. And that includes the likes of Apple as well.

But the big question is, can a common charger make a big dent in the e-waste problem?

Well, maybe not. Because chargers only contribute to a measly 0.1% of global e-waste. But this could result in savings for consumers.

You see, if you're buying a new phone, manufacturers won't have to pack a new charger alongside it. This could make phones cheaper. Also, if people have a standard charger across devices, they'll end up buying fewer chargers. And the EU believes that this could help consumers save up to €250 million a year. It's a massive sum of money!

But India may be pursuing this policy for an entirely different reason. About 60–90% of the world's e-waste is traded illegally or dumped in developing countries like Ghana, Nigeria, China, Pakistan and India. And while India does ban the import of e-waste, they still make their way into the country under the garb of refurbished goods. Which explains why the total value of all e-waste imports still keeps growing at 12.3% every year.

Now if the likes of the EU start imposing a common standard across Europe, India could become a dumping ground for chargers they don't want anymore. However, if we have a common standard imposed already, we could turn away any “refurbished” chargers that don't fit our new mandate, because nobody needs them anymore.

But that's not to say that everybody is gung-ho about this move.

There are concerns, primarily from manufacturers. They believe this move may stifle innovation. For instance, consider this—the first USB chargers hit the market sometime in 1996. Now imagine regulators demanded manufacturers to adopt a common standard back in the day. Would chargers have shrunk in size? Would they still be as sleek as they are today? Would they perform as well as they do now?

Unlikely. Most companies invested good money in optimizing their chargers and the products we have today are a testament to this fact. So, you can see how this move may impact consumers negatively.

But global manufacturers clearly have an ulterior motive here. A common charger will force them to ditch their proprietary technology. And they won't be able to aggressively market their fast-charging capabilities. This explains why they're not entirely happy with this move.

Indian manufacturers on the other hand have their own reservations. They believe adopting a common charging specification (say a Type-C port) will increase costs across the board—even for those who manufacture feature phones. And if they can't pass on the cost to consumers, they may have to abandon these product lines entirely. Elsewhere, the chairman of the India Cellular and Electronics Association believes that this may impact India's aspirations to be a world leader in manufacturing chargers. He believes adopting a single standard could put manufacturers here at a disadvantage who have come to dominate the market for chargers below \$5.

So yeah, there's some belief that a common charger policy will help consumers a great deal but also a few reservations.

We will just have to wait and see how the government goes about this.

**By Sai Manjush**



## Update for the day #1540 | NRAI vs Zomato & Swiggy. Again!

In May 2022, Swiggy splashed a cool \$120 million to acquire Dine out.

For the uninitiated, dine out was a discovery platform. You could browse menus, discover restaurants and even book tables on the app. And if you paid via Dine out's wallet, you were also entitled to receive cashback and discounts. In fact, dine out's popularity rose in such a spectacular manner that in 2021, people were booking 8,500 tables every hour across India using the platform!

And so Swiggy thought, "Hey, we want to go after Zomato, but why reinvent the wheel in helping people discover restaurants for dining out? We have the cash, so let's just buy the company!"

And it did. Swiggy acquired the company, took Dine out's restaurant booking and discount feature and rebranded it as Swiggy Diner.

That's the story so far. But you could turn around and ask—Why bring this up now?

Well, the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI)—an entity that represents about 5,00,000 member restaurants, isn't exactly pleased with the developments. In fact, they aren't just miffed with Swiggy. They've also got Zomato in their crosshairs. More specifically the payment gateway—Zomato Pay.

But wait...what exactly is NRAI's problem with these features?

Well, this is what they said: "Zomato Pay and Swiggy Diner both operate broadly on the same construct—no cost/subscription fee to the customer to participate; restaurants must compulsorily offer a discount in the range of 15–40% to be part of the program...Restaurants must also compulsorily pay a commission in the range of 4–12% on every transaction made via the respective payment gateway to Zomato or Swiggy."

And if we had to take a guess about what they're implying here, well, think of it this way.

So far, new restaurants have been at the mercy of Zomato and Swiggy for online deliveries. But with these new developments, they're monopolizing the whole industry. If they're constantly incentivizing people to book tables and pay online, then customers will inevitably depend on these platforms for all their booking and payment needs. You could be ordering in or dining out. You'll likely use these apps. And if this behavior becomes ubiquitous then every restaurant will inevitably have to pay the "Zomato/Swiggy" tax i.e., the exorbitant commissions NRAI keeps talking about.

But... they have another concern they say—Data.

The food delivery companies don't share a lot of data with their restaurant partners. And they often struggle to build a profitable menu as a consequence. They know very little about you or where you're from or what you're eating habits include.

But aggregators have used this data to build and market their own "cloud kitchens." They know what customers want, where they live, the order frequency and all that. They're profiting off of this data while they continue to fleece restaurants. And NRAI alleges that this is patently unfair. They even filed a complaint with the Competition Commission of India

But with aggregators now moving into new territories, their fears have only amplified. NRAI believe these middlemen will similarly “colonise dine-in data” too. They’ll benefit from it. They’ll sell the data to third parties and advertisers and make more money in the process.

And considering restaurants will now have a very limited understanding of their customers, they could become more dependent on Zomato and Swiggy—a death knell, according to NRAI.

But Zomato and Swiggy will likely argue otherwise. Customers flock to these apps because they add considerable value. They offer convenience, discounts and cashbacks. And if restaurants do feel miffed, they always have the opportunity to band together and make their voice known.

Remember the #logout campaign?

When Zomato introduced Zomato Gold and forced participating restaurants to offer free food and massive discounts, many felt displeased with the predatory pricing strategy. Eventually, they made their displeasure known by logging out of the app entirely. That avenue is still available.

So Zomato and Swiggy will likely stand their ground.

And yeah, there’s an impasse right now. Both companies are under intense pressure to finally turn a profit while restaurants continue to heal from the wounds inflicted during the lockdown.

**By Lavanya R**



## Update for the day #1541 | 'You are not fooling anybody...' EAM Jaishankar on US F-16 package for Pakistan

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar was having an interaction with people of the Indian diaspora in Washington when he was asked a question about United States decision to send the F-16 package to Pakistan

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar took a sharp dig at the US deciding to send the F-16 fighter jet fleet sustainment program to Pakistan earlier this month.

Attacking the US argument that it was sending the F-16 fighter jet for Pakistan to meet 'current and future counterterrorism threats', he said 'you are not fooling anybody by saying these things'

The EAM who is on a 10-day visit to the US was interacting with the Indian diaspora when he was asked a question about the India-US relationship and the US deciding to 'sell' the F-16 aircraft to Pakistan.

Talking about the US-Pakistan relationship he said "Very honestly, it's a relationship that has neither ended up serving Pakistan well, nor serving the American interests. So, it is really for the United States today to reflect on what are the merits of this relationship and what do they get by it,

Taking a sharp look at the way the US-Pakistan relationship has evolved in recent years he said, "If I were to speak to an American policy-maker, I would really make the case (that) look what you are doing... forget about us it's actually not good for you, look at the last 3 years on where this relationship has gone and what cost you have paid"

On F-16 aircraft he said, "For someone to say I am doing this because it is all counter-terrorism content and so when you are talking of an aircraft like a capability of an F-16 where everybody knows, you know where they are deployed and their use. You are not fooling anybody by saying these things,"

Earlier this month, the US government led by President Joe Biden decided to overturn the decision of his predecessor Donald Trump to suspend military aid to Pakistan in lieu of it providing safe havens for the Afghan Taliban and Haqqani network. Biden administration, however, approved a \$450 million F-16 Fighter jet Fleet sustainment programme for Pakistan arguing that it would sustain Islamabad's capability to meet current and future counterterrorism threats by maintaining the F-16 fleet.

Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh had earlier expressed India's Concerns over the US decision to provide sustenance package for Pakistan's F-16 fleet.

Earlier, the EAM addressed the United Nations General Assembly on Saturday (Local time) and met with UN Security Council Secretary-General Antonio Guterres along with other world leaders.



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On the Washington leg of his visit, EAM is expected to meet US Secretary of State Antony Blinken along with other prominent members of the Biden Administration.

**By Rajbalam**



## Update for the day #1542 | Why Indian states are going bankrupt like Sri Lanka

Indian states are going bankrupt just like Sri Lanka

On the 11th of June 2022, the reserve bank of India released a very important document about the economy of the States of India. Some of our Indian states have been managing their finances so bad that these states could be heading towards the same state as Sri Lanka's economy! And we all know what's happening in Sri Lanka right now! And the worst part is that if this continues for a long time, the entire country of India will lose money and could face another economic crisis!

The cause of all this unrest is Sri Lanka's worsening economic crisis. Inflation is currently at 55%. The protests come in with the country's financial crisis. Now this follows incredible scenes in the capital as thousands of protesters storm the presidential palace.

Reasons Why Sri-Lanka Is Facing Economic Crisis-

They spent 27 years into fighting a civil war that emptied their coffers and repelled foreign investments. They did not diversify their exports and were heavily relying on plantation and tourism. And lastly, they took a load of debt and channelize it towards economically unviable welfare schemes.

Eventually their debt to GDP ratio went for a toss to 110% and now the country is in a pathetic state.

And just like this debt GDP ratio used to check the financial health for countries.

For states, there is a metric called debt to GSDP ratio. The ratio of the debt of the state versus the gross state domestic product or GDP of the state. This ratio is ideally supposed to be around 20%. While states like Maharashtra, Gujarat stand at less than 20%, Punjab, Bihar, Rajasthan, Kerela, UP have the worst debt percentage, with Punjab and Rajasthan standing at a disastrous 53.3% and 39.5%, respectively. And what's even worse is that Punjab spent 21.3% of its revenue in just interest payments.

And according to this RBI document, the Reserve Bank of India has raised concerns about three such Expenditures. The first concern is with the pension expenditures. To tell you about it, this is a story that dates way back to early 2000s. During this time, the net present value of the pensioners, promises to civil servants and pensioners added up to 60% of India's GDP. So clearly, it was a big burden on the economy of the country. This is when the Vajpayee government came up with something called the National Pension Scheme.

From 2009 onwards, not just government employees, but anyone could contribute to the fund. So, a lot of money was actually being used by the government and private companies to do business and generate profits.

The money that is acting as pension is not coming directly from the government, but with the returns generated by the funds in the market. So, this way, the cost incurred by the government on pensions in the long run was expected to decrease by a large extent.

Instead of fixed returns, the return is based on market conditions. So, the government does not have to take the risk of giving up pensions even during bad market conditions. And when the scheme was launched, all the states opted for the national pension scheme, except for West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

Now, the point to be noted over here is that the impact of the new pension scheme could only be seen after 30 years of execution because the people employed under the scheme got accrued from

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January 2004 onwards. So, the impact can only be seen in 2034 after these employees retire and all the pensioners in the existing pay list of the government pass away.

And now that Rajasthan has brought the old pension scheme back, even Chhattisgarh has done the same. And the leaders of other states are also becoming motivated to reverse the national pension scheme. And this is all being done right ahead of their elections.

So, you see, just like in Sri Lanka, Rajasthan's welfarism is coming at the cost of long-term development in spite of the high debt to GSTP percentage of 39.5%. This is the reason why this policy is considered as a fiscal disaster and the Reserve Bank of India has raised concerns.

Mr. Rajeev and Ms. Renuka Sane point out that Rajasthan spends 23,000 crores on pensions and 60,293 crores on salaries and wages. This constitutes 56% of its own tax and non-tax revenues. So practically ten lakh families constituting about 6% of the 1.64 crore families preempt 56% of the state's revenues. So, if the old pension scheme is executed in the short run, the people will definitely be happy. The politicians will be happy because they'll get votes and people are happy. In fact, in the short term, even the government will cut its expenses because they don't have to contribute the 10% to the pension fund, right? But in the long run, the people of Rajasthan will be severely affected because the financials of the government will be used more for pensions and salaries instead of development and actual welfare.

And this brings me to the Second concern of RBI which are nothing but unviable subsidies and unnecessary freebies.

For example, in Punjab, the government is offering free electricity up to 300 units to every household and is even waving off electricity bills which is said to cause the government 5000 crores. On top of that, if the government does what Mr. Kejriwal promised, which is to give Rs1000 per month per woman who is above the age of 18, it is set to cost the state 15,000 crores according to RBI. Then we have the Andhra Pradesh government which is offering Rs 15000 of financial aid to every poor mother who sends her children to school. And this caused the government more than 6500 crores.

And altogether, according to RBI, the Andhra Pradesh government is set to spend 27,541 crores on welfarism. And in UP the Home Minister himself had been promising free gas cylinders if people voted for BJP than in Madhya Pradesh, the electricity subsidies to farmers and domestic users alone is set to cost the state 21000 crores. And just like these, there are a list of schemes listed by the RBI for Kerala, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Haryana, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. By the way, the fun fact is that this entire list of states covers not just the AAP Party and Congress ruling states, but also BJP. So, this isn't about which party is doing well and which party is not.

It's over all the economics of the states taking a backseat while politics takes the center stage. And this is very dangerous. Out of all these schemes and subsidies and freebies, it's still not very clear as to how many of them are set to generate a tangible return for the economy of the states. But one thing that is for sure is that the people who are benefiting from these schemes are extremely happy.

And on the outset, it looks as if the government is extremely generous and empathetic to the people. But behind the scenes, what scares RBI is that these states are taking more and more grants from the state while they are recklessly spending them on people pleasing policies and welfarism. And if this continues for a long time, the cost of today's subsidy will be borne by the same people with inflation rationing and food and fuel shortages in the future.

**By Karthik A S**



## Update for the day #1543 | Fraud by DHFL NBFC

DHFL was a non-banking financial company (NBFC) that doled out housing loans to lower and middle-income group individuals. They were seemingly doing quite well, until a couple of years ago, when the company collapsed rather spectacularly due to financial mismanagement. The Piramal Group finally acquired DHFL, but the promoters haven't been offered any respite. The CBI and the Enforcement Directorate are still on their tail and for the Wadhawan brothers, it's looking a bit grim.

It all began during the first half of the last decade. The home loan business was taking off and DHFL found itself in the thick of things. They began doling out home loans in bulk. But if you're an NBFC, you can't keep up this kind of growth, unless you borrow large sums of money yourself.

They borrow it from banks. And since DHFL needed a lot of money, a consortium of 17 banks led by Union Bank had to jump in. From 2010 to 2018, they sanctioned nearly ₹43,000 crores to DHFL. Everything was fine for the most part. But then a stunning investigation by Cobra post revealed a shady nexus between DHFL's promoters and a number of shell companies. They claimed that the promoters borrowed money from banks to enrich themselves.

The lenders panicked. They'd given out a lot of money to DHFL and wanted to get to the bottom of this fiasco. So, the Union Bank of India got the pros involved—they hired consulting firm KPMG and demanded a special audit of DHFL's financial accounts. And well, KPMG found exactly what Cobra post had claimed. The rot ran deep and a lot of money had indeed gone missing.

At this point, the banks had very few options left. They couldn't label these as bad loans anymore. They had to classify it as fraud!!! So, the Union Bank of India complained to the CBI last year.

What did the promoters do with the money?

Well, take for instance, an elaborate scheme called the "Bandra Books". To perpetrate this scam, DHFL set up a dummy branch that existed only on paper. It was a virtual account carved out in the internal loan management software. They made it seem as if they disbursed home loans to 2.60 lakh individuals. But instead, they lent out the money—nearly ₹11,000 crores to 91 companies.

**By Bhuvana S Bharadwaj**



## Update for the day #1544 | India's battle against Tuberculosis

The 'National Tuberculosis Prevalence' survey, the first of its kind since the 1950s, was released in India this year. And it had some shocking revelations:

India has 312 TB cases per 1 lakh population (above the age of 15) compared to a global average of 127 per lakh of people.

Over 64% of the population who had been diagnosed with TB symptoms didn't seek healthcare.

Now this is a big problem because without proper care and attention, TB can be fatal. The bacteria affect the lungs and if people don't seek medical intervention, the problem can get out of hand. It can quickly progress to other vital organs—kidneys, brain, and spine. And for a country that is home to over 31% of all TB patients, we end up losing \$32 billion every year due to the disease. We're talking about the economic loss due to a drop in productivity of affected families.

And despite our ambitious goal of making the country TB free by 2025, the progress has been slow so far.

To combat this malaise, the Indian government launched the Pradhan Mantri TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyan scheme last week. And like many of its other schemes, it's a collective action effort. The government has realized that it cannot fight the problem alone. It's calling on NGOs, corporates, individuals and elected representatives to come forward as donors to assist TB patients in their journey towards recovery.

But how did India's TB situation get so dire?

India was one of the first developing countries to set up a dedicated TB program in 1962. But some experts say that the country has under-invested in TB control for decades. Take this stat for instance—even though the government provides free diagnosis and treatment to TB patients, over 70% of patients turn to private hospitals for treatment and diagnosis. This is because public hospitals are understaffed and overburdened with cases.

Now the problem happens when the private sector does not report TB cases on the national portal. There is no proper follow-up or adherence to the treatment regimen and people end up getting infected by TB multiple times. The end results? The emergence of even more severe cases of multi drug-resistant TB (MDR-TB). India has become the hotspot for such TB cases in the world. And diagnosis and treatment of such cases is hard. Even the costs are exorbitant.

One of the prescriptions for multidrug-resistant TB is a relatively new antibiotic called Bedaquiline. But not everyone has access to it. And that's because of its price. You see, a 6-month course of this antibiotic costs the government over ₹25,000. And that's due to a patent on the drug held by pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson. Another drug called Delamanid costs nearly ₹1 lakh per patient. Again, due to a patent held on it.

These are not costs that the government can easily bear.

But there also might be something else that doesn't get talked about enough—how undernutrition feeds into TB. TB bacteria can actually live in your body without infecting you or making you sick. It's called latent TB. You don't transmit the disease to others as well. And it's estimated that 40% of Indians carry latent TB. But here's the thing about latent TB. Individuals who are undernourished are more likely to see this develop into active TB compared to those with a healthy body weight.

And by some estimates, undernutrition accounts for almost 55% of India's yearly tuberculosis cases.

There are also the side-effects of undernutrition. The medicines prescribed for TB patients aren't like your everyday paracetamol or any other OTC drugs. These are strong antibiotics that have to run a course for 6 months and even longer. And many patients who belong to poorer sections of society stop their treatment because their bodies are severely malnourished. Their bodies just can't cope with the side effects of these medicines. This then leads to multiple other problems. Such patients often complain of a loss of eyesight, constant fatigue, and severe weakness in limbs. And you can imagine what this does to their productivity cycle and economic situation.

Now India has the Nikshay Poshan Yojana to provide TB patients with a Direct Benefit Transfer of ₹500 every month for their nutritional needs. But considering the recommended calorie intake of 2,800 kcals a day by the National Tuberculosis Elimination Program for TB patients, ₹500 just doesn't cut it. Also, there have been many complaints about the pay-outs from the scheme itself—including delays in payments or its non-receipt and demand for excessive documentation too.

**By Anarghya Suvin**



## Update for the day #1545 | Think and Grow Rich

Think And Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill

1-Sentence-Summary: Think and Grow Rich is a curation of the 13 most common habits of wealthy and successful people, distilled from studying over 500 individuals over the course of 20 years.

Short-Summary: If The Intelligent Investor is the bible for investing, then Think and Grow Rich is the bible for successful people in general. It'll also make you rich, but not necessarily by picking stocks.

Published in 1937 by Napoleon Hill, this book has sold 70 million (!) copies to date. Yup, nothing beats the power of starting early. To contrast that, the last Harry Potter book has sold 50 million copies – impressive, huh?

Hill spent the majority of his life studying successful people and their habits, and the 13 most prevalent ones are the ones he shares in this book.

Here are the 3 that will get you the furthest:

Use autosuggestion to build an unshakable belief in yourself.  
Be stubborn and always stick to your decisions.  
Join a Mastermind group to cut the learning curve.

Ready to absorb Mr. Hill's mental fertilizer? Here we grow!

### **Lesson 1: Use autosuggestion to build an unshakable belief in yourself.**

Autosuggestion is a psychological technique developed in the early 20th century.

Basically, it makes use of the Placebo effect by turning your goals into self-fulfilling prophecies through imprinting them in your subconscious.

Hill says a key trait of all successful people is this absolutely incredible, unshakable belief that they have about themselves and their goals. It's not a result, more a necessary prerequisite, to become successful.

By telling yourself over and over and over again, that it is possible for you to achieve your goals, that you can make your dreams a reality, and that you have to go your own way and can't let anyone interfere with it, you form these beliefs in your subconscious.

This builds not only the confidence you need to follow through on your actions, but also lets your goals seep into the unconscious part of your brain, until you automatically align all of your actions in a way that leads you towards your goals.

But what else can you use this belief that could move mountains for?

### **Lesson 2: Be stubborn and always stick to your decisions.**

Maybe you could use it to become a little hard-headed. In fact, you should. Hill quotes lack of determination as the most common reason for long-term failure. Millionaires, on the other hand,



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make snap decisions, and then they stick to them. Come hell or high water.

When Henry Ford decided the Model T would be his masterpiece, he knew this would be it for the long haul. In spite of people telling him to come up with a new model again and again, he stuck to his guns. How long did production run? The first model was produced in August 1908, and started the craze that turned into 15 million units total – the last of which was manufactured in 1927 – 19 years later.

Opinions are cheap. Everyone has one, and most people dispense them like they're paper towels, only cluttering your mind with negative influences.

So, be careful who you share your goals with, make it a set of trusted advisors, close friends and allies only – a mastermind maybe?

### **Lesson 3: Join a Mastermind group to accelerate your learning.**

Yes, this is where this concept comes from and yes, it's that old. Napoleon Hill invented the Mastermind group as we know it today. Millions of people use it, and with the internet, it's become a worldwide phenomenon, as it's gotten easier to hold a Mastermind session with people from around the globe.

Here's how Hill defined a Mastermind group originally: "The coordination of knowledge and effort of two or more people, who work toward a definite purpose, in the spirit of harmony."

Do give it a read, it's worth your time.

**By Umesh Pareek**



## Update for the Day #1546 | :(SMILING DEPRESSION:)

A Smile is curve that sets everything straight.

Smile is a free make up.

No matter what Life throws at you. Keep Smiling!!

We all have heard these quotes; But there is something more we need to know about.

:)SMILING DEPRESSION:(

How many people do you imagine look happy, but struggle with depressive thoughts on a daily basis? Typically, depressed people are depicted as being bed-ridden and incapable of functioning. Not everyone experiences depression in the same way. Some might not even realize that they are depressed, especially if they seem like they're managing their day-to-day life. It doesn't seem possible that someone can be smiling, chipper, functioning, and at the same time depressed.

### WHAT IS SMILING DEPRESSION?

“Smiling depression” is a term for someone living with depression on the inside while appearing perfectly happy or content on the outside. Their public life is usually one that’s “put together,” maybe even what some would call normal or perfect.

Smiling depression isn't recognized as a condition in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders but would likely be diagnosed as major depressive disorder with atypical features.

Smiling depression often goes undetected. Those suffering from it often discount their own feelings and brush them aside. They might not even be aware of their depression or want to acknowledge their symptoms due to a fear of being considered “weak.”

The hallmark of smiling depression is sadness. The smile and external facade are a Defense Mechanism, an attempt to hide their true feelings. A person could be experiencing sadness about a failed relationship, career challenges, or lacking what they view as a true purpose in life. The sadness might also manifest as a constant overall feeling that “something just isn't right.”

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF SMILING DEPRESSION?

Someone experiencing smiling depression would — from the outside — appear happy or content to others. On the inside however, they would be experiencing the distressful symptoms of depression.

Depression affects everyone differently and has a variety of symptoms, the most distinguished being deep, prolonged sadness. Other classic symptoms include:

changes in appetite, weight, and sleeping

fatigue or lethargy

feelings of hopelessness, lack of self-esteem, and low self-worth

loss of interest or pleasure in doing things that were once enjoyed

Someone with smiling depression may experience some or all of the above, but in public, these symptoms would be mostly — if not completely — absent. To someone looking from the outside, a person with smiling depression might look like:

an active, high-functioning individual  
 someone holding down a steady job, with a healthy family and social life  
 a person appearing to be cheerful, optimistic, and generally happy.

#### WHO'S AT THE RISK OF SMILING DEPRESSION?

##### Big life changes

As with other types of depression, smiling depression can be triggered by a situation — like a failing relationship or loss of a job. It can also be experienced as a constant state.

##### Judgment

Culturally, people may deal with and experience depression differently, including feeling more somatic (physical) symptoms than emotional ones. Researchers believe these differences may have to do with internally versus externally oriented thinking: if your thinking is externally oriented, you may not focus on your inner emotional state but instead may experience more physical symptoms.

In some cultures, or families, higher levels of stigma may also have an impact. For example, expressing emotions may be seen as “asking for attention” or as showing weakness or laziness.

If someone tells you to “Just get over it” or that “You’re not trying hard enough” to feel better, you’re less likely in the future to express these emotions.

This can be especially true for men under scrutiny for their masculinity — who may have been subjected to old thinking like, “real men” don’t cry. Men are far less likely than women to seek help for mental health problems.

Someone who feels they would be judged for their depressive symptoms would be more likely to put on a facade and keep it to themselves.

##### Social media

Over 50 percent of the Indian population is using social media, we can be sucked into an alternate reality where everyone’s lives are going so well. But are they really going that well?

Many people may not be willing or able to post pictures when they’re at their worst, instead opting to share only their good moments with the world. This can create a void of realness that gives smiling depression more room to grow.

##### Expectations

We all sometimes have unrealistic expectations of ourselves to be better or stronger. We’re also affected by outside expectations — from coworkers, parents, siblings, children, or friends.

Whether you have unrealistic expectations for yourself or the expectations are from others, you may be more likely to want to hide your feelings if they don’t seem to serve those expectations. Someone with perfectionism might be even more at risk, due to the impossibly high standards they hold themselves to.

#### THOUGHTS PEOPLE GET WITH SMILING DEPRESSION ARE:)

“I DON’T WANT TO UPSET ANYONE ELSE”

“I WANT TO FEEL AS HAPPY AS I LOOK”

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EMERGING THOUGHTS

“I DON’T KNOW IF MY SMILING DEPRESSION IS REAL”

“I WANT TO TELL PEOPLE HOW I FEEL, BUT I CAN’T”

LEARN HOW TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS OF SMILING DEPRESSION

Smiling depression is deceptive. While people with smiling depression may look like they’re going through their lives successfully, they’re still experiencing all of the negative effects of depression. Smiling depression can lead to other health problems, it can lead to self-harming behaviors, and it can also lead to suicide. Compared to other forms of depression, which tend to leave sufferers without much energy, smiling depression may put sufferers at greater risk of suicide because they’re less likely to receive help and support and because they have the energy to act on Suicidal Thoughts. Recognizing subtle signs of smiling depression can help ensure that the person with depression gets the help they need.

**By Rachana N**



## Update for the day #1547 | Will Airline Tickets Get Cheaper?

Will Airline Tickets Get Cheaper?

A few days ago, the Ministry of Civil Aviation decided to do away with price caps on domestic flights. The caps were lifted yesterday and there's been a lot of chatter on what this means for end consumers.

But before we get there, let's try and see why the caps were imposed in the first place.

Remember the lockdown? In March 2020, the country came to a standstill due to Covid-19. Soon enough, the government banned air travel.

And the ensuing travel restrictions caught the industry in a chokehold. Passenger demand dropped by an astounding 46%. According to estimates by ICRA Ltd., an independent credit rating agency, airlines were losing close to ₹90 crores a day. The whole industry was hanging by a thread.

But as travel restrictions eased, airlines resumed operations. The only problem? The government had to deal with a conundrum of its own.

At the time, some airline companies were faring far worse than others. And the government knew the Indian aviation industry could be unforgiving. This was a cutthroat enterprise characterized by some of the cheapest flights in the world. And if they hadn't intervened, the strongest airline companies could have easily driven out the competition by pricing their tickets at dirt-cheap levels.

There was also another consideration. At a time when only a few Travelers were taking to the air, airlines did have a perverse incentive to overprice some routes in a bid to recoup the losses they made earlier. So, to alleviate the burden off of consumers, and keep struggling airlines afloat, the government decided to impose price caps (both lower and upper ceilings) on airfares along select routes. For instance, the base fare for a 40-minute flight, between Bangalore to Mangalore was capped at ₹6,000 on the upper end and ₹2,000 on the lower end.

Now, some people will look at this and ask—"Why didn't my flight tickets become cheaper if such price caps were already in place?"

Well, there are two reasons. The government has been reviewing the caps consistently to protect airlines. For instance, the price band for the 40-minute flight we spoke of earlier is now set between ₹2,900 and ₹8,800. It has been revised upwards.

Second, the caps were only set on the base fares. But the total ticket price also includes charges like passenger handling fees, CUTE (Common User Terminal Equipment) fees, fuel surcharge and taxes. Now, consider for instance, a fuel surcharge. If fuel prices keep increasing, airlines can add an extra surcharge and that would reflect in your ticket price. So, the caps weren't entirely obvious to consumers since they didn't always translate to an appropriate reduction in prices.

But here's the thing. The pandemic is squarely in the rearview mirror right now and in May domestic passenger traffic levels breached about 98% of the pre-pandemic levels. So, the government has finally decided to do away with price caps and they'll let airlines decide how they want to price their tickets.

But the big question still remains—How will this affect passengers?

Well, it's likely that this move will translate to higher prices along select routes with little competition. But in the long term, competition will dictate outcomes. And if there's one thing that's certain—It's that the airline industry in India is likely going to get fiercely competitive with players like Akasa entering the mix. There's also the fact that prices of air turbine fuel have dropped by about 12% in the last few days. So yeah, maybe there's some reason for passengers to rejoice.

**By Vijay Sathyanarayan**



## Update for the day #1548 | Is Byju's Hipe Machine Jumbling

### The Story

It took a while for Byju's to put out the results for the financial year 2020–2021. But it has finally arrived now. And it's not what people expected.

The company originally projected revenues worth ₹4,400 crores.

But in reality, revenues remained flat at around ₹2,500 crores and losses surged to a whopping ₹4,500 crores - 20 times higher when compared to FY20.

At this point, you could turn around and ask—How?

How did this happen? If the expectation was that Byju's would post a higher top-line figure and better earnings figure, where did it go wrong?

Well, to understand this discrepancy, you have to first look at Byju's income streams.

According to a report in the Ken, there are three ways in which Byju's makes money:

Course fee—income made from live tutoring. Session by session

Streaming fees—revenue earned when students stream pre-recorded courses

Revenue from tablets and SD cards—these involve offline course materials and tests. The target audience here is typically people from lower-income families who don't have access to high-speed internet.

But here's the thing—Byju's makes most of its money selling hardware—the tablets that we spoke of. So, they will contend that they're a product-first company.

And revenue recognition here is rather straightforward. Companies record revenues when they ship a product or the customer accepts delivery. But the Byju's tablet isn't worth all that much without the content inside and the content can be consumed over several years. So, if you recognize the total revenue when the sale is made, it might be misleading, considering the service is rendered over a longer time frame.

What if the customers default or don't pay up or cancel the course after making a down payment? What happens then?

Should you still recognize all the revenue upfront? Or should you take a less aggressive approach and recognize the revenue over a longer time frame?

Their auditor seems to have taken the more conservative approach and as a consequence Byju's has had to defer or postpone recognizing 40% of the revenue for FY21.

But they're also some confusion on the expense side.

According to an article in the Morning Context, Byju's has had a habit of “capitalizing” expenses.

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What does that mean?

Well, think of it this way. If you spend a bunch of money marketing your service, you should ideally tally it all up on the expenses side. Then, deduct it from the top line and calculate earnings. But on some occasions, you could argue that these marketing spends create long-term benefits and the value accrues to you over time. And if you could support it with evidence, you could treat some of this expense as an intangible asset. An asset that creates long-term value.

And if you do that, you could cut down your marketing expense and redistribute it across multiple years. This would translate to a material improvement in profits for the current year. However, this practice is generally shunned and auditors are wary of capitalizing such expenses.

But some companies do it nonetheless.

For instance, “In March 2020, Byju’s total salary expenses were about Rs 900 crore. But the company transferred Rs 526 crore of this expense as intangible assets to the balance sheet, and eventually recorded only Rs 420 crore as expense in the profit and loss account. Basically, more than 60% of the expense was capitalized.”

This year, Deloitte hasn’t let the company capitalize a large part of its expense and it’s safe to say this probably has had an impact on the bottom line.

But that’s only just the tip of the iceberg.

Byju’s has many other issues.

For instance, there were rumors about a possible listing a while ago. The company had plans to go public in the US and raise money from investors in a bid to legitimize its claim as the world’s biggest ed-tech company. The company was expected to go public at a \$40 billion valuation. But then, the funding winter arrived. There wasn’t enough money going around anymore and investor interest tapered. Byju’s probably decided to defer the listing plans considering the sentiment.

Needless to say, we haven’t heard much about the IPO since.

Then, there was the famous \$300 million acquisition of Whitehat Jr just 4 months into the pandemic. Byju’s paid a pretty penny for the company. But it seems that the acquisition hasn’t worked out all too well. 30% of Byju’s losses can be attributable directly to Whitehat Jr.

That is harsh.

Also, the company’s investors seem to be asking more pointed questions.

Especially for a company the size of Byju’s.

Finally, there’s some apprehension in the bond market as well. You see, the company borrowed some \$1.2 billion in November by issuing bonds. However, according to a report in the Financial Times, the bonds are now available at a 30% discount.

So even the lenders aren’t all that enthused about Byju’s prospects it seems.



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Bottom line—Byju's has a tough road ahead of it. The complaints aren't going away. Investor skepticism is on the rise. And the company's financials don't inspire a lot of confidence.

**By Vishnu Bhushan B D**



## Update of the day #1549 | India's Battery -as- a-Service (BaaS) Resolution.

In today's update of the day, we talk about battery swapping and all the buzz around it.

### The Story

Imagine it's a Saturday morning and you get called for an emergency meeting at the office. You run to your electric scooter and power it on. It stays silent and you see a warning sign. Oops, you forgot to charge your battery overnight and there's not enough juice left to get to your office.

You curse yourself and wonder, "What if I could've simply swapped out the dead battery and got a fully-charged one from somewhere?"

Well, fret not. Battery swapping could soon be a pan-India reality.

You see, India's putting the final touches on a battery-swapping policy. And Foxconn, the largest electronics manufacturer in the world, is already set up the necessary infrastructure needed to make this dream a reality. The rumor is that it will partner with Gogoro, a Taiwanese company, known globally for its work in the battery-swapping domain.

But wait...what's this battery-swapping thing we're talking about?

Okay, let's start from the top. And that means understanding the electric vehicle ecosystem itself.

See, the government wants EVs to be the future of transport in India. This will cut down our dependence on imported oil and it could also be environmentally friendly.

So, they've doled out incentives to make it cheaper for everyone to buy an EV. And it has worked. Sales of EVs tripled in FY22 over the previous year. And the hope is that by 2030, the EV market will grow by nearly 50% every year to hit the 17-million-unit mark.

But there are multiple speed bumps along the way before we get to a point where we see EV adoption soar.

For starters, there's the cost. Sure, incentives have made EVs cheaper but they still cost a pretty penny. And you could attribute most of it to the batteries. They're the most expensive part in electric vehicles and the raw material needed to whip these up doesn't come cheap. Batteries alone could make up for nearly 25–35% of the cost of your brand-new vehicle and you could just look at the famous Tata Nexon EV as an example. The battery pack costs over ₹5 lakhs!

Then there's perennial range anxiety—the question of “what if I run out of charge when I'm in the middle of nowhere?” On a full charge, you'll probably get around 300 kilometers while driving an electric car. Scooters can only offer about 100 kilometers. And don't forget that we still don't have many EV charging stations peppered across the country—only 1742 to be precise. Especially when you consider that we have over 81,000 pumps that can top up petrol and diesel.

Now if you manage to get to a charging station, you can't fuel up as you would do at a traditional fuel pump. Be prepared to wait for over an hour to get the battery's juices flowing again. And imagine the horror of seeing another car queuing up at the station already! Yikes!

So, what's the answer to all these woes?

Battery swapping!

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Sort of like renting a battery.

You buy a vehicle, but you don't pay for the battery up front. Instead, you take a subscription that allows you to spread the cost over a longer time frame. And each time you need to swap out your discharged battery for a new one, just visit the station and you're good to go. It's Battery-as-a-Service or BaaS. It saves time. It's cost effective and it could supercharge EV adoption.

However, there are issues.

At the moment, this battery-swapping business is a walled garden. Take Bounce Infinity—an electric scooter with a swappable battery. It's great because you can swap it out at any Bounce station. What's not great is that you have to use batteries supplied by the company. You're locked into the Bounce ecosystem.

Somebody might look at this and say- “Okay! But what if the government lays down a certain standard so that these batteries become interoperable?”

In fact, the battery swapping policy we talked about earlier envisions something very similar. It intends to standardize batteries and charging stations to a certain extent. But this will come at a cost. The cost of innovation.

If EV manufacturers are forced to devise batteries with a certain specification, then it could curb innovative battery designs.

Why do you think a scooter from Ola Electric or Ather Energy offers different riding ranges? Battery innovation, of course. And if you look at Tesla, you'll see how decades of innovation have given them an edge over the others. They've even tied in their software to make the batteries more efficient.

So yeah, ultimately, there will be a lot riding on the battery-swapping policy. Will the government offer enough leeway for innovation? Or will it just focus on interoperability for now?

We will have to wait and see.

**By Arun Nagarajan**



## Update of the day # 1550 | Cheetahs make a comeback to India, fingers crossed

More than 70 years after India declared the Asiatic cheetah domestically extinct, their African cousins have been introduced in an ambitious project to have the world's fastest land animal roam again in India.

Eight wild cheetahs — three males and five females flown from Namibia — were set free from their transport cages inside a holding area at India's Kuno National Park last week.

It is the first step in an ambitious attempt to reintroduce the feline species to the South Asian country, seven decades after they died out there.

The cheetahs will quarantine for a month before being released into a larger enclosure inside the sprawling park in the state of Madhya Pradesh in central India.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi — who was celebrating his 72nd birthday — was there to welcome the cheetahs to their new home.

"A long wait is over," Modi wrote on Twitter together with pictures of the cheetahs in their new environment.

For now, the cats will be kept in a specially built compound where they will be monitored for disease and adaptation before being released into the bigger enclosure.

The Asian cheetahs were native to India before they were declared extinct in 1952 — largely due to habitat loss and hunting for their distinct spotted pelts.

Will the cheetahs survive?

It's the first attempt to relocated cheetahs from Africa to India and there were mixed reactions to the animals' move.

"As a conservationist, I am thrilled, and as Cheetah Conservation Fund's leader, I am exceptionally proud of the work of our reintroduction team," said Laurie Marker, the founder and executive director of the Namibian-based CCF, in a press release.

"Without research and dedication to cheetah conservation, this project could not take place." Marker has been an advisor to the Indian government's Project Cheetah on behalf of the Namibian government.

As the international media spotlight shines on Kuno National Park, other experts are taking a more cautious stance towards the program, which plans to release 50 cheetahs into various national parks over the next five years.

Some worry that the reintroduction plan is premature and question whether the cheetahs will survive.

A costly mistake?

Ravi Chellam, a wildlife biologist and conservation scientist, described the program to reintroduce cheetahs to India as a "vanity project" which was rushed through to meet some goals other than conservation.

"Facts should always speak louder than opinions. This is not even mentioned in India's National Wildlife Action Plan [2017-2031] and will divert attention from far more important and critical conservation issues such as the great Indian bustard, caracal and Asiatic lion," Chellam told DW.

"The conservation goals are unrealistic and unfeasible. Tragically, despite all the investment this will most likely be a very costly mistake," said Chellam, who also suggested it was a bid to stall the relocation of Asiatic lions.

The Kuno National Park was originally identified for the relocation of the Asiatic lions from Gujarat's Gir sanctuary, currently the only home of the Asiatic lions in India. But despite work from 2006, the plans have remained on the back burner.

### **System for success**

Pradnya Giradkar, India's first cheetah conservation specialist, said the process of bringing a species back that has become extinct locally was a huge challenge.

"The cheetah needs massive amounts of support to survive, and it is my hope that we, as conservationists, can provide what the species requires for success," Giradkar told DW. "Success is generally based on reproductive output and important characteristics of the release site include habitat and prey availability."

Compared to other big cats, cheetahs are smaller in size. The cat is best known for being the fastest land animal, with the ability to sprint at high speeds of up to 120 kilometres an hour (75 miles an hour).

Today, cheetahs are found in the wild in several locations in Africa, and a tiny population of another subspecies, the Asiatic cheetah, is found in Iran.

Scientists estimate that fewer than 8,000 African cheetahs are living in the wild and that there may be fewer than 50 Asian cheetahs left in the world. The African cats are visually identical to their Asian cousins but have minor genetic differences.

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A dozen more cheetahs are currently quarantining in South Africa and are due to arrive at Kuno National Park in October.

**By Guruprakash S**



# Update for the day #1551 | Work doesn't have to be a drag!

"Work does not have to be a drag!"

In fact, striving for a happy workplace is a near guarantee of productivity and loyal employees. The happiest of workplaces are ones where employees feel appreciated, productive, and have a sense of control over their own work goals. A workplace where they feel well taken care of is one where most employees will happily thrive.

## 1. Bring wellness to the workplace

Investing in the wellness of your employees is one of the smartest moves a company can make. Employees need their optimum health to function well and be productive. Prioritize employee health in a variety of ways to encourage them to look after themselves to stay happy and well.

## 2. Invest in personal growth

Stagnant employees get bored and tend to look elsewhere for fulfilment. Work isn't always about the pay check. By investing in your employees' personal growth, it shows them you believe in them expanding their skills.

Ways to invest in employee growth:

- Giveaway self-help books
- Offer life coaching sessions
- Share networking opportunities
- Offer personal development retreats

Allow for opportunities for personal development at all levels to keep employees striving. When employees are given the opportunity to improve themselves overall, they can thrive in the workplace, too.

## 3. Offer more vacation time

After a year of lockdowns and nowhere to go, people are yearning to take a break. Even if it is just a trip to local camp sites or to visit family, it's an opportunity for your employees to break away from the monotony of working. Weekends off are just as important, too. Plus, studies show the physical and psychological benefits of time off can reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and reduce heart disease risk. It's a win-win.

## 4. Create a healthier space

No one wants to go to work in a dull, dreary office. While everyone needs different attributes for their best work environment, it's no secret that a healthier space is top of the list. That includes the options for a quiet, private workspace, plenty of social distancing space, touchless technology, and improved cleaning systems. Help employees feel at ease in their work environments by creating one that's healthier overall.

## 5. Always show gratitude

A job well done deserves kudos. Whatever that looks like for your leadership team, make sure to say thank you often. Appreciation goes a long way. Give thanks to your team! No matter your company

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budget, remember the words “thank you” are always free.

### **6. Don't be so serious**

There is a time and place for everything. That includes humor, which can certainly elevate the happiness factor in your workplace. Humor is a simple way for colleagues to quickly connect. As leaders, practice laughing at yourselves, cracking jokes, and generally look for ways to have a good laugh with your team. Laughter is always good for the soul and the workplace.

**By R S Jahnavi**





## Update for the day #1552 | Will the National Logistics Policy be a game-changer?

Will the National Logistics Policy be a game-changer?

Those veggies you see at the supermarket. That car you just test-drove last weekend. The clothes you are about to order online. They're all ready and stocked up thanks to the modern marvel of logistics. Lumbering trucks, long trains, massive ships, and booming planes carrying cargo—they're the bedrock of this world.

But the logistics business is extremely complicated, especially in India. It's a \$160 billion industry, but one that isn't very streamlined. There are 20 government agencies, 40 government partner agencies, 36 logistics services, 129 inland container depots, 168 container freight stations, and a lot of other intermediaries in between. Needless to say, things don't always go smoothly. And when things don't go smoothly, it gets expensive to deal with it. If the logistical cost involved in moving a product from Point A to Point B adds up to ₹100, you could attribute about ₹12 to customs, paperwork, and administration costs. And this is a bit too much. So, the objective was to cut it down. Make it cheaper. Institute an overarching policy to achieve this grand objective. And on Saturday evening, Prime Minister Narendra Modi did just that. He unveiled a spanking new National Logistics Plan in a bid to cut the cost of logistics—from 13–14% of the GDP to around 8%.

Bring it in line with global standards. How's this going to work, you ask? Okay, the focus is on digitization. Creating a platform to get everyone together. We are talking freight companies, ministries, businesses—all in one place. Think of it as a one-stop shop for everything logistics. Like tracking. Suppose a truck heads to a factory to pick up something. They get there only to find the product isn't ready. Or a cargo arriving at a port. They're there waiting for someone to unload the goods. But nobody has any information on what to do with it. This is valuable time wasted. But if everyone could easily track real-time movements, these inefficiencies would disappear and we could save money.

And then there's paperwork for clearance. They keep going back and forth between agencies. However, if everything were digitized and available online, "paper-pushing" becomes faster. Scan, view, stamp, and do whatever is needed to get a move on. There's also this plan to set up massive logistic parks. They'll have warehousing facilities and effective distribution—all under one roof. It could help people quickly track spare capacity in warehouses. Store their products when needed. And then move them whenever needed using transport that's readily available. It's a win-win for everyone. At the launch, the PM even said, "We want our logistics to move at the speed as the cheetah." And you can't fault him for his cheetah reference. He'd just released 8 African cheetahs into the Kuno National Park. So that would've definitely been on the top of his mind. But the question is—can we? Well, it's complicated. See, we've always known that our logistics sector needed work. In the past 5 years, we've pumped in nearly ₹15 lakh crores to improve roads, rail, ports and airports—critical links for logistics. But digitization alone cannot solve our problem. We need infrastructure. Basic infrastructure.

Let's start with roadways—the Bharatmala Project Launched in 2015, the project was intended to create a massive network of highways across India. But the progress hasn't been great. It was due to be completed by FY22. But now we've revised the deadline to FY28! A six-year delay. Right now, it's only 23% ready and the costs have soared by nearly 100% when compared to the first estimate. Then there are the waterways—the Sagarmala Project. The idea was to modernize ports and develop the inland waterways. There was a total of 802 projects in the pipeline and they are set to be completed by 2035. However, only 181 projects are up and running as of today. Connectivity to ports has been another issue. We had 98 road-to-port connectivity projects in the pipeline. Only 13 have been

completed so far. Why are things moving so slowly you ask? Well, it seems the many ministries aren't coordinating all too well. Then there are the railways—the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC). Way back in 2006, India embarked on a project that would lay dedicated railway tracks for cargo along the length and breadth of the country. Goods would be transported at 70kmph instead of 25kmph. And freight capacity would double to 13,000 tons. But what's happened?

Take the Eastern and Western lines of the DFC. The initial deadline for completion was 2017. But we've delayed it 5 times already. And now, the hope is that we can wrap it up by 2024. Delays lead to costs too and the estimate of ₹28,000 crores has soared to a whopping ₹1.24 lakh crores now.

And there's one final thing—the choice of transport. You see, three logistics sector is heavily dependent on roads. The congested roadways have a 65% share (compared to 25% globally) while railways and waterways only account for around 35%. Unfortunately, moving things along the roadways is expensive - ₹2.2 per tonne-kilometre on roads versus ₹1.4 for rail and ₹0.7 for waterways. So yeah, the National Logistics Plan is definitely a welcome introduction. But if we truly intended to overhaul the logistics sector in India, then we definitely need to focus on basic infrastructure.

Maybe then, we can move like a cheetah!

**By Sree Harshitha**



# Update for the day #1553 | SELF DISCIPLINE - THE KEY TO UNLOCK SUCCESS

Self-discipline is key to success

Your success in life depends more on the person you become than on the things you do or acquire. As Aristotle wrote, "The ultimate end of life is the development of character." The development of character is more about disciplining ourselves.

Now, let us see how self-discipline can be the key to success. Further we read how self-discipline benefits us and leads to success.

With self-discipline almost everything is possible

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "With self-discipline, almost anything is possible." Self-discipline is, indeed, regarded as one of the keys to success. Many people attribute self-discipline as having determination and fortitude. That means having the strength and will to continue carrying out what one wants to achieve despite setbacks and hardships. But in actual fact, self-discipline is more about having self-control or the ability to control your desires and not falling prey to bad habits, such as laziness, procrastination and irresponsibility. In other words, self-discipline is having the willpower to fight your willful desires.

When a teenager gets up early and prepares him/herself for online classes, that is self-discipline, as they resist the desire to sleep longer. If a student turns off his/her mobile phone to study peacefully without any distraction, that is self-discipline. Making great efforts to abstain from bad habits, such as smoking or too much gaming, is also self-discipline. So, basically, self-discipline is regulating yourself for the sake of improvement or betterment of your situation.

Self-discipline is something difficult to achieve, since it really requires one to battle with one's own self in making the right choice. But true self-discipline is not punishing oneself and it is not supposed to restrict a person's lifestyle or the right for some leisure. It is to make the right choice at the right time when the time calls for it. Like completing your assignment first before playing games. It actually denotes one's mental and inner strength, which is crucial in leading a more meaningful life. Self-discipline grants you freedom - freedom from being a slave to your willful desires and wants. It helps you to divide your time wisely between study/work, rest and entertainment.

Self-discipline delays short-term gratification for long-term reward

Having self-discipline helps us to overcome laziness and procrastination and prevents us from taking things for granted. It directs us to choose what we want now and what we want for the future. Maxwell Maltz, author of a self-help book called "Psycho-Cybernetics: A New Way to Get More Living out of Life", said, "The ability to discipline yourself to delay gratification in the short term in order to enjoy greater rewards in the long term is the indispensable prerequisite for success". Self-discipline makes you re-evaluate what you need to do now in order to achieve success in the future. As the saying goes, what you sow now is what you will reap in the future.

You alone are responsible for your quality of life

One thing about self-discipline is that it is a learned skill, not something innate. Some people are taught self-discipline when they are young, like making their own beds, having salad at every meal or having a specific time for study and play, while others do not. But however, you were brought up, it is never too late to learn self-discipline. All you need is a strategy and a little practice.

Some strategies that you can employ to increase your self-discipline are, for example, establishing a daily routine, like sleeping and getting up at the same time every day, having a specific timetable for your daily activities and removing distractions and temptations slowly but consistently. Another good strategy is reminding yourself of the benefits of what you need to do compared to what you want to do.

Instilling self-discipline in yourself is not a walk in the park. It is challenging and many people fail. But this is where your determination and fortitude come in. Suffer the pain of self-discipline or you will suffer the pain of regret. Persevere and continue practicing self-discipline every day, and one day you will reap the fruits of your success.

“The best day of your life is the one on which you decide your life is your own. No apologies or excuses. No one to lean on, rely on, or blame. You alone are responsible for the quality of it.”

**By Mithun H S**



## Update for the day #1554 | Is Dream Folks flying too high?

Uber, the world's largest taxi company, owns no vehicles. Facebook, the world's most popular media owner, creates no content. Alibaba, the most valuable retailer, has no inventory. And Airbnb, the world's largest accommodation provider, owns no real estate. Something interesting is happening.”

That's what marketer Tom Goodwin wrote in his book *Digital Darwinism* a few years ago.

Well, you can add one more company to that list—Dream Folks Services, a company that owns no lounges.

Hold on, we'll explain what we mean. Now if you've ever lazed in an airport lounge in India, chances are that your entry to the lounge was managed by this company. In fact, out of 52 lakh passengers who stepped into a lounge in FY22, Dream Folks managed the experience for 35 lakh people. That tallies up to a market share of a whopping 68%.

But the key word here is “managed”. Because the company does not own these lounges. Dream Folks is what you'd call an “airport lounge aggregator”. Yup, there's an aggregator for everything!

So, if you look at the fine print on your credit or debit card, it may say something about lounge access. And if your card does extend this benefit, you'll probably find Dream Folks at the other end helping you access the lounge. The company ties up with card networks like Mastercard (their very first client in 2013). And also, with banks that issue these cards. And then, the company provides the tech that connects the cardholder to the lounge operator across India.

But wait...why does anyone need Dream Folks for this, you ask? If I know there's a lounge at the airport, can't I just walk in and get access to it? It's not like Airbnb that helps me “discover” spaces or experiences, so why have an intermediary?

That's true. But a disaggregated lounge experience could come with its own set of complications. Let's explain. Imagine you have a card issued by a bank that permits you one lounge visit a month. Anything more than that, and you'll have to pay up ~₹1,000. Also, the lounge visit is only for you and you can't take any guests along.

Anyway, on the 1st of September, you visit a lounge in Bengaluru airport managed by Company X. Your monthly quota of visits is done!

Now let's say you're at the Mumbai airport on the 26th of September. You have time to kill before your flight and you head to the lounge as usual. Now the lounge there is managed by a different company. Say Company Y. And this time your friend is tagging along too.

How will Company Y know that you've already made a visit that month? Or that the card doesn't permit a plus one. It's just a lounge operator, not a tech wizard. Or will your bank track this and send a message to all airport lounge operators saying, “1 visit for September is done!”? Imagine the banks fiddling with all this information for all their customers! It would be a nightmare.

And that's where Dream Folks steps in with its tech. At the front end, it validates and provides immediate lounge access. Or denies it if you've exceeded your quota. It'll then tell the lounge operator to charge you the full price. And at the back end, it helps the operator and bank account tag rewards associated with any lounge spending.

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The great thing about this model is that Dream Folks doesn't have to shell out money to set up lounges. It doesn't have to spend truckloads to acquire customers like you and me—that's the banks' headache. It simply works as a tech intermediary. It's pretty smart.

But the biggest attraction? Well, Dream Folks runs a virtual monopoly!

Yup, there's no other domestic player quite like it. There are only 54 domestic lounges in India today and Dream Folks enables access to all of them. It's also an exclusive partner to 12 separate lounges. And there's the fact that it has also tied up with over 1,000 international lounges. In fact, there might just be two other global players who're doing the same thing—Priority Pass and Dragon Pass.

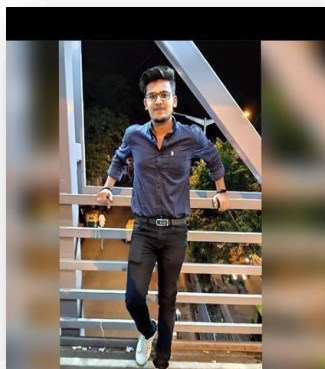
And nearly 99% of its revenues for Dream Folks accrue when you visit a lounge and swipe your card.

But it's not just lounge aggregation that Dream Folks enables.

Imagine you're a privileged member of a bank. You decide that it's time for a trip and you make your booking. Your bank knows that you're travelling so they call you up and ask you if you need an airport pickup and drop off too. You're pleased with the service and say yes. But obviously, the bank's job isn't to get involved in all of this. So, who do they call? Well, Dream folks.

Dream Folks wants to be at the front and center of everything associated with a traveler's airport journey. As Dream Folks' tagline says, "It's Your Airport Experience Amplified".

**By Dhruv Bajoria**



## Update for the day #1555 | Navaratri - Navadurga: The 9 Divine Forms of Maa Durga

Celebrated in different ways by different communities, Navratri is a major Hindu festival that is celebrated throughout India twice a year. Named after the Hindi season it is celebrated in, the two Navratris are known as Chaitra Navratri and Sharad Navratri. Breaking it up etymologically as nav meaning nine and Ratri meaning night, it is the festival of nine nights which is followed by Dashami, the tenth day, popularly known as Dusshera in the Sharad Navratri cycle.

During Navratri, devotees worship the nine forms of Goddess Durga, who was an incarnation of Goddess Parvati. Goddess Parvati wanted to kill the notorious demon Mahishasura, for which she had to take the form of the fierce Durga. Devotees pay their respects during the nine nights by fasting and offering special Prasad for each form, according to its significance in human life. Let us have a look at all of these nine forms:

### Day 1: Shailputri

With Trishul in one hand and a lotus in the other, she rides a bull called Nandi. Goddess Parvati is the daughter of Shail or the mountain (Himalaya) and is therefore known by this name. Offering: Devotees offer pure ghee to Goddess Shailputri for a disease-free life.

### Day 2: Brahmacharini

When an unmarried Goddess Parvati decided to meditate in order to please Lord Shiva, she was known by this name which means celibate or unmarried. Goddess Brahmcharini walks bare feet, with a rudraksha mala in hand.

### Day 3: Chandraghanta

The third form of Goddess Durga, Chandraghanta is the ten-armed goddess who gets her name from the crescent-shaped moon that adorns her forehead. She rides on a tiger to annihilate evil.

### Day 4: Kushmanda

Breaking up her name into three parts, i.e., small/little, warmth and eggs; this form of Goddess Parvati is considered to be the creator of the universe and is revered on the fourth day of Navratri.

### Day 5: Skandamata

The fifth form of Goddess Parvati and hence also known as Panchami, Skandmata has four arms and carries a bell in one hand, a kamandalu in the other and a lotus in the other two. She is also seen with Lord Kartikeya on her lap and is therefore called the mother of Skanda, another name for the Lord.

### Day 6: Katyayani

Another form of Shakti, Goddess Katyayani is the sixth and the fiercest form of Goddess Parvati and carries a sword in one of her four arms. She rides a lion and is called the warrior Goddess. Daughter of priest Katyayan, she gets her name from her father.

**Day 7: Kaalraatri**

She gave up her natural complexion and took up a darker skin tone to kill demons. Riding a donkey with a noose, trident and sword in three of her four arms, she is believed to contain the universe in her third eye which is placed in her forehead.

**Day 8: Mahagauri**

The eighth day of Navratri is dedicated to Goddess Mahagauri, who rides a bull or a white elephant and holds a Trishul and a Damaru in her hands.

**Day 9: Siddhidatri**

Worshipped on the last day of the ninth-day long festival, Goddess Siddhidatri is believed to represent perfection. She sits on a lotus and holds one in her hand as well in addition to a mace, a discus and a book.

**By Sadhana V Raghavan**





## Update for the day #1556 | Debit, credit card rules are changing from October 1, how will this affect you?

New tokenisation rule: RBI has asked all operating banks to create tokens for card details. In layman's language, all online, point-of-sale, and in-app transactions done by debit and credit cards will have to be replaced by tokens issued by the banks.

From October 1, the online transaction rules for debit and credit cards will change for all users. In a bid to make all e-payments safe, secure, convenient, quick and affordable, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked all operating banks to create tokens for card details. In layman's language, all online, point-of-sale, and in-app transactions done by debit and credit cards will have to be replaced by tokens issued by the banks.

What is tokenisation?

Tokenisation is replacing the debit or credit card details with a token issued by the operating bank. That means, now while paying for something online, a user will not punch in the 16 digits engraved on his or her card. The banks will issue a non-sensitive equivalent token for the transactions. With this, customer's card information will no longer be available on any merchant, Payment Gateway, or third-party platform. The process will also mask names on the card, expiry dates and CVV codes.

Safety issues

All token-based transactions are considered safer as the actual details will not be shared with the merchants, entities and cannot be misused any further. Entities can save the last four digits of the card number and the card issuer's name to track the transaction.

How would it work?

From October 1, the tokens generated for transactions will be irreversible and unique. With this, no one can breach the security layers and decode the payment process to procure card details.

As per RBI, the new system will bring down the number of chargebacks, disputes and fraud, and would help the consumers, merchants, and banks.

How to get a token?

The first step towards tokenization will be clicking on "securing your card as per RBI guidelines" after a customer enters all the card details for a transaction. Once done, the merchant will request the operating bank to generate a unique token for a particular transaction. Once consent is given, the merchant will send the request to the card network.

The buyer will get an OTP on his or her mobile or email from the card issuer, which has to be filled on the bank page, and then the token will be generated. The same token will be mailed to the merchant. He can save it with the customer's phone and email id in case the transaction faces some technical issues.

Updates so far

As per news reports, Paytm has tokenized over 52 million cards so far. Payment's platform PayU has reported that it has tokenized over 50 million ahead of the deadline. PhonePe has said that it has tokenized 15 million debit and credit cards so far and is in line with RBI's deadline.

**By Pooja Naik**



## Update for the day #1557 | 1% Marginal Gains Rule

Small but constant changes towards growth!

People who are mentally tough and successful at what they do understand that the cumulative effect of small changes leads to significant outcomes. And while they set out with big goals, they improve using systematic and surgical precision. Most of us also set big goals, but we try and tackle them all at once because we want immediate results and invariably, end up failing.

Sir Dave Brailsford, former performance director of British Cycling, revolutionized the sport using the theory of marginal gains. He believed that if you make a 1% improvement in a host of tiny areas, the cumulative benefits would be extraordinary. The theory of marginal gains has been credited for vaulting the British cycling team from a mediocre performer to 16 gold medals over two Olympics and seven Tour de France wins in eight years.

The examples of micro excellence used by the British cycling team are legendary in the sports world. Brailsford had the floors of the team truck painted pristine white to spot dust on the floor because even the slightest amount of dust could potentially impair bike maintenance. This act alone wasn't enough to win a race or make any more than a borderline gain, but when added to a host of other small improvements, it made all the difference.

Every little detail counts.

The Tour de France is a 21-day race of grueling distances and climbs that saps every ounce of energy and strength from its riders. During the race, the cyclists slept in 21 different hotels, each with different beds and pillows. When you are riding six hours a day for three weeks straight, the slightest deprivation of rest can make a significant difference in performance. Brailsford had the team bus carry custom-designed mattresses and pillows for each rider, which were set up in each athlete's room so that the elements of rest and recovery were controlled and not left to chance. Again, this is a detail that in isolation is not going to win you the Tour de France, but in combination with all of the other minor changes, the results are staggering.

“Perhaps the most powerful benefit is that it creates a contagious enthusiasm,” Brailsford said in a 2015 interview with Harvard Business Review. “Everyone starts looking for ways to improve. There's something inherently rewarding about identifying marginal gains — the bonhomie is similar to a scavenger hunt.”

As this thinking became a culture and a philosophy shared by all members of Brailsford's team, they kept searching for any and every area where they could make tiny improvements. Their goal was a marginal or 1% gain in every aspect of their training and environment.

Individually, each incremental change may have seemed unnecessary or random, but collectively, they helped create a powerhouse with a level of success that became the envy of the cycling world.

It is a lot easier to focus on manageable improvements where you see specific results than to chase big ideas that may lead nowhere. But the dedicated focus on improvement in the smallest of tasks (that no one wants to spend time on) is what separates the elite few from others who are often more gifted and talented — but never realize their full potential.

**By Aditi Jain**



## Update for the day #1558 | President Murmu inaugurates Integrated Cryogenic Engine Manufacturing Facility at HAL

The President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, inaugurated the Integrated Cryogenic Engine Manufacturing Facility of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in Bengaluru today (September 27, 2022). She also laid the foundation stone for the Zonal Institute of Virology (South Zone) virtually on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, the President said that inauguration of the Integrated Cryogenic Engine Manufacturing Facility is indeed a historic moment not only for HAL and ISRO, but also for the whole country to have a state-of-the-art facility to manufacture Cryogenic and Semi-cryogenic Engines. She said that HAL has contributed immensely to India's self-reliance in defense. It can be said that HAL has been the force behind the forces. HAL has time and again demonstrated its capabilities in research, development and manufacturing of various Aircraft Platforms.

The President said that ISRO has been the pride of the nation. When this institution started operations in the 1960s, India was still a young Republic, facing challenges of severe poverty and illiteracy. But there was immense potential. The rapid pace, with which ISRO has grown, caught the attention of even the most advanced and technologically developed countries. Sincere efforts and dedication of ISRO have made India emerge as the sixth country in the world to have Cryogenic Engine Manufacturing Capabilities.

The President said that HAL and ISRO together contribute to strategic defense and development. Both the organizations have played a major role in the development of various equipment and programmes which have reinforced the security and development of our country. HAL with its high-end facility of manufacturing defense related equipment has proved to be an invaluable asset for our country.

The President said that the glorious past of HAL and ISRO gives us an assurance that these organizations will continue to play a significant and positive role in the future as India enters the Amrit Kaal. By 2047, when we will celebrate the 100 years of Independence, the world around us will have changed drastically. Just as we were in no position 25 years ago to imagine the contemporary world, we cannot visualize today how Artificial Intelligence and automation are going to transform life. We have completed 75 years as an independent country. We are looking ahead at the next 25 years as the period to re-imagine India and make it a developed country. It is our joint responsibility to ensure that the India of 2047 will be a much more prosperous and strong nation.

Speaking about the Covid pandemic, the President said that the resilience and extraordinary effort of our doctors and scientists helped us deal with the crisis. She noted that the Indian Council of Medical Research has provided exemplary support for effective COVID management and is expanding its research infrastructure. National Institute of Virology, Pune under Indian Council of Medical Research, is also taking all possible steps to increase R&D in the field of virology. She was happy to note that the National Institute of Virology has been designated as one of the collaborating laboratories of the World Health Organization. She said that the expansion of National Institute of Virology through Zonal Campuses across the country catering to the demands in the different geographical regions is praiseworthy.

**By Tushar U**



## Update for the day #1559 | The Untold Story of White Revolution.

Amul is an emotion in India. It has become synonymous with dairy products. Amul not only did start a white revolution in India but also saved lakhs of farmers from exploitation. It is a brand that managed to get 40,000 Crores of Revenue. However, the story of Amul's inception is as enjoyable as its current business. How did Amul come into existence, and make India the largest producer of milk and milk products under the leadership of Varghese Kurian?

Here's a brief analysis of Amul's history and how Amul contributed to the White Revolution. Amul Co-operative was registered on 19 December 1946 as a reaction to the exploitation of local milk producers by the dealers and the agents of the leading dairy of that time, the Polson dairy. The price of milk was randomly determined. The government had given monopolistic rights to Polson to collect milk from Kaira dairy farmers and supply it to the city of Mumbai.

Agitated by this treatment, the farmers of Kaira approached Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel under the administration of their leader Tribhuvan as K. Patel. Sardar Patel advised them to frame an organization, i.e., 'Kaira District Co-Usable Milk Producers Union' (KDCMPUL), and supply milk directly to the Bombay Milk Scheme rather than relying on Polson. He sent Morarji Desai to sort out the issues faced by the farmers.

Milk collection was decentralized as most of the makers were minor farmers who could provide 1-2 liters of milk each day. Cooperatives were framed for every town. By June 1948, KDCMPUL had begun pasteurizing milk for the 'Bombay Milk Scheme'. Under the leadership of Tribhuvandas Patel, Amul celebrated its 25th Anniversary in 1973 with Morarji Desai, Maniben Patel, and Varghese Kurian.

The cooperative was additionally created and headed by Dr. Varghese Kurian with H.M. Dalaya. Dalaya's innovation of making skimmed milk powder from buffalo milk for the first time in the world and then making it on a commercial scale with Kurian's help led to the first modern dairy cooperative at Anand (Gujarat). It competed against many established market players. Within a short period, the success at the cooperative's dairy spread to Anand's neighborhood in Gujarat. Thus, five unions in other districts like Mehsana, Banaskantha, Baroda, Sabarkantha, and Surat were set up by following the approach sometimes referred to as the 'Anand' pattern.

In 1970, the White Revolution of India began. In 1973, the Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd. (GCMMF), an apex marketing body of these district cooperatives, was set up to combine forces and expand the market while saving on advertising and avoiding internal competition. The Kaira Union, which had the brand name Amul with it since 1955, transferred the name to GCMMF.

Over the last five and a half decades, dairy cooperatives in Gujarat have created an economic network that links more than 3.1 million village-manufactured milk products with millions of consumers in India.

On September 30, 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Amul's chocolate plant in Mogar, Anand near its headquarters.

**By Suhan Bammigatti**





## Update for the day #1560 | How Relaxo monopolized the humble Chappal

A white sole. A blue strap in the shape of a Y. All made using plastic or rubber.

Do you have an image?

Well, of course, you do.

It's the ubiquitous Hawai(i) chappal—a staple of every home in India. It's cheap and durable. It can weather the Indian monsoons with ease. And it is usually the weapon of choice to kill that pesky cockroach. It's like the Swiss army knife of footwear! And India can thank Bata for this. They introduced these rubber slippers (or flip-flops) all the way back in the 1950s. They marketed it under the brand name 'Hawai' and it is now a generic name for slippers. But if you're a curious soul with a particular interest in footwear, you'd probably have noticed something else too. The name embossed on most of these blue straps isn't Bata. It's Relaxo. Over the past few decades, this company has stamped its authority as the chappal king of India—it can churn out 10 lakh slippers every day!!! In fact, a report by Centrum states that 13% of India's annual footwear production capacity comes from Relaxo alone. It's a big deal! But how did Relaxo get here? Well, you'd have to go back to the 1970s when the Dua family, the current promoters of Relaxo, inherited a family business that manufactured cycle parts and footwear. Ramesh Dua, the current Managing Director, was only 17 years old and dreamt of becoming a doctor. But the business accumulated a lot of debt and it needed a steady hand. It needed a new leader. It needed Ramesh Dua. And he answered the call. However, he soon realised the cycle parts business wasn't entirely profitable. He believed that the company's future lay somewhere else—in rubber footwear. And being the smart young man that he was, he also realized he needed to learn a lot more about rubber—the key raw material that would sway the fortunes of the company. So, he packed his bags and headed to the Plastics and Rubber Institute in the UK. In 1975, when the Indian government-imposed Emergency rule, things became a little dicey. The government was going after business people across the country. And once again, he noticed something interesting. The only store that remained open without fear in Delhi happened to be his competitor Bata. And when he asked them how they'd kept their shutters open, they pointed to their brand value. And that's when Dua realized that they needed a brand too. And in 1976, Relaxo, the brand, was born. Anyway, Relaxo truly made its mark by focusing on 3 things.

Firstly, a simple realization that the business is practically recession-proof. What do we mean? Well, everyone needs chappals. And it's low cost—the average selling price for Relaxo is only ₹135. Remember, that's including all its products—premium chappals and sneakers. Find a branded, organized player that sells a chappal for cheaper on Amazon. Go on, try it. See how hard it is. And that means Relaxo's products take a very tiny sliver of your disposable income. Which explains why the customers are relatively sticky. A case in point is the pandemic. Between FY20 and FY21, Bata's sales cratered by 44%, Metro Shoes dropped by 38% and Khadim's also fell by 19%. Relaxo's sales, on the other hand, just saw a tiny drop of 2%. That's it. Secondly, according to fund manager Saurabh Mukherjea, Relaxo took a counterintuitive call. They decided to manufacture everything in-house. They used their historic expertise in the plastic business and turned it to their advantage. While everyone else outsourced manufacturing, Relaxo knew that it made sense for them to hold their cards close to their chest. Today, Relaxo manufactures 95% of its products in its own factories while Bata outsources over 50% of its production. This allowed Relaxo to really scale up its manufacturing. Also, unlike its peers, Relaxo tapped into a distribution network to penetrate the market far and wide. Bata stuck to its own branded retail outlets. And finally, you have to remember that people's disposable income began rising rather disproportionately after liberalization.

And Relaxo needed to portray itself as an aspirational brand. Even if it was just selling chappals. So, it spent heavily on advertising. It roped in Bollywood biggies like Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif to prance about on the telly wearing chappals. It worked. Its brand recall boomed. Essentially, Relaxo built a chappal monopoly. And it sells 18 crores chappals a year now. And the last two decades have been quite phenomenal for the company. In FY03, it had revenues of just ₹150 crores. In FY13, it mushroomed to ₹1010 crores and in FY22, it had soared to ₹2,600 crores. Sure, the past looks great. But what about the future?

Okay, first the two bright spots.

One, it's the typical "under penetration" argument. Indians don't own enough footwear and when they buy more, it'll benefit companies like Relaxo. For instance, India's per capita footwear use is a measly 1.9 and that's well below developed countries like the US and UK where it stands at 7. And two, over 65% of the footwear market in India is still in the unorganized sector. But it has been tapering from the 80% share that it used to command. Demonetisation, GST, and even Covid have all knocked the wind out of the unorganized players. Gradually, as many shut shops, the tailwinds are likely to benefit Relaxo. Where else would you get a branded ₹100 chappal from? Okay, that's all well and good. But what about its problems, you ask? Well, there are issues. Primarily, inflation. See, rubber and plastic derivatives are important inputs in the manufacturing process. So, when inflation strikes the commodities market, it hurts Relaxo. For instance, the price of the raw materials Ethylene Vinyl Acetate (EVA) has jumped by 3 times this year. That means Relaxo has had to pass on the costs to its customers. In FY22, it has already increased prices by 25% and that's the highest jump in a single year in Relaxo's history. Also, the government tweaked the GST rates this year. And for footwear priced below ₹1,000, the rates have increased from 5% to 12%. Naturally, any price increase hurts sales. Especially in such an uncertain economic environment. But there are long-term risks too—People are increasingly looking at more premium products. See, the mass market footwear segment (that's priced below ₹500) is expected to see a drop in its market share. From 56% to 51% over FY15–25. And since over two-thirds of Relaxo's sales come from this category, there could be some trouble.

By Divya G Shanbhag



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