

PING!

July 2019

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ON THE WALL
CAN I GET
A MATCH
AT ALL?

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what happened,
a year on

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we tried the less
eaten, so you dont
have to

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hello
world
the real map
of IIT

Ping! is an independent magazine of the students of IIT Hyderabad. The views presented are not representative of the institute, and the institute is not the publisher of the magazine.

A photograph of a sunset over a stadium. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and grey, with scattered clouds. A tall stadium light tower is visible on the left side of the frame. The sun is a bright yellow circle on the horizon to the right. The foreground is dark, showing the silhouettes of trees and a fence.

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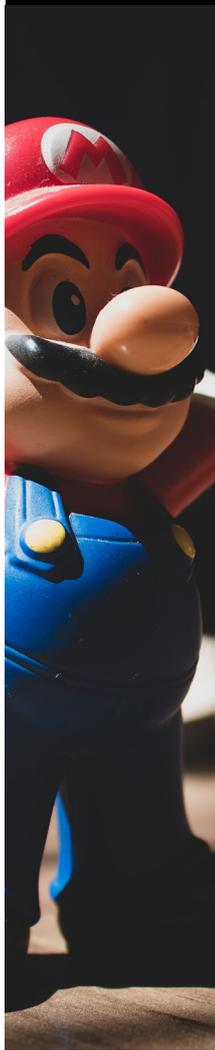
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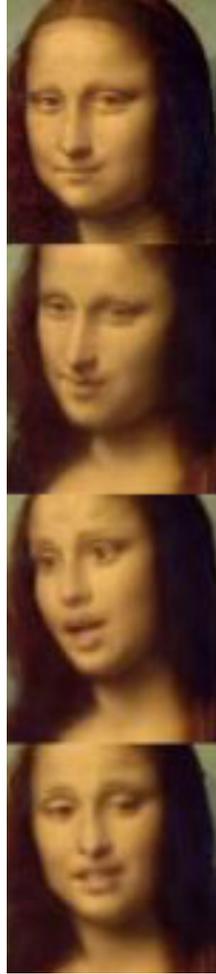
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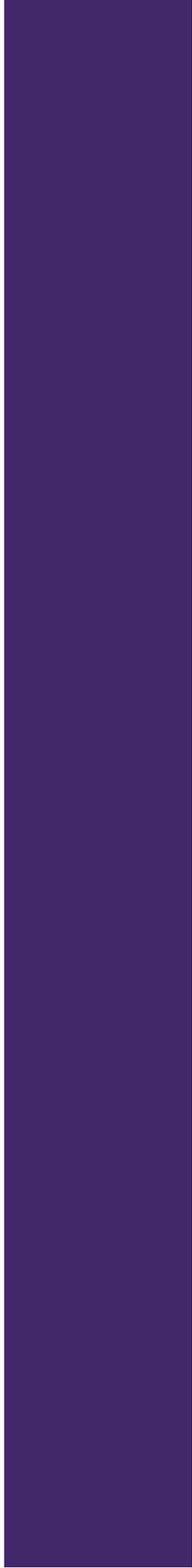
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EDITORIAL

[UG] [Students] Random checks in the



COUNCIL OF WARDENS

to students, caretakers, head, Radhika, Chair, Wardens ▾

Dear Students,

It is to inform that Council of Wardens and hostel management have discussed the frequent violation of hostel rules, such as substance abuse, in detail in view of the recent happenings (including punishments to some students due to substance abuse). The committee has decided to carry out random room checks in all the hostels.

The purpose of random checking of the learning process of all students studying hostel rules.

Students should co-operate with the room. Based on the requirement, hostel management may ask several questions to the room occupant.

[UG] [Students] Regarding laundry

COUNCIL OF WARDENS

to students, caretakers, head, Radhika, Chair, Wardens ▾

Dear Students,

Over the years, it was observed that it is becoming painful for the hostel administration to maintain washing machines due to frequent failures of washing machines. Due to frequent failures, the vendor is unable to forward to service the machines. As a result, washing machines are not working and resulting into severe inconvenience to students.

By considering the issues of difficulty in servicing washing machines and other management overheads, during recent COW and Hostel meeting, it was decided to discontinue laundry service through washing machines. The students can wash cloths on their own. It was proposed to introduce locally out-sourced laundry service in the hostels.

[UG] [Students] Hostel Allocation Policy Mo



Hostel Admin Head <hostel.manager@iiit.ac.in>

to General, students, Care, Chair, Council ▾

Dear Student Parliament,
Greetings of the day!

Hostel Allocation Policy Monsoon - 2019:

As per the Minutes of meeting with Council Of Wardens, Hostel Manager, Monsoon -2019 appended below for your information and further action.

- (i) Fresh UG1 - BakulNivas (First and second floor>)
- (ii) UG1 going to UG2- BakulNivas (Second floor, and third floor, and
- (iii) UG2 going to UG3- Palash E Block
- (iv) UG3 going to UG4- Palash Main Block (single occupancy)

WELCOME TO THIS ISSUE:

A flurry of emails halfway through an otherwise uneventful summer vacation kickstarted the first of several hostel woes (washing machines, random checks, UG3 shifting concerns). Some were resolved, others — not so much. It marks the continuation of an age-long tradition of the administration making decisions without student input, with possible partial resolution if students find the decisions disturbing enough to protest about. It is concerning that so many decisions heavily concerning student life are being made without student consultation, especially when a framework for student representation (the Student Parliament) exists. We as students have oftentimes pointed fingers at the parliament, claiming they do no work. But what can the parliament do if there's no one listening?

Random Hostel checks

The first of the hostel-related emails to spark discontent was one officially authorizing “random checks in hostels”. It is not a new concept in itself, but the scope of unchecked power left a few people very concerned. As stated, “Students should co-operate with the hostel management during checking of room. Based on the requirement, hostel management conducting checks may ask several questions to

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fourth floor>)

the room occupant(s). The hostel management may also check the room meticulously, based on the requirement. During random checks, if any student does not cooperate with the hostel management by exhibiting impolite and improper behavior, the same is to be intimated to the Manager-Hostel Admin. for further action.”

The framework leaves a lot wanting in terms of checks and balances - a rogue person in hostel management could potentially abuse the system as there is no clear definition of “impolite and improper behaviour”. The issue of unchecked power structures has been discussed at length in the past, and it is alarming how despite this such decisions are taken.

On the plus side, a discussion with parliament representatives revealed that the issue might be resolved: in further meetings the administration agreed not to have random checkings, although if guards found evidence of substance abuse or the like they would report it to the warden.

Washing Machine Conflict

Students have been complaining about non-functional washing machines for years now. Heavy use cycles over prolonged periods of time means that even the industrial machines we possess have been breaking down constantly. Hardly a surprise, given an average of about 3 machines for 500 students. The administration has been notified of the issue often, with the hopes of finding a solution.

We would have said that nobody expected the “solution” to be a notice declaring that washing machines are to be removed altogether. We would be lying.

Student representatives have since conferred with the administration and had the decision reversed, but we must admire the approach initially taken. Issues with washing machines leading to maintenance costs? Remove them! One can only

wonder what heights students would have reached had they used the same approach to all problems in life.

Hostel Allocations

In case anyone is still unaware of the hullabaloo that happened last year with regard to Bakul-OBH student room allocation, here is a quick summary:

The college decided they needed to increase interbatch

interactions as the policy of separating first year boys from the rest of UG that they had introduced two years prior wasn't working by some metric. So all of UG 1-3 (boys) would reside in Bakul, moving to OBH for single rooms after. Consequently, UG2 was stuck in Bakul till they moved to fourth year, and the college tried to get third years who had moved to OBH from Bakul in second year to move back to Bakul for their third year before they would eventually move to OBH for their fourth/fifth years. Mysterious circumstances shroud the events that led to the college not wildly inconveniencing students for once, but sources suggest MP resignation was involved (these rumours were later invalidated). Also, PG1 would live in OBH and PG2 stay in Bakul for the year, with both PG batches to reside in OBH the coming year.

Given this series of events, one would expect that this decision too be adhered to for at least two years.

Well, no. A mail sent by the Hostel Admin Head announced that the second years (who, according to a poll, have largely grown to love Bakul and its toilets) will have to move to OBH for their third year, and even more shocking (not), they will only have a choice of room-mates, and not their wing. UG2k17 residents of Bakul are not very happy. This also means that PG1 and PG2 continue to live separately (PG1 in Bakul and PG2 in OBH).

As of the time of writing, efforts are being made to resolve the matter.

IIIT Messes and Data

Since the beginning of March this semester, all the messes have been maintaining registers containing comprehensive data about the messes. Previously, it was not possible to know how many people had actually eaten a meal in the mess on a particular day, as not everyone swiped their electronic id cards, some students just checked out their roll number on the list kept at the desk— and there were guests not accounted for. The messes decided to keep plate counts to overcome this. They also keep track of the day's wastage and kitchen wastage. However, this data is handwritten in registers and not computerised and therefore is hard to analyse.

If this data was computerised, it could be used to obtain interesting information, like how much of IIIT skips breakfast, which food item is wasted the most, etc, and possibly aid towards positive change in the management of the messes.

The Institute Responds

Since the Institute is being called to blame for several of the editorial's topics, in the interest of fair representation we sent an email to the Hostel Admin Head and the Dean (A), requesting a response to the points raised. The Hostel Admin Head responded, and we quote it in its entirety:

Dear Ping,

Refer your mail regarding publishing content related to the issues mentioned below, I would like to bring out broadly which are co-related to the administration and student community at large.

(1) Removing of washing machines from the hostels citing rising maintenance: I am extremely sorry to say that this was misinterpreted by end users as a burden for administration part. Since my joining wef 12 Dec 2018 I take this opportunity to address these issues in large with focus on student comfort and its ownership by the students. As per the AMC of washing machines which institute had paid RS 4,39,000/- annually for effective on site maintenance for IFB appliances. The ibid contract signed between vendor and student parliament directly ensuring the ownership of the machines and its operability. Dear students one thing you have to ensure that the success of Admin lies solely with effective participation of students to make trouble free services for their comfort. The running of heavy duty washing machines depends on many parameters which includes usage of right detergent as prescribed by the vendor, water density/scalability which is most important criteria for life span of the machine, frequent downtime due to technical errors like improper operation which effects PCB, repetitive malfunctioning due to inner drum failure, apart from this the machine specified as 10 kg heavy duty no student can ensure that the cycle he uses may be less than 10 kg for which machine consumes same energy levels and water for its standard functioning. The hostel administration along with student parliament discussed these issues in depth during Council Of wardens meeting and the committee never in the stand of removing this facility. They are in the idea of introducing outsourced vendor for these services where student can save lot of time like as estimated 40 minutes per cycle,, CAPEX and OPEX there by ensuring the laundry services with out downtime/waiting for vendor to respond our complaint.

(2) To reiterate, any action motivated by some intention and accompanied by desire for its fruits is undoubtedly a great task to achieve as

per the policy is concerned. when you mean and say this is bad, the mind gets conditioned to look for difficulty in opportunity. And when you say this good, the mind looks for opportunity in difficulty. And therein lies the difference between winners and losers. For true success in life, develop the habit of perseverance. Perseverance pays, when success seems elusive do not give up. Do not blame anyone. Persevere. If you do that, success is sure to come.

(3) While closing this discussion, it is important to note that we can truly manage our thoughts only by practising detachment. If we are too attached to possession our thoughts will always evade management and we will remain unfocused. We suffer because we fail to understand that the world does not move as per our wish. Hope you all understand our concern to move forward with some other option but as per your wish we could retain the same system with ownership of the system. Let us make this system truly genuine and I insist you all take active part in this much discussed issue for your comfortable stay during your academic pursuit. May god bless you all and I on behalf of team hostel admin wish you a happy learning. ■



#Ggwp

The Gaming Scene: Here and Now

Abinash Maharana

Back in the day when when video games were rising in popularity in the 1980's and 1990's, the industry was just seen as a hobby and a source of entertainment. No one could have foreseen the heights that the gaming industry would reach by the late 2010's, and then still maintain the pace of its growth! So what is the deal with esports?

Esports or electronic sports refers to any form of organized video game competitions which could be team-based or individual. Examples of such games include Counter Strike, Overwatch, League of Legends, DOTA etc. These video games, along with the players, form an ecosystem of people playing, spectating and competing for rewards and most importantly, for fun. Although it was a subject of quite a bit of criticism, professional esports is slowly gaining popularity among the masses. With so many interesting games and their tournaments happening round the year, it has gained quite the traction.

Until about last year, India wasn't exactly brimming with esports activities. There are many causes which have led to this surge of viewership and rise of esports in India.

The roots of esports were sown as early as 1972 at a Stanford University LAN tournament, but since then it has grown leaps and bounds. The arrival of the legendary Quake 3 (a multiplayer focused first-person shooter game)

marks a major milestone because it became one of the most-played games of that era, and to this day is respected by the whole gaming community. Subsequently, with the introduction of League of Legends in 2009, and DOTA in 2004, regular tournaments were organized. The prize pool was low at that time, but the incentive and thrill of doing something new was what attracted young people to this world. Corporate sponsorships entered this scenario in 1997. In 2009, the first major Counter Strike tournament was held in Russia.

The Rise of PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds

Unless one has been living under a rock, they must have heard of PUBG in some form or the other. PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds was released on December 20, 2017. Soon after, the mobile version of the game was released on March 19, 2018. Since then PUBG has paced up to become one of the most followed and played games of all time. Subsequently this became the first instance of a mobile game having such a huge impact on the esports community. Since PUBG was paid on PC and the mobile version was free-to-play this gave a chance to the gaming community to try out a premium game for free, since there was no loss of gameplay whatsoever among the two versions. Also, this game was easy to learn and play, unlike some other games (cough CS:GO cough) which require dedication from a person to learn and master. That is the true definition of a perfect game: easy to learn and difficult to master.

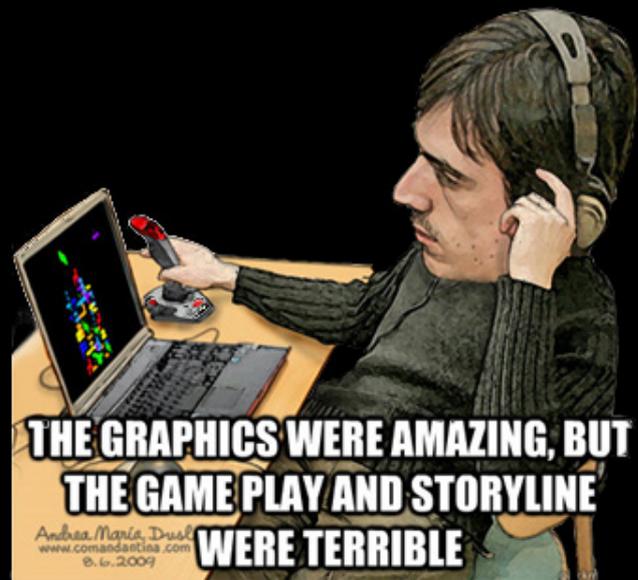
The first professional PUBG tournament was organised in India in the month of October 2018. The total prize pool was Rs. 50 lacs and it saw participation from about 1000 colleges across the country.

Tournaments

If we look from a global perspective, esports events take place round the clock all around the world. There are regular sponsored and well financed tournaments that reward these professional players with money among other incentives. Much of this is also attributed to the interest garnered by the spectators. Fanfare (no pun intended) is one of the chief reasons for the success of such events. Naturally, this has led to the growth of competitiveness in the circle and hence new teams and groups playing these games are emerging every second day.

This culture is more predominant in Europe, largely because of financial reasons and accessibility. Some countries, such as Finland (the home of our beloved Angry Birds franchise) have even gone on to build schools for modern gaming to train and nurture this spirit among teenagers. But that certainly doesn't mean that other nations are too far behind. Asia is slowly but steadily emerging as a huge hub for esports. Regular events are being held in Taiwan, Japan etc. on a very professional

I WENT OUTSIDE ONCE



level, keeping the competition from other regions in mind. To the delight of the Indian gaming community, Mumbai will be the host to 2019 ESL DOTA 2 Major this April, making it a first in many ways. It will feature 12 teams from all across the world with a prize pool of \$300,000.

Finance

According to a report from the marketing research company Newzoo that was released in early 2018, esports revenues for the year were expected to hit just over \$900 million in 2018. This industry is projected to grow to around \$1.1 billion in 2019, roughly one-fifths of the English Premier League and about twice the revenue generated by IPL, analysing from both these sports' latest annual revenue reports. Pretty impressive considering the sport is yet to get the limelight it deserves.

Most of the revenue from events is chiefly garnered from sponsorships, advertising, media rights, including broadcasting rights, merchandise and ticket sales. But what about India? This scene is especially bleak in India because of lack of the kind of encouragement and support needed to train professional esports players. Then there is this orthodox belief among the youth to choose conventional career options. Albeit few in number, there are world class training facilities and (e)sports centres available. But then again there arises the issue of financing their training. This is somewhat analogous to the story of Olympic medallists in categories such as shooting, wherein equipment and training play a major role in determining the strength of the player. Hopefully, this will improve in the future.

Recognition as a Sport

No other global event garners as much attention as the Olympics and the World Cups. Bearing in mind this



fact, attempts have been made to include esports as a real ‘sport’ in the Olympics. The International e-Sports Federation has been working hard to get the approval from the IOC (International Olympic Council) to get things rolling. Hopefully, by 2024, their efforts shall bear fruit and we might actually see esports as a medal event in Paris (host for the Olympics that year). It has already been successfully organised as a demonstration (non- medal) sport in the 2018 Asian Games, and will feature as a medal sport in 2022.

Gaming @ IIIT - H

Computer gaming is something which has been crafting its own culture in our college for years. Although it hasn’t come into limelight, the gaming community in the college has been active for years. Every year Felicity hosts Zombie Zone, which is a two to three day long event for

gaming. Students from across all batches come together to participate and have fun.

The recently introduced “The Gaming Club” has got great plans and it aims to introduce gaming among the student community in a positive light. This is the first time that a club for gaming has been formally established in our college (although there have been informal attempts at in the past). This will help in promoting gaming as a form of recreation in this college and to synchronize and support the number of related events that occur each year. Also, this will be a huge boost in introducing esports to our college community. Wondering what ggwp means? *good game, well played*

Note: The author is associated with the gaming club. ■

The Water Bill

Shahbaz Shaik, Vivek Pamnani, Mahathi Vempati

Discrepancies in the water bill and issues with regards to the water pricing instigated protest and several meetings with the SAC (Student Affairs Committee) and faculty in the Monsoon 2018 Semester till it's final resolution.

The Beginning

Three to four weeks before the registration of the Monsoon 2018 semester, NBH students noticed that their water bills on the institute's IMS seemed much higher than expected. The college first charges a certain amount as the water bill fees and later bills students for the water that was used in excess of the paid fee called the 'recovery' amount.

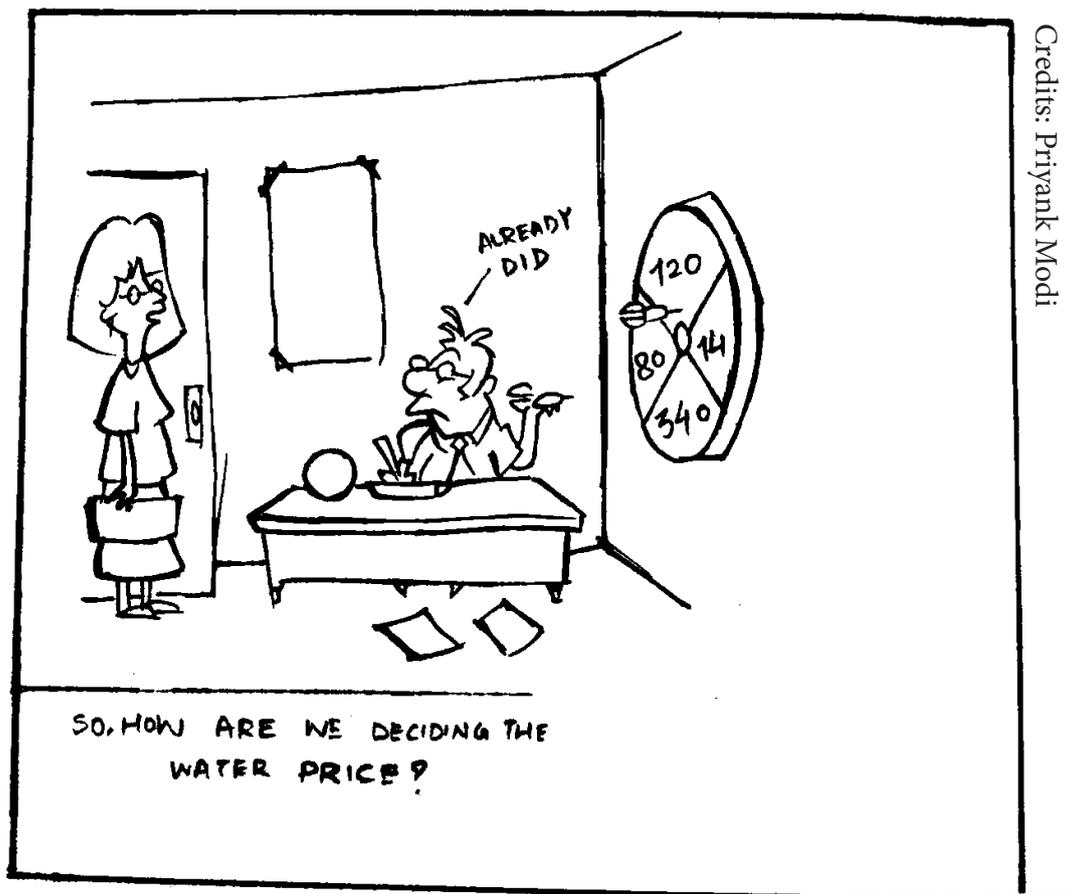
The students residing in NBH found that their recovery amount was quite high. The students thought it could have been an error and mailed support enquiring about this. In reply they got an Excel sheet as a justification. They then started to enquire, and then realised that the water fee in NBH was significantly higher than that of OBH. Upon further enquiry, they were told nothing could be done about it, since the meter readings for both the hostels were different.

According to Minesh Mathew, one of the first few students who was involved in the enquiries, on looking for possible reasons for the increase in the water bill, an enquiry was made into the number of guests living in NBH. Although there were supposed to be only six, upon going around and checking, they realised that there were around forty unregistered guests, which could have been a factor that contributed to the high fees. However the actual reasons were not clear. The SAC as well as the Director were not responding to mails on the matter, which instigated the students to protest. They refused to pay the recovery amount till the issue was resolved and in the meanwhile tried to look deeper into the water bill issues and the water bill policy as a whole.

IIIT Water Policy

IIIT can procure water in one of two ways. Either it buys water from the HMWSSB, the faction of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), that deals with water supply and treatment,





or obtains it from the IIIT in-house borewells. Students are charged the same amount irrespective of how the water is procured. GHMC water undergoes proper treatment which ensures it is potable, and transports it too. Borewell water is not purified.

The ratio in which we get ground water and borewell water is not known. However, according to SAC, some of the academic buildings' drinking water areas directly get GHMC water. The rest of the GHMC water is mixed with the borewell water in an underground reservoir and sent to all the buildings. Some buildings have water treatment plants before the water is pumped up. All the drinking water points have RO purifiers, so it doesn't matter which water is pumped there.

Students paid Rs. 120 per kilo liter, based on the consumption in the meter reading of their respective hostels. This was not the case in the past, where there was a flat pricing for every student per month. The students

questioned why the water was priced close to the GHMC water price when we did not completely receive GHMC water.

According to an email sent to the Parliament as a response to students' questions, the Director stated that the 120 INR / KL that was being charged was defined irrespective of any available calculations, and that the difference will be used to plan for the future.¹

On being asked why the charge for borewell water was nearly as much as that for GHMC, the reasoning given was to preserve water, to conserve it and to plan for future. In the Director's words:

"The decision to charge bore water at the same rate as the Manjeera water was take a couple of years ago in a conscious manner. The objective —as explained then — was to promote responsible use of water. Ground water is not forever at all and it should not be seen as

¹The email containing the minutes of the meeting: <https://tinyurl.com/ping-water-bill>

S.No	Location	Bore Motor Capacity	No Of Working Hours	Units	Sump Motor Capacity	No Of Working Hours	Total Units	Rate per Unit Rs	Total Power Charge Rs	Water Pumping Charge per KLD
1	OBH	7.5HP	12 Hrs	67	5.0HP					7.39 Per KL
2	NBH	7.5 HP	6Hrs	30	10.0HP					24 Per KL
3	WH	7.5 HP	3 Hrs	15	7.5 HP					00Per KL
4	GH	5.0 HP	12 Hrs	45	7.5 HP					10 Per KL
5	BAKUL	6.0 HP	8 Hrs	34	5.0 HP					00Per KL
						30	97	10	582	58
						60	90	10	675	37
						34	49	10	490	19
						5	90	10	900	5
							49	10	490	
WATER PUMPING										
1	Borewell to UG Sump, UG Sump to OHT'S (Electricity Charge)									
2	Man power (Pumping Operators)									
3	Cleaning of OHT'S and UG Sumps									
4	R & M (Pumps, Motors, Flushing of Bores)									
	TOTAL									

“free water”. We will be doing a disservice to the future residents if we do so, resulting in depleting ground water too soon in this part of the world. We didn't have a proper formula to “cost” this aspect and went with the rate that we pay for external water. I hope you appreciate it as it is a matter also of principle. We are working towards reducing the water requirements by recycling the grey water, having a treatment plant, etc. The wise thing will be to use the difference in today's perceived costs to building such infrastructure. The plans are very much in progress.”

Various Costs claimed

On 19th July, the engineering department handed out a sheet as justification for the charges. However several students pointed out that this sheet had errors, some very blatant like $97 \times 10 = 582$. It was also claimed at one point that the high charge was due to the maintenance team.

Water Surcharge

IIIT charges students a certain fixed amount which is to be collected and used for future projects. These are called surcharges. Students in IIIT pay an electricity surcharge, which was used to replace tube lights with LED lights and to replace fans with more environment friendly fans. However, students also used to pay a water surcharge, despite the fact that the high water bill was being justified as something that took future projects into account.

Like the electricity surcharge, the students were unaware that an extra water surcharge is paid too.

This surcharge used to be 100 INR, but was later removed after students questioned the institute about why a surcharge existed in addition to the water bill. The fact that money is being collected for future projects is not wrong, and in fact, should be encouraged if the projects

are realistic and environment friendly. However, students were not informed about either the electricity surcharge or the water surcharge.

Status Quo

Five student representatives comprising of parliament members as well as hostel representatives had meetings with the SAC and other concerned officials regarding the discrepancies throughout the monsoon semester.

According to an update in the PHASE 1 report of the student parliament:

- The issue got resolved with the introduction of a new water policy. From August-2018 (Monsoon 2018), each student has to pay 250 rupees per month. This will be included as a component in the hostel rent from next semester.
- For Kadamb and Parijaat where high irregularities were observed, the residents of these hostels will get refunds or adjustments in the next semester's fee. The consumption for the last 2 semesters will be based on the last 3 months' usage which is around 3 KL/month/student.

According to Minesh Mathew, one of the student representatives, it was also agreed that a meeting would be held every year to look into the need for revising the prices. The last meeting was held in November, 2018.

In January, students of residing in Parijaat and Kadamb received an email that a refund process would be initiated for those who paid an excess amount in the water bill. ■

THE



FOOD CRAWL

Kripa Anne
Shahbaz Shaik



It's 3 a.m. You have just finished your assignment, and now can finally sleep. You lie down on the bed, and cover yourself with your blanket. Then you feel it. You do not want it to happen, but you know it is going to happen either way. Your. Stomach. Growls. And now you drag yourself out of bed, forage for food within your room. You fail to find anything. It's too late for you to go to any in-campus canteen. You now need to drag your sore tired body all the way to one of the only convenient sources of late night food for a IIIT student. You have to go to DLF.

DLF is a row of roadside food-stalls, that stay open well into the early hours of the morning. Not exactly hygienic, not exactly gourmet, but definitely cheap and tasty and improves the state of your stomach, at least in the short run. When you wake up you might not be in the most charitable mood, but at least you gain the ability to sleep

peacefully. That is what DLF is. A life saver, a sleep giver of sorts, for cash strapped IIIT students. An alternative to ordering from restaurants when your allowance is running low. That, dear reader, is what DLF is.

It usually opens post-dinner, at 8pm-ish, and peaks at around 12am. Then, some shops shut down, or run out of food, but many continue to stay up till dawn. Of course, during the course of their operations a few minor hiccups like passing police cars do come up, but DLF takes such things in its stride, faltering occasionally, but never stopping, walking miles before it sleeps.

Between the tried-and-tested stalls serving piping hot *tawa bondas* or a classic Milky Way burger, there are many hidden gems on this street. Our mission was to find as many of these as possible and judge these dishes based on their taste, quantity and price.

AM-PM Maggi Point

We decided to review one of the DLF favourites in recent times: the fried Maggi from AM-PM Maggi point. The place was quite popular and was packed with people from college, IT companies and shut down clubs. We ordered the egg fried Maggi and risked our appetite by standing right behind the stoves. While we will refrain from commenting on the questionable hygiene of the cardboard boxes of plain noodles, the dish itself tasted great. It was hot, spicy and flavourful. Don't let the name fool you — the Maggi is cooked twice, and not *fried* per se. The dish wasn't innovative in its entirety but rather, a slight variation on a standard fare bowl of Maggi. The quantity was a bit lesser than we would've liked but it had all the makings of a staple.

Dish: Egg-fried maggi

Quantity - 4/8

Taste - 6/8



The Magic Straw

Next on our list was a cute little shack nestled away on a dark road leading up to the masala chai-wala called The Magic Straw. The place sold mojitos and milkshakes, among other beverages. Our taste buds were still burning from the Maggi so we ordered the Strawberry Storm. It was one of the cheaper items on the menu but still wasn't in the range of an everyday item. Initially, the drink had a clear segregation of syrup, ice and water which ruined the experience for us. After a good shaking, it tasted like a normal mojito you would get from a restaurant and was quite refreshing. However, they had put in huge blocks of ice which took up almost three-quarters of the entire volume. Overall, the drink was lazy and wasn't worth the money spent on it.

Dish: Strawberry Storm

Quantity - 3/8

Taste - 5/8



Pariwar Eatery

Tawa bondas are an essential part of every DLF trip but this time, we got a bit creative and ventured into Pariwar Eatery and ordered a butter cheese fried *vada*. The place was on the street before GD's and had a delicious buttery scent wafting around it. The dish was prepared just like a *tawa bonda*, but as it was made with just 2 *medu vadas*, the dish was painfully small. However, the taste more than made up for it and had equal parts spiciness, buttered crispness and masala. All in all, the dish must definitely be tried at least once but we have a hard time seeing this as a replacement for our trusty *tawa bondas*.

Dish: Butter cheese fried vada

Quantity - 4.5/8

Taste - 6.5/8



Chai Factory



Chai Factory is a rather deceptive name for a place that sells more non-chai items than chai items. The list of items available over there was so long that due budget constraints we could only try out the ones with the names that seemed to pop-out the most. *Bombay bhel*, and *dahi samosa*.

Bombay bhel, like the city itself, was full of rather unexpected flavours, all very densely packed into a tiny plate. Like the city, I had had enough of it after eating just half of it, was far too tired to complete it, and the plentiful nuts that were present did not help. Overall, it was quite an okay dish, with a lot of quantity.

We then moved onto the *dahi samosa*. Words that seem to make perfect sense when read separately, that simply do not seem to make any sense when combined. We were served a snow capped mountain on a plate, and upon plunging our spoon into the mountain, the hot interior was exposed. Metaphors aside, it solely consisted of a samosa, with dahi on top. Tasted quite good, although a bit more quantity would have made it better. It tasted a lot like dahi vada, except that the taste of the seemingly bland vada is replaced by a more dynamic samosa.



We also tried two of the many chais available, masala chai and black tea. The masala tea was akin to swallowing lava, except with a five second delay. Initially, the taste seems to be fine. And then, Mt. Vesuvius explodes within your oesophagus. Not a pleasant experience. But it had masala. 12/10 for honesty. The black tea was actually quite good, and although it did have far more sugar than necessary, I would definitely buy it again.

Dish: Masala Tea
Quantity - 5/8
Taste - 4.5/8

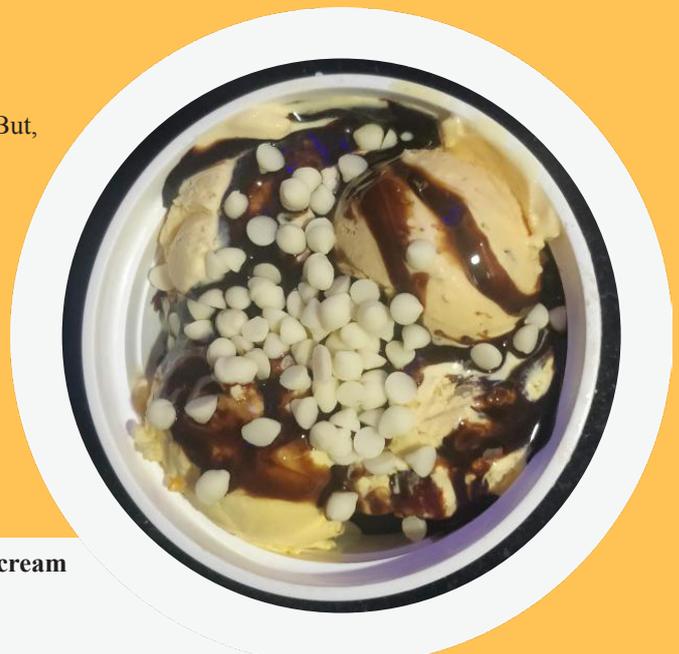
Dish: Dahi Samosa
Quantity - 7/8
Taste - 6.5/8

Dish: Bombay Bhel
Quantity - 10/8
Taste - 4.5/8

Dish: Black Tea
Quantity - 5/8
Taste - 6/8 (-1 for the layer of sugar at the bottom)

Amul

The store itself is a very well known feature among students. But, we were tired and wanted dessert. And since we were here to review food, why not try something completely out of the left field? So *Ice creamy yo land* it was. As a safety, we also got the old trustworthy Chocochip ice cream. Which was a good decision, as *Ice creamy yo land* was... meh. At best. Definitely not worth the asking price; maybe a good dish one could try as a quirky purchase. The most interesting thing about eating the dish was the jelly, and getting shuttered in when the police came patrolling yet again. As for chocochip, it was chocolate ice cream with chocolate chips. Standard Amul fare, probably not worth the price all considered.



Dish: Ice creamy yo land
Quantity - 4.5/8
Taste - 5/8

Dish: Chocochip ice cream
Quantity - 6/8
Taste - 6/8

It is obvious that the average IIT student's body is composed mostly of nimbu Pani (as it is affectionately called), maggi (fried or otherwise), and varying amounts of oil and fat. And DLF plays a vital role towards helping the students maintain this ideal body composition even under the most strenuous of conditions. Its importance is impossible to overstate, and foolish to ignore. It is as much a part of IIT as any of the canteens, something that burns a slow hole in our pockets and stomachs, while satisfying our taste buds and hunger pangs.

■



Au Revoir, Shosanna

Anush Mahajan

The following is an analysis of a character in the movie "Inglourious Basterds". It is recommended to watch the movie before reading this. Otherwise, of course, a spoiler warning is in effect.

In modern-day cinema, the plot is the soul of the film and many of these plots require complex protagonists to really strike a chord with the audience. Like Cobb struggling to let go of the memory of his dead wife in Inception or Wolverine, the man who can never be killed, coming to terms with old age in Logan. But there are few films in which the supporting characters steal the limelight even in the presence of the protagonist. One of them is Colonel Hans Landa of the SS, popularly known as "The Jew Hunter" from the film Inglourious Basterds. We will be looking at the traits of the character and what makes him interesting throughout the film scene by scene.

ONCE UPON A TIME... IN NAZI - OCCUPIED FRANCE

An officer is seen to arrive at a small dairy farm with his security detail. The officer exits his car and introduces himself as Colonel Hans Landa of the SS to an insignificant farmer, which is uncommon for a high ranking officer such as himself, revealing him to be gentler than his fellow Nazis. After inviting himself inside the farmer's house he says he would have milk over wine. He starts to investigate about a Jewish family which was not "accounted" for and gets unconventionally excited upon hearing from the farmer that he has heard rumours of escape, pointing towards the eccentric nature of the Colonel.

Landa asks for another glass of milk and inquires if the farmer knows the nickname bestowed upon him by the people of France, confident that he would know, as Landa's reputation precedes him. "The Jew Hunter", the farmer says as he pushes the glass of milk towards Landa. After comparing Jews to rats and Germans to hawks, Landa praises Jews in being able to abandon their humanity in order to survive but also is confident that he can think like Jews as well making him a great "Hunter of the Jews". Changing his tone the Colonel asks, "May I smoke my pipe as well?" Afraid, the farmer says, "Please, Colonel, make yourself at home." And then... Landa removes from his pocket a pipe which bears a remarkable resemblance to Sherlock Holmes' pipe conveying to the audience that why he holds the post of Colonel even though he is not physically very strong. He is a detective and he has deduced that the farmer is hiding the Jewish family in his house. The farmer drops the act and reveals that he is indeed sheltering the Jewish family underneath his floorboards. Landa orders his men to assemble over

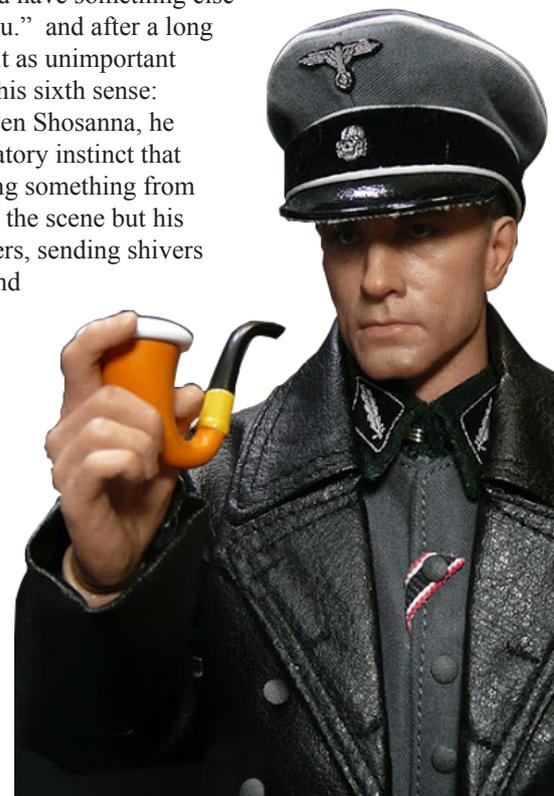
the floorboards and open fire to kill the Jewish family - bringing an end to the seemingly warm nature of his. One member, a girl named Shosanna manages to escape and instead of shooting her

Landa lets her escape exclaiming "Au Revoir, Shosanna". The whole scene gives us a complete insight into Landa's behaviour which is exemplified throughout the movie. He is a devil in disguise willing to go to any lengths to get what he desires and a shrewd detective who will fool you by his kind demeanour, and as soon as you let your guard down he will end you. Therefore it is best for you to be on the same side as him.

GERMAN NIGHT IN PARIS

We jump to three years after the sequence of events in the first scene and we are informed that Shosanna, now known as Emmanuelle Mimieux, is an owner of a cinema in Paris and is being "persuaded" by Private Zoller and Dr. Goebbels in a restaurant to host a premiere of a German film

which will be attended by all the high ranking officers of the Third Reich. After agreeing to do so, while the rest leave Emmanuelle is requested to stay back for questioning by none other than Hans Landa as he is in-charge of security at the premiere. Landa is shown to be formal and respectful in his interrogation and orders a glass of milk for Emmanuelle. After the interrogation he lights a cigarette for himself as well as Emmanuelle which bears an uncanny resemblance to the first scene as Landa says gravely, "I did have something else I wanted to ask you." and after a long silence dismisses it as unimportant which showcases his sixth sense: as never having seen Shosanna, he still gets this predatory instinct that Emmanuelle is hiding something from him. Landa leaves the scene but his presence still lingers, sending shivers down our spine, and reminding us of his menacing nature despite his seemingly gentle demeanour. Shosanna is shaken to her core after meeting the man who slaughtered her family and



starts weeping profusely.

OPERATION KINO

Landa reaches a tavern to investigate an incident in which a few German soldiers and their commanding officer lie dead. He identifies two soldiers as being the members of the Basterds, further affirming the detective skills that Landa possesses as The Basterds only left a few survivors with Swastika marks on their heads. He also finds a shoe belonging to Bridget and a napkin on which her autograph is present.

REVENGE OF THE GIANT FACE

At the premiere, Landa approaches Bridget and inquires about the cast that she has on her leg to which Bridget replies that she hurt her leg mountain climbing. Hearing this Landa starts laughing hysterically as he cannot believe the absurdity of her lie and lets his suspicion of Bridget's lie be conveyed to her. He toys with her some more before asking about her guests (three members of The Basterds who barely speak Italian), who she claims are of Italian origin. Landa then goes on to address the guests in fluent Italian taking them by surprise. Though Landa knows that Bridget was at the tavern he acts as if he is ignorant of the given fact so convincingly, he should be given an Oscar. He then asks to have a word with Bridget in private where he orders her to put her foot on his thigh and proceeds to fit the shoe that he found in the tavern on her leg to let Bridget know that he knows she is a double agent. Landa chokes Bridget to a cold death, disclosing the lengths he is willing to go to sustain himself. He then kidnaps Aldo (the leader of the Basterds) and Utivich (a member of The Basterds). Landa then lets them know that he knows about their plan to blow up the cinema and essentially end the war by killing Der Führer and he can crush their plan by making a phone call. Now,

remember this is 1944, USA has joined the allies and the Axis powers are beginning to lose control over the regions they had captured and the end of the Third Reich is inevitable. Landa knows this and is easily ready to abandon the Nazi cause in the favour of staying alive which highlights that his loyalty is only

to himself and no one else. Hence he offers to conditionally surrender himself and avoid making the phone call if he gets safe passage to the USA and citizenship. Which he does end up getting but at the cost

of a permanent Swastika on his head carved out by Aldo.

“ A DETECTIVE. A DAMN GOOD DETECTIVE.”

Keeping aside the fact that Landa went through agonizing pain at the end of the movie he was the character that never had to suffer throughout the movie which elevates his status from just another villain to an elite league of extraordinary characters consisting the likes of Anton Chigurh, Darth Vader and The Joker. A calculating sociopath who is ahead of everyone at every step will always haunt you long after the movie is over. Landa is discovered to have a cynical disregard for morality and a sole focus. ■

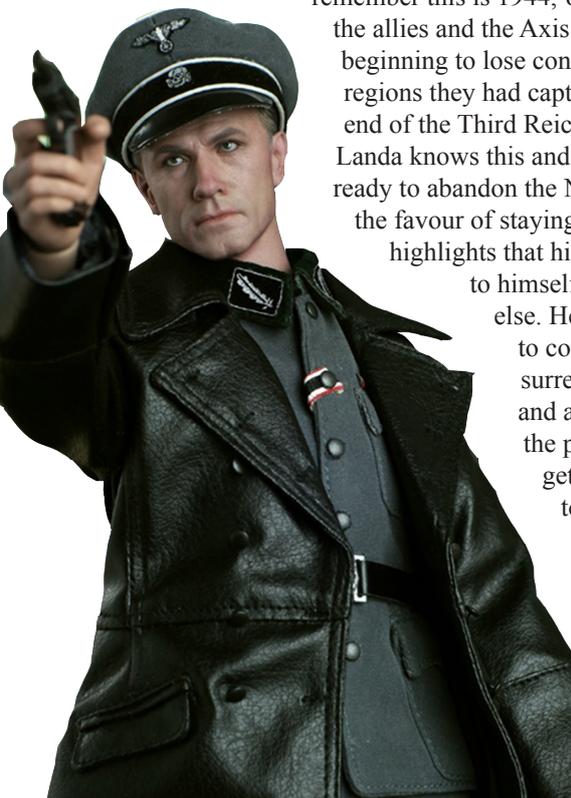
WATCH IT NOW



IMDb 8.3/10

metacritic 69%

Rotten Tomatoes 88%





Training us for the competitions where you play football in the dark.

The peak of boredom.

Don't worry about the snakes and scorpions, your grades will scare you before these do.

Vindhya :
The maze of IIT.

The Golden Gate Bridge took less time to construct.

One building, three names

Bet you didn't know this ditch was a lake.



Won't recommend going here at night.

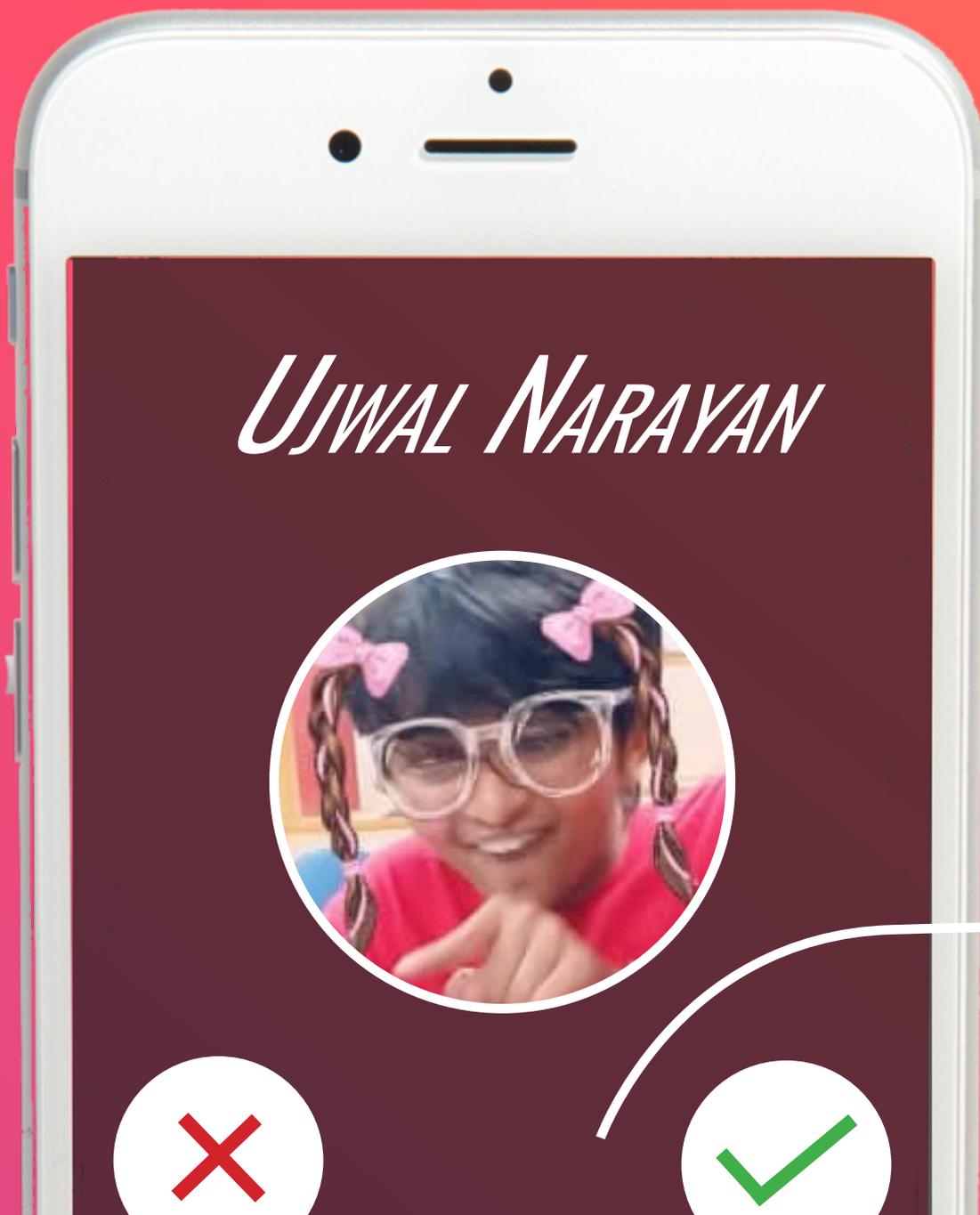


Places we recommend you to explore on your own, maybe even get lost.

PING!



*Mirror Mirror On
The Wall, Can I Get
A Match At All?*



With assignments, deadlines, and exams forever looming on the horizon, who actually has time to get out there and meet new people? In a college where a holiday means to most a couple of extra hours of sleep, dating apps like Tinder help tremendously to meet and interact with people outside of college. With everyone having heard about Tinder and knowing at least one person using it in college, it is clear that they have a significant impact on our lives.

Tinder is one of the most popular dating apps out there and has revolutionized modern dating. While it is the undoubted king, it is not without competition. TrulyMadly, Happn, Coffee meets Bagel etc, all offer the same functionality with their own unique take on it. For example, Coffee meets Bagel does away with the whole Right swiping Tinder is famous for; rather it offers a match based on the information you gave when you signed up to provide one match a day every day at noon, for a more focused experience (or so the folks at Coffee and Bagel claim).

DATA! DATA! DATA!

“Data! Data! Data! I can’t make bricks without clay”
Sherlock Holmes

Still, while the advantages are plenty, it is not without faults.

You cannot come to any conclusion without data. A survey was conducted across the campus, to find out how people were using dating apps and their experiences with it. 49 people responded to it. Only those who have used or had used any dating app were considered for the survey as the scope of the topic was not who uses it but rather how one uses it.

What dating apps do people predominantly use?

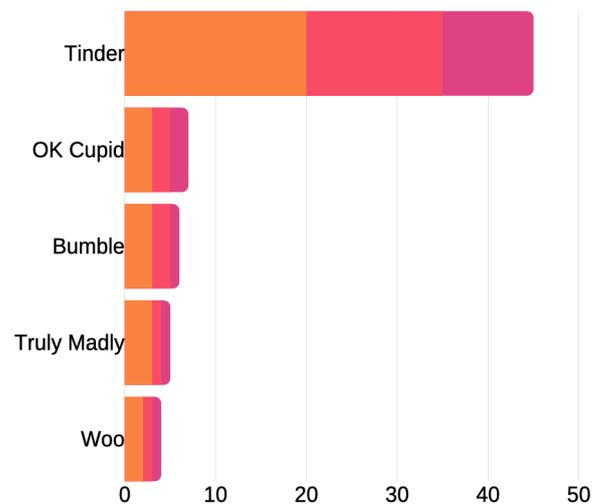
Not surprisingly, all those surveyed used Tinder. Some of the other dating apps which were popular include OkCupid and Truly Madly. While fundamentally all of them are the same, i.e help people meet others, there are few differences.

Tinder offers an extremely easy set-up. One can set up a profile within minutes and by linking your social media like Facebook or Instagram, your likes, dislikes, and pictures can be automatically imported. Giving space only for a very short bio, people can quickly decide if they like the profile or not. With a slick UI and intuitive gestures, it has gathered a large user-base. With the increase in the number of users, the number of users signing up for Tinder increased as they had a higher probability of getting matched. Tinder originally required you to link it to Facebook, but now one can sign up with a phone number instead.

OkCupid, on the other hand, encourages long profiles. Users can answer multiple choice questions on a wide variety of topics including but not limited to, “Are your

parents ugly?”, “Do you believe in dinosaurs?”, and my personal favourite: “Your a bit*h! What bothers you about the above sentence?”; with the options being Grammar, Profanity, Both, or None. Users can choose the level of importance of each question and decide if they should be publicly visible on their profiles. While OkCupid offers the classic Tinder swipe right if you like them and left if you don’t (they call it DoubleTake), users can also choose to be matched by the answers they gave. This thus leads to a greater chance of you meeting someone you’re compatible with.

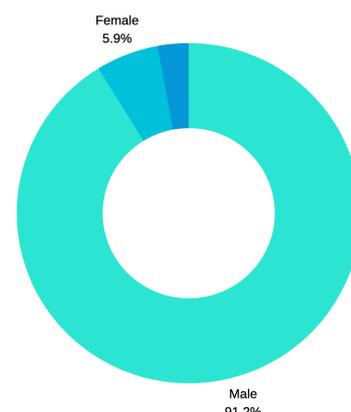
TrulyMadly offers a more secure or safe environment. Users need a minimum 30 Trust score. These trust scores are gained by linking your Facebook, LinkedIn, or other social accounts. Signing up by Gmail for example, gives you



only 10 points whereas Facebook gives you the required 30 you need to start interacting with the other users. Users also cannot see the names of other users unless they’ve matched, thus making it difficult for people to find you on other platforms. The matching happens based on compatibility and the algorithm used is very transparent. In place of a bio, users describe themselves with a maximum of 5 pre-written hashtags.

Who uses Tinder the most?

As an engineering college, it is expected for most people using Tinder to be male. While IIIT has approximately an 80:20 sex ratio (Exact values can be found in the NIRF report available here <https://www.iiit.ac.in/nirf-report/>) at least 90% of the surveyed were male.

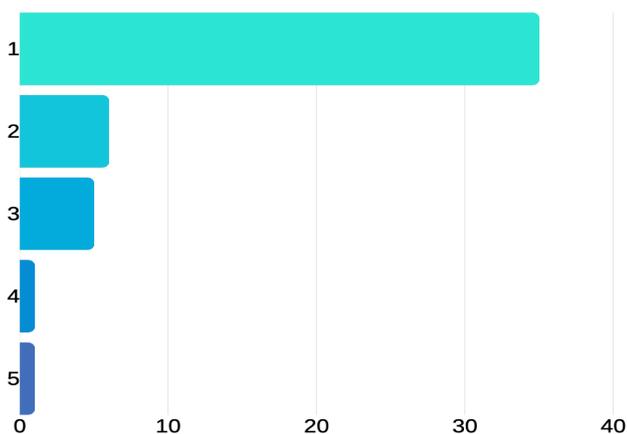


With Section 377 (Unnatural Offences) of the Indian Penal Code which talks about among other things the criminalization of consensual sex between the same gender in private, being scrapped to allow the LGBT community to carry on with their lives with dignity, the number of LGBT users on dating apps shot up. Among the surveyed the majority of the users are heterosexual but three non-hetero users were present too.

Matches: Behind the Scenes

A variety of factors play in the finicky game of getting matches. It's not just your looks or your bio. One of the few meta factors were the frequency of usage. It was observed that the most frequent users were not the most successful ones. When rating regularity of usage on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being rare usage and 5 being daily), users reporting 3s or 4s were usually among the most matched. Tinder does some spam detection with marking users who right swipe everybody. It could also be the case that in the initial few weeks, users who get matches are more likely to continue using the app compared to those who don't and thus might be discouraged to use it more.

Another one of the factors was your bio. Your bio matters a lot with some users ranking it more important to them than your pictures.



How Often do you end up meeting a match?

Now coming to the most important question, how often does somebody get matched? The number varies wildly based on gender, with the ladies getting nearly three times as much as the average guy. On a scale of 1-5, all the ladies responded with 5 while most of the guys were at 1s and 2s. India's skewed ratio and the skewed representation on these apps has led to such an oversaturation of dudes that many feel the average person has little to no chance.

Say you're matched. What happens then? First impressions usually set the tone and most people go with something they picked up from the bio. A pun, a witty joke, some interesting trivia. Popular games like 20 questions also seem to work out well and it's always to get to know your date before actually meeting them. Pick up lines are another go-to tool for opening a conversation but may not always work. "How much does a polar bear weigh? Enough to break the ice" and the like seemed to work better than the usual run of the mill pick up lines. Nearly 70% of those surveyed reported to never meeting

their matches in real life. A meagre 15% of all matches actually end up meeting their matches. Scheduling conflicts and the expenses involved like in the case of your match being 10km away all contribute to the lack of real-world interaction between matches. Due to all these factors and the apps being usually used for quick hookups, it's not easy to get into an actual serious long term relationship with the help of these apps. But don't give up hope for this as nearly 10% of those surveyed did have a long term re-

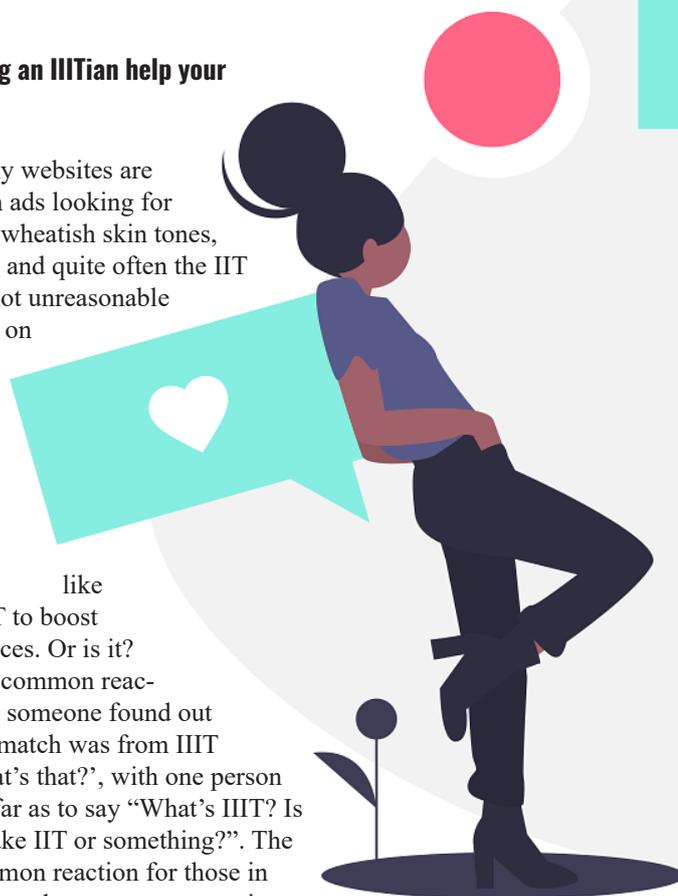


lationship with people they met from the app. While this is a tiny fraction, one has to keep in mind that less than 15% get consistently matched.

Does being an IITian help your chance?

Matrimony websites are filled with ads looking for people of wheatish skin tones, slim body and quite often the IIT tag. It is not unreasonable to expand on this notion and believe that being from colleges like IIT or IIT to boost your chances. Or is it?

The most common reaction when someone found out that their match was from IIT was "What's that?", with one person going so far as to say "What's IIT? Is it like a fake IIT or something?". The most common reaction for those in the know can be put ever so succinctly in one word. NERD. Some even ask about the most effective coaching centres or books used to crack JEE. To summarise, IIT being relatively new and thus not very well known, does not seem to make much of a difference, but those who know about IIT as one user puts it "Go crazy about it".



How safe do people feel using dating apps?

Meeting strangers is all well and good but how do you know that these strangers are not going to kill you. Sadly enough this is not just a thought experiment. Tinder Serial Killers exist and for all we know walk amongst us. Perhaps the most famous amongst them is Danuel Drayton, a 27-year-old man from Connecticut. His modus operandi was to meet people through dating apps like Tinder or ride-sharing apps like Uber. He used to lure them away after their dates and then assault and murder them. One may say this would not happen in a country like ours, but as recently as Sept of 2018, a man was murdered in Jaipur. His date planned on kidnapping him for ransom, and when she realized that he had lied about his financial status and the ransom could not be arranged, she along with her partner murdered him.

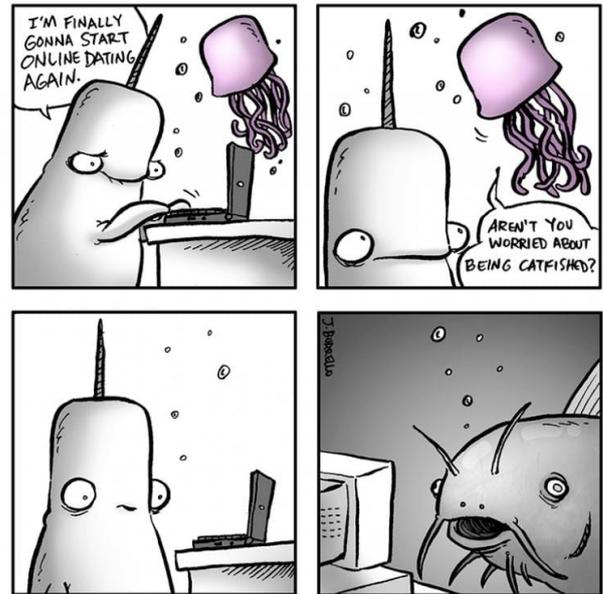
Dating apps especially those like Tinder with little to no verification are fertile grounds for catfishing. While many are just spam bots, there could be problems with disastrous consequences. Consider the case of u/angls-wa, a 21-year-old man from Australia who was dating a girl he met on Tinder. One fine day around three months into his relationship he was asked to fetch some cash from

his girlfriend's wallet and he chanced upon her id which put her age at 15. Her reported age on Tinder was 19. This whole incident might send him to prison for statutory rape, all because he dated a girl who looked and acted 19 but was not.

Coming back to IIIT, when asked to rate their interaction with the people they meet in the apps, on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being very good and 5 being very bad most users rated a 3. With an abundance of fake accounts and catfishing being prevalent, precautions need to be taken if you're going to use them to date. Among those surveyed, one user recalls of an incident where some random person found her Tinder profile, got his hands on her number through unknown means and texted her, "I'm waiting below your hostel, come out".

A Simple Hello Could Lead To A Billion Things

Just because of a few sour grapes, one does not stop eating all grapes. Similarly, while there can be and you probably might have experienced some unpleasantness, you should



not stop meeting new people provided you take precautions and keep your safety and well being in mind. With 26 million matches happening per day across the world, there is a significant chance that you can find somebody you like and are compatible with. 13% of all couples formed from dating apps are either married or engaged, and the numbers are increasing with every passing year as the apps permeate deeper into the popular culture.

It is true that the primary purpose of these apps is dating and finding a partner, but they are used for a variety of other reasons too. There is a large number of people who use Tinder while travelling to get recommendations from locals. They use it to get a better grasp of new languages. People have even used Tinder to find investors for their ideas. All the world's a stage and it's up to you to grasp every little opportunity that comes your way.

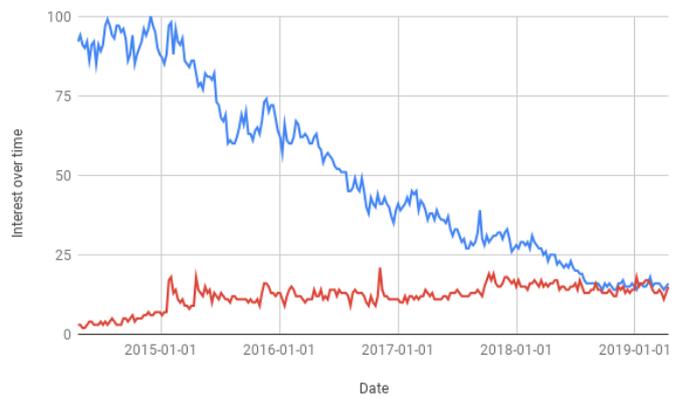
Will these trends hold?

Roughly 70% of the surveyed were using Tinder and the like for more than a month, with nearly 20% of them using it for more than a year. Thus there is a regular user base and it is growing especially in countries like ours with a growing educated youth population. This trend is clearly observed with around 10% of those surveyed using Tinder for less than a week. Traditionally in Indian culture, arranged marriages were the norm, with matrimony websites like Bharat Matrimony and shaadi.com having over 35 million users. But this trend is gradually changing. Comparing with one of the popular matrimony sites

BharatMatrimony.com using Google Trends our conclusion is justified. With Tinder slowly but surely overtaking the popularity of BharatMatrimony.

Over the course of the last five years, BharatMatrimony represented by Blue here was massively higher with Tinder represented by red having a negligible share in the market. But today Tinder has overtaken BharatMatrimony and is increasing at a sharp rate.

Dating apps are going to have a much greater influence on society in the coming years, with marriages between people meeting on dating apps becoming the norm rather than the oddity it is today. ■





DEEP IMPACT

ABHIGYAN GHOSH



In an era post the 2016 US Presidential Elections fake news has been a major talking point, playing a significant role in all aspects of all our lives. The increased proliferation of the same on the internet calls for greater vigilance and verification of sources; the alternative being visibly depicted in many of our own families' WhatsApp forwards. While the content itself is largely harmless gossip and scammy news to make Indians feel patriotic or to convince people of a particular ideology, the impact of it is not a matter to be taken lightly. Fake news channelling mob mentality via such means has already claimed several lives in India, often by using rifts among communal, political, and other grounds.

If text weren't bad enough, the age of digital manipulation brings with it a myriad of opportunities to produce Fake News — or 'False Propaganda' as some have termed it — in Multimedia format: photos and videos, highly influential forms of media consumption. Those who followed the news a few years back may recall the incident of a news channel doctoring video 'evidence' to claim that students from a particular university had turned a protest violent first, contrary to what they claimed. Despite the level of realism some of these efforts have achieved, there remain ways to distinguish between what's real and what's not. But what if that weren't the case? And from here we can arrive at the focus of this piece: to showcase the impact of using tools made possible by advances in Computer Vision and the field of AI to produce stunningly realistic videos, capturing events that never happened, called the Deep Fake.

What is a Deep fake?

A deep fake is a doctored video (most often with audio) that is very realistic, and usually hard to detect as fake without a close inspection. It's popularity arose primarily from the source of innovation of all things related to video and audio - the pornography industry. It was used to make fake videos with the faces of famous actresses. Despite being banned on major websites like Reddit, Twitter and Pornhub, they remain easy to make and find. They're named deep because of the deep learning artificial algorithms that make these possible. Input real audio or video of a specific person (the more the data, the better it is), and the software tries to recognize patterns in speech and movement. Then a new element like someone else's face or voice is added to the video and a deep-fake is born. They are actually more easy to make than it seems at first. Some breakthroughs from academic researchers who work with this particular kind of machine learning have even reduced the amount of development video required to create one of these. There are a few freely available Apps like FakeApp which can be used to create such fakes, albeit of a low quality only. In August 2018, researchers at CMU revealed an unsupervised algorithm that could accurately reproduce not only facial features but also weather patterns. At Stanford University, researchers have manipulated head rotation, eye gaze and eye blinking, producing computer-generated videos that are hard to distinguish from reality.

So what's the deal with Deep Fakes, really? Impacts considered.

An observant reader would have already noticed several potentially far-reaching consequences of having such technology freely available out there.

Over the next bit, we'll explore the various impacts of all of this - categorised into Economic, Social, and Political.

The Economic

In film-making, deep fakes could be used to cut actor fees by large amounts. Not very famous actors can be cast in movies with their deep makeovers. At least one such instance (of replicating actor's faces) in recent times is Star Wars Episode VIII, featuring an actor who had died years ago. It is likely more actors will be going the way of the late Robin Williams, restricting the use of their likeness by legal means. In business and world affairs, related technology could break the language barrier on video conference calls by translating speech and simultaneously altering facial and mouth movements so that everyone appears to be speaking the same language.

The Social

The damage from current fake news pales in comparison to the harm that could come from deep fakes. Deep fakes can not only convince people of things that are not real but also undermine their confidence in what is. This will impact everything in our society ranging from the rule of law to how journalism is done. Fake videos could feature public officials taking bribes. Videos of public officials uttering racial epithets could spark violent protests something like the 'Bloody Sunday' of March 7, 1965. Videos of officials engaging in adultery could lead to catastrophic consequences. Soldiers could be shown murdering innocent civilians in a war zone, precipitating waves of violence and even causing strategic harm to a war effort. Fakes might depict emergency officials "announcing" an impending missile strike on Los Angeles or an emergent pandemic in New York, provoking panic and worse. A false video might convincingly depict U.S. officials privately "admitting" a plan to commit this or that outrage overseas, exquisitely timed to disrupt an important diplomatic initiative. And given the current political scenario where outlandish statements happen to be the norm, to believe even odder, more outrageous situations backed up by video proof isn't as unlikely as we may like to think.

The Political

Politicians and other government officials could appear in locations where they were not, saying or doing horrific things that they did not. Fake videos could place them in meetings with spies or criminals, launching public outrage, criminal investigations, or both. We still don't know about the existence of the "Pee Pee tape" and yet there is so much buzz about it. Imagine if a person came up with a clip swapping someone else's face with Trump's. It could lead to serious tensions between the already strained relations between the superpowers. A fake audio clip might "reveal" criminal behaviour by a candidate on the eve of an election. We have seen instances of the influence of social media in the 2016 US Presidential elections with details of the Clintons' private email servers being brought to the public and the 2014 Indian Lok Sabha Elections wherein the opposition party leader was made into a meme to defame his candidacy to the Parliament. We can only contemplate the consequences of deep fakes in such a climate. A fake video might portray a Pakistani official doing or saying something so inflammatory as to cause riots in India, potentially disrupting diplomatic ties or even motivating a wave of violence.



Source Sequence



Unmodified Target Sequence



Result



Source Sequence



Unmodified Target Sequence



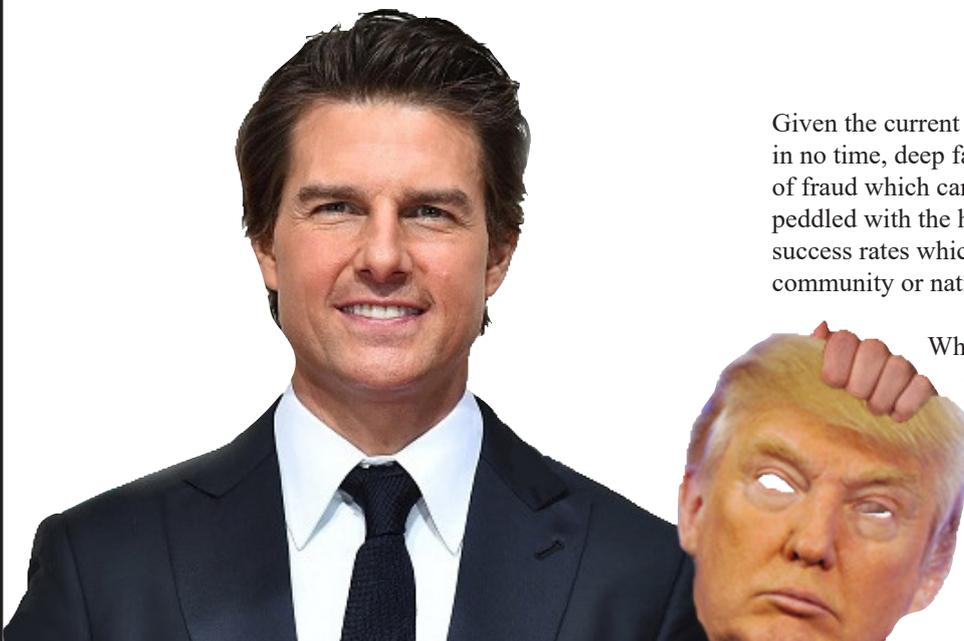
Result

Is it all bad and no good?

The ethical aspect of developing such technologies is debatable. As we have discussed earlier, the technology has a lot of potential for future use. We all enjoy all the funny face swap memes made using similar technology. Dubbed movies will feel a lot more authentic than before. The thing that one needs to keep in mind with technology is that it is both good and bad.

“ There is no option to make a device secure against bad guys and insecure against good guys ”

- Edward Snowden



Given the current state of the technology, it seems that in no time, deep fakes can be used to perpetuate a kind of fraud which can lead to global disasters. They can be peddled with the help of social media with unprecedented success rates which could be harmful to the individual, community or nation.

Whether or not to continue work on this is a call that needs to be made by the developers themselves. It's a question applicable specifically to this, but also generally to the community at large working on anything potentially disruptive. ■



THE HEALTHINESS OF DEPRESSION

Yes, depression can be healthy. For me, it has perhaps been the healthiest phenomenon that I have experienced. While I would be speaking a lot from my personal experience, the objective for this article is to reach out and let depression be seen beyond a mental “illness”, and how it works as a mental experience in itself, and I will try to find some objectivity through my subjective experiences.

There have been two previous publications in Ping on mental health; Dushyant Goel’s “Depression Denied” talks about society and the individual overlooking their depression and calling it anything else that feels more convenient, while Atreyee Ghosal’s “Mental Health, or the Lack Thereof” brings in a multi-dimensional, elaborate picture on mental health.

Before I start off, let me reaffirm something from Atreyee’s article; that it is not possible “...to have a conversation about mental health without getting something wrong or overgeneralizing something.” And while that article brings out the many dimensions of mental health, this article moves the focus to the most talked-about, single dimension.

I will be talking about depression, something that most individuals experience short-term, though it may be chronic for a few. Depression is perhaps the most common phenomenon that we experience relating to mental health. Nearly all of us have had at least a second-hand experience with depression. I have personally had a lot of second-hand experience with depression, mostly outside of college, and had been pushing for a better conversation around mental health on campus as well. Having many extended-family members affected by mental health issues, I also have parents who are quite mental health literate, and in general, I have had a rather conscious environment regarding mental health around me. So, in a way, I am luckier than most.

And yet, I had always been terrified of experiencing mental illness myself. I had probably been mildly (not clinically) depressed for a while, but that was quite latent. It was

only with a mental breakdown, that I came around to acknowledging my depression. (The mental breakdown was a period of insomnia, extreme lethargy and loss of appetite.) Yes, I had read the literature, been told by friends about their experiences, but being depressed myself was still a little beyond acceptance for me. Mental illness may not be as visible, and often external events may appear to be highly positive. My mental breakdown too was somehow predated by a series of supposedly “positive events” in my life. High grades, and all that jazz. That just made it even harder for me to take it for what it was.

So, yes, acceptance is hard. And it gets harder, the fewer “reasons” you have to be “sad”. Indeed, the cause for depression itself remains incomprehensible to me. Lack of serotonin, deep-seated childhood troubles, or just stressful college environment, what may cause one to be depressed is really anyone’s guess. But acknowledging one’s depression is nonetheless important. One path to that may be to ignore the causes. Even my psychiatrist ignored the causes. The cause is irrelevant; the phenomenon is what remains.

Let me back it up a little now. What *is* depression? Putting it very simply, it may be an *extended* period of sadness and dejectedness, or a shorter period of *extreme* sadness and dejectedness. What it also accompanies is a loss of interest in activities. Depression is labelled clinical when it is at a particular scale, as evaluated by clinical psychologists. It may often not be clinical, but even then it may be quite significant. Clinical psychologists consider many factors when evaluating the scale; how much sleep you are getting, appetite, weight loss, lethargy, acknowledging your own condition, and of course, sadness. There may be many forms of depression, but in common usage, depression is associated with major depression, which has severe symptoms in the above-mentioned activities. So, what I am talking about here is major depression.

So, back to my experience. Before I go on, let me just clarify that I have been through enough therapy and self-therapy, to retrospectively psychoanalyze the situation. So, I

might seem more self-aware than I actually was during that period.

Now, as I mentioned earlier, recognizing that there is something going on with you is not always possible with depression. For me, that point came five days into my mental breakdown. It was only after getting into conversations with my parents, and with some friends, did I finally acknowledge that I may be depressed after all. I know that this reaching out process may not be as simple for everyone. Like I mentioned, I am luckier than most, being able to talk this out with friends and parents. However, I had also been a bit of a loner, not easily letting others inside my frame of mind, and not easily opening up to others. So the process involved a bit of a leap of faith even for me, as it might for others as well, but in different ways. Do note that the upside of this was that I ended up forming much stronger bonds with my chosen confidantes.

What followed was visiting the psych, medication, therapy; but what I probably did the most different was self-therapy. (However, I must not bely the role of medication and trained professionals in this; the efficacy of their efforts is much more difficult to perceive.) By self-therapy, I mean that I read a bunch of things that helped me understand and psychoanalyze my situation better. I have been a fervent reader, and that is why this was a good mechanism for me. You might have your own, but in a way, if you are depressed, reading this article itself is both a way toward acceptance, and self-therapy.

There was one powerful insight that I gained through self-therapy, that I thought I might share. In a book written by a practicing psychiatrist, and from which I took the title for my article, depression has been represented as the “call of the unconscious for change”. What he is trying to say is that depression is merely a symptom that your way of life has to change. He mentions how his patients would often want “this to just end”, and “go back to the way things were”. However, depression is simply a strong symptom suggesting that, though you may not consciously see it, you have had enough of “the way things were”. It is time to change; most of the time, to make major changes, that fit your mind better. I am perhaps not doing justice to this insight in my writing, but in a nutshell, depression is strongly correlated with change, major change.

Another important insight that I came across, not from reading but through “listening to my unconscious” alone, was, that depression might also be a call for a vacation. By vacation, I do not mean going to Goa or Hawaii; what I am talking about is deeper; going inside your own mind. This is not crazy talk coming from a has-been basketcase. What I am suggesting is to move your focus on your own being, rather than what you do with yourself. In my case, I could see that I was losing my individuality (the strong individualist that I was) to how things are meant to be. Of course, it will play out differently depending on your personality. Either way, it is important to take a break from your work or college life. And this is really no different from taking a medical leave. Students in this college often take semester breaks due to physical ailments, and I do not see how that

is any different. My own break however lasted only two weeks, and unfortunately, the third week was the mid-term exams, which then I ended up writing. Your own break may be longer, and surprising as it may sound, the college has adequate provisions to manage these for the students.

I know it might sound too far-fetched to make major changes in a college environment where consistency is touted as the key to success, or to take a break where dual degree students are constantly mocked and freak out about “getting out in five years”. But as I realized through my experience, this is just the unnecessary bullshit of the system. Accepting change and taking a break, though superficially far-fetched, are rather obvious choices once you think about them. These choices will rather make you stand out from the crowd, and if you choose not to stand out, the crowd always has space for one more, no matter how many breaks you take. Whether you’re an individualist or a conformist, the process following depression will only bring out what suits best to your personality. Thus, the experience that comes with depression is necessary, and not to be ignored or taken lightly.

Now this is where the real healthiness of depression comes in. Depression is a process that is followed by renunciation and rebirth. “Change” seemed too simple a word to describe this process, and hence this choice of words. As I mentioned, the old way of things has to be given up, and so there is renunciation, and with giving up an old life, there is a rebirth.

I think I may have delved into the “unnecessary glorification with words” act again. Let us look at this more simply. What change did to me touched me on multiple dimensions. Of course, there is the immediacy of change; I was not clinically depressed anymore, albeit on medication. But there is more; my depression had built up gradually into a mental breakdown, and so there is no telling what the origin point for that depression was. Maybe even five years ago? Who can tell? The point here is that this is a change that can change the perception you and others have had for your very identity. Although, that may be overstating things slightly.

That is pretty much how it panned out for me. Those who have not known me for longer think that I am suddenly a new person, which is not so much the case, as my older friends and parents would tell me. Now, for my case, I am strongly individualistic, and getting out of depression only made me more so. Even for others, I believe the process would only bring out the best qualities in them. For me, it was rediscovering my own self, but at the same time, a slightly different, newborn self. Or rather, as I mentioned above, it was a rebirth.

Also, while I mentioned earlier that my mental breakdown was predated by some positive events, as fate would have it, it was immediately followed by a bunch of negative life events. And yet, I was healthier through those events, than I was even with the earlier positive events. In fact, I have been coping so well with all those “tragedies”, that even the “always-been-mentally-healthy” friends of mine were

surprised. What I am trying to do here is to reaffirm how mental health in many ways may not be so strongly associated with external events as is believed to be.

What I delightfully also noticed is that I not only changed myself, but also the environment around me. And by “environment”, I mean nearly everyone I even vaguely cared about and came to interact with. This might again seem like overstating things, but I believe that this has also resulted in people around me being happier and freer. There is more beauty in my immediate environment, and those close to me have had the opportunity to co-opt in that beauty, hence they also feel that positive change.

Of course, there is no completely getting rid of depression. Feeling low, lethargic, all that is off and on. It is a bit of a roller-coaster ride, but I believe all of us can take a bit of a roller-coaster ride; it is fun in small measures. It ultimately gets accounted for anyway, in the beauty you end up finding in the world.

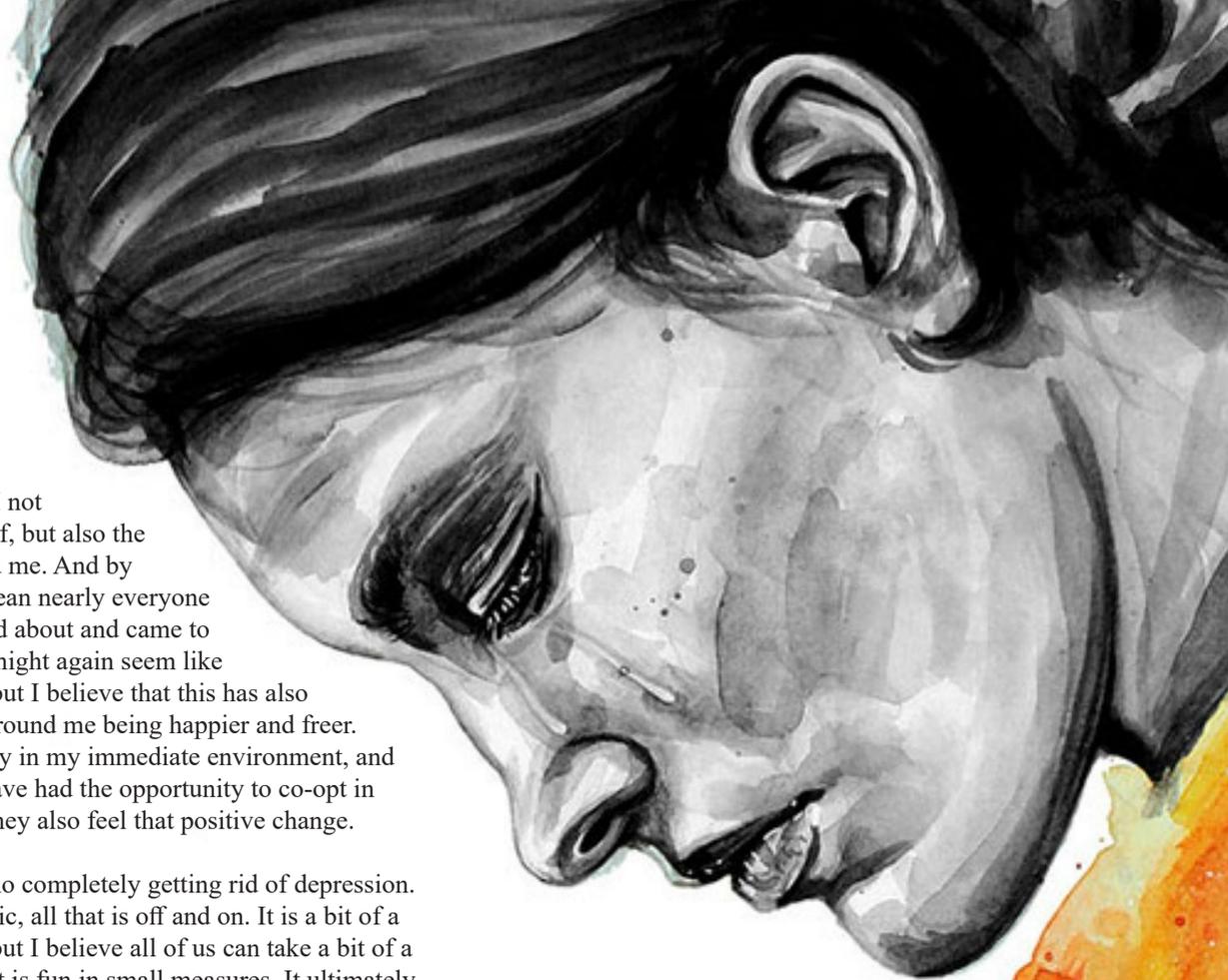
Of course, when I mentioned in the beginning that depression is healthy, I was not referring to the period of depression itself, but to every thing else that comes with it.

I must end this article by iterating that this constitutes a very small dimension to mental health experiences, and does not even cover all the dimensions to depression itself. Depression can manifest in multiple ways, some of which may be much more difficult to resolve. There are also numerous mental health issues beyond depression, often beyond comprehension. And each individual is likely to experience mental health differently.

However, from my *limited* worldly experience, I could see that a lot of individuals have experienced depression in ways similar to how I did, and perhaps, seeing what my journey churned out for me, it might offer some of you the incentive to explore your own depression.

Bon voyage! ■

Submitted anonymously, because just as depression does not belong to any one individual, neither does my journey, nor does this article.





Hostel “Woahs!”

Neelesh Agrawal, Vanalata Bulusu

The April 2018 issue of Ping had a two-feature article pushing for co-ed hostels on campus. The article in turn led to a drive for... err, “further discussions?”... on the issue. But before we “go out with the old and in with the new”, let’s dive a little deeper into the older; the existing hostel rules.

No one really knows or cares about the documented rules. And even if they did bother to go through the rather banal document (as at least one of the authors of this article painstakingly had to), it has been left so open to interpretation, that the rules may be executed at will.

(There are two(!) rules stating that the rules should be followed, with one even going on to call them the “laws of the land”. The final line brings it all together though; “For smooth running of the hostels, the hostel administration may drop/modify the existing rules or form new rules whenever required.”)

But it’s not just about the documentation, hostel rules are executed at will, and rumoured and “expected” rules overshadow the document. It is an open secret that there is a gap in understanding of “campus life conduct” among the various

groups responsible for it. Security guards, caretakers, faculty, students; all have a different idea of how things should be, and this friction leads to results that are sometimes outrageous, sometimes plain absurd, but almost always hilarious.

But this is not going to be a serious look into the situation. Rather, we took the knot and twisted it further. Yes, we made up a fake survey, with fake rules, to get real reactions out of people. The fact that we conducted the survey on April Fool’s day didn’t help either.

We had three different types of rules; the completely made-up ones, the rumoured, but unsubstantiated rules, and the actual, albeit misinterpreted rules. Our participants obviously didn’t know which was which, and we presented them all as actual documented rules.

To our disappointment though, most people were just “meh” about it. The best was one participant who just had one word to say to everything; “Weeeeeird”. Still, we managed to sieve out the occasional funny lines. Here are a few:

(after introducing the survey)

“I am a lawful citizen of OBH. I don’t think I violated any rules.”

How wrong they were to be proven soon enough, when they found out “you’re not allowed to watch or have pornographic material in your room”. Sigh.

There is a rumoured rule, as conveyed to one of the OBH main block residents, that curtains are not allowed in the OBH main block.

“No porn and no curtains; they sure don’t want us jerking off in our rooms.”

“I need curtains to, um, block the sunlight. *poker face*”

Putting up posters is allowed in the room or not? Most people thought it wasn’t. Although, the housekeeping staff did appreciate my Lana Del Rey posters; “picture achha lagaya hai, bhaiya”. When we told them that it is actually quite alright to put up posters, one student realized, “There’s at least something to make up for the porn and curtains we are not allowed to have.”

Here’s another rule that we conveniently made-up; no condoms to be kept in the room. “No porn and no sex. They are really promoting a platonic, celibate environment here.”

Another one that’s a mix-up of rumours and misinterpretations, “no more than three three people are allowed in a room, and if there are, you shouldn’t lock the door.” “Well, what do they expect, orgies? I think the celibacy was well-established by now.” However, a rule-breaker proudly declared, “No one can know what goes on behind locked doors in girls hostels.”

We misinterpreted the “weapons” rule from the document to tell people that they are not allowed to keep razor-blades and knives in the room. “Sigh, I murdered some fruits only last night.”

Here’s something that was decreed by one of the security guards, “guys are not allowed to stand outside girls hostels.”

Do Not Dive/Jump from the Balconies

We will cremate your remains and feed them to the cats if you break your neck and die, then we will tell your parents you were last seen shooting up heroin with a group of hookers.

A practical hostel rule

Source: <https://twitter.com/hostelculture/status>

The awareness of this would have saved a lot of guys some unnecessary consistent efforts. But one man remains stubborn; “Well, I was standing outside the football field, not the girls hostel.”

In the end, we did do them the favour of informing that some of the rules were made up.

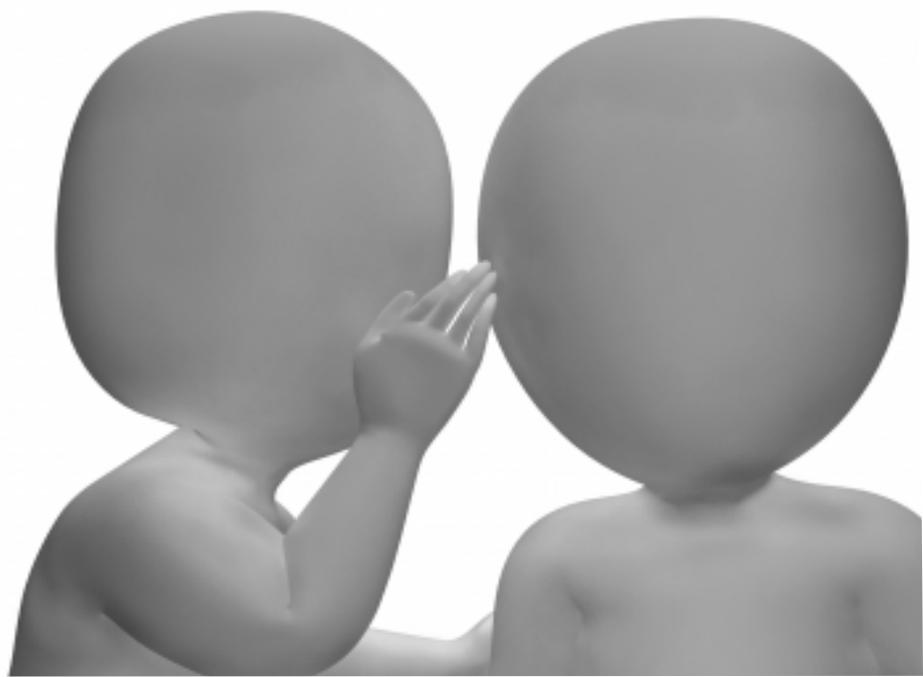
A hopeful enquiry followed; “The porn rule is the one that was made up, right?”. Nope, that’s on the document.

The disappointment on their face told stories. ■



A much needed hostel rule.

Source: <https://imgur.com/gallery/AFyRvrq>



Wise Wendy



All views here are expressed in good humour. Take them the way are way they are intended, or not at all.

Heartaches and Heartbreaks

In other words, universal problems

I like one of my juniors, she is in the third year. I have liked her from the first week of her first year. She is in a relationship with one of my seniors. How should I approach her?

With the minimal information you've given me about the situation, let's analyze this. You have your unwavering love that's stood the test of time. The other person is senior to you, and by default, more alluring. Oh, and she's probably in love with him. Yeah, seems pretty evenly matched. Wait it out, you're good at it!

Hey Wendy! So I have a crush on a PhD lady here and somehow I end up calling her "didi". Help please!

Just watch a few Game of Thrones episodes together. Quoting Tyrion Lannister here, "Armor yourself in it, and it will never be used to hurt you."

I am not sure if it's the right time to get into a relationship. Help me decide.

Yes, this is a delicate question. I make the assumption that you've found the right person, and all you're looking for now is the right time (yes, losing a lot of generality). I also make the assumption that the other person doesn't know they are your right person (with minimal loss of generality). Therefore you need to optimize both your stability and the chances that they end up with you. And what is the time when both are maximized? Right after you get your GSOC paycheck (the best time), or that random internship paycheck (might work), or the TAship paycheck (you aren't going to get into a relationship, sorry.)



Slowly start converting didi to Dee dee ?
And then maybe make a reference to her being just as cute.



College Woes

Questions that concern all of IIT

How to make Vijayraj leave your room?

Have a row of laptops open on different people's timelines, preferably open on embarrassing pictures and watch him excitedly follow the trail, and now temptation will get the better of him, you can lead him not only out of your room, but into wherever you please. Ideally where he doesn't have internet access.

I want to play sports and also excel at academics. But I am not able to find time for the former, what should I do?

Sprint to classes as you get up ten minutes after class starts, dance cautiously through the semester trying not to lose more than four lectures a course, and pull yourself up everyday because for some reason you feel low all the time. The sport aspect should get taken care of. Oh, academics, don't bother, that's screwed whether you can find time for it or not.

Why is college competition so unhealthy?

Oh, there are Yuktahar-monthly-registered, jogging-when-there-is-no-PT, sleep-schedule-maintaining-against-all-odds fuckers who will murder you if necessary if it means a 0.01 increase in their CGPA. Yeah, the competition here is not necessarily too unhealthy. And those that constitute the unhealthy part of it are generally seen in the gym or the field right after they land their internships or PPO's, being in the privileged position where their jutting out bellies constitute all of their life problems, so they end up getting healthy too.



When will IIT become 100% dog free?

When we stop admitting people who are forever barking and whining about problems in college. *cough* Cynical Cindy *cough*



Personal Questions

That therefore need to be publicised.

How do I convince my friends to poo in the loo?

The status quo is not clear but let's address all the cases. Either your friends poo but not in the loo, or they do something else in the loo, and you wish they'd poo instead, or they don't poo at all. First case, educate them about the mess they're causing, second case, they probably have nowhere else to do what they do, so just tell them to clear their mess out after, and third case, tell them not to eat in North mess, they should be fine.

How to help your friend get out of bad company without him knowing you helped him?

Cut him off from your life, but do it gradually and frustratingly, don't make any obvious gestures, but slowly get out of engagements and ignore texts and calls. Change the topic and pretend you don't know what he's talking about if he brings it up. Couple months later, he won't be friends with you anymore, so he's out of significant bad company, and will hate you enough to ever think you were helping him in any way. Mission accomplished.

When will infinity war 2 be coming out?

Hehe, you're using this column like my grandma uses Facebook. I'll tell you what I told her; this is not Google. :)

What is my name?

Oooh, flirty, I like that.
Call me by your name, and I'll call you by mine.
Hey, Wise Wendy!

Log itna randirona kyu karte h?

I'd like to be generous to all of you and say it's not really your fault because college gives you ample opportunity to randi-rona, but after watching the people with the best grades cry about them the most (*Yaar 7 hi stars mile*) and the ones with the best social lives forever complain about social lives, it is clear, there is no external reason, it is an inherent quality we all have. ■

ASK
WENDY
YOUR
QUESTIONS
HERE:

PING!