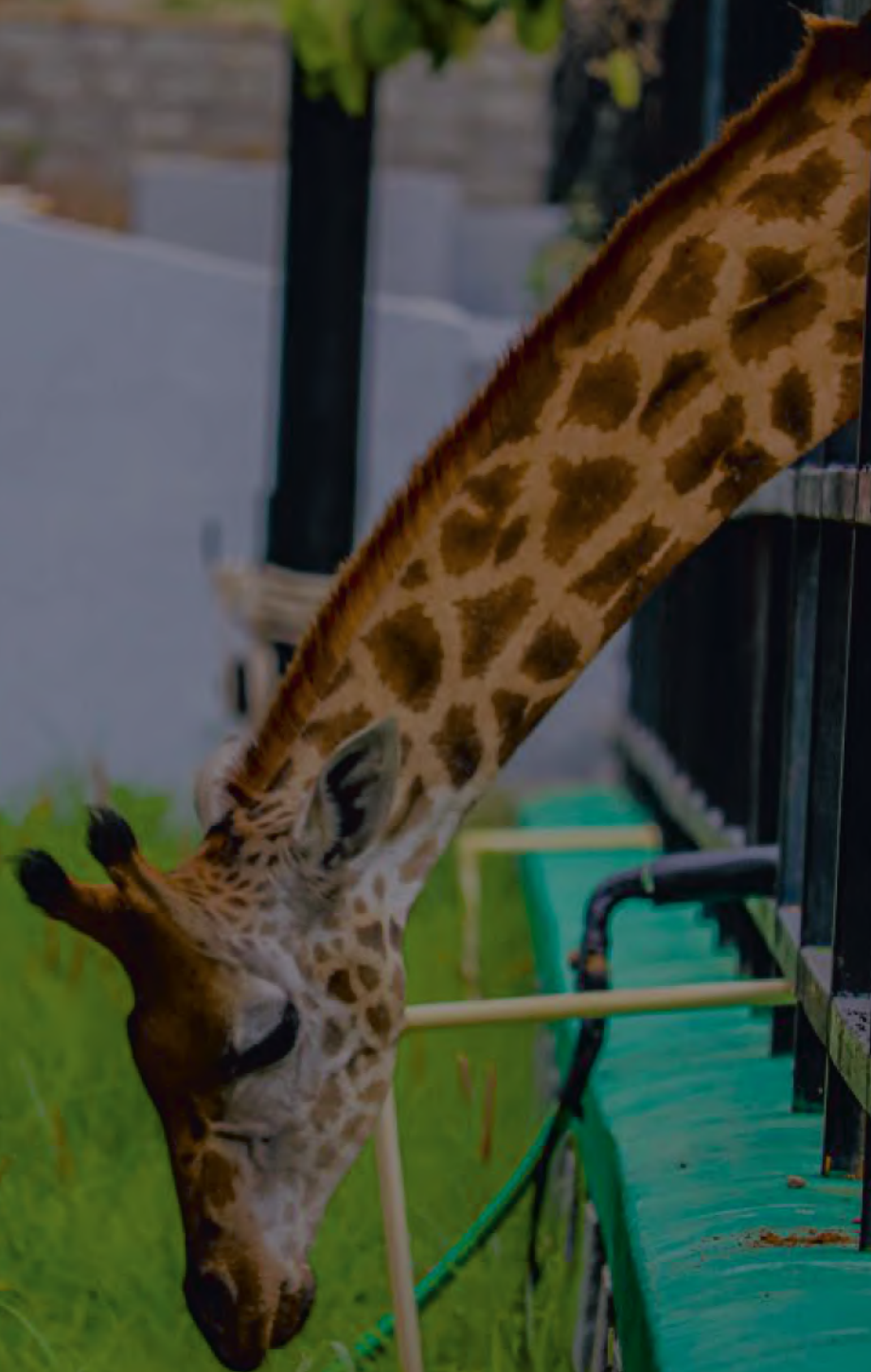


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- BY PARAM LODAYA, SEMESTER 1, USLM



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SUCCESS OF MAN OR FAILURE OF SYSTEM?

- BY - Shraddha Sharma, Assistant Professor, USLM

We remember Dashrath Manjhi – the Mountain Man who worked hard for 22 years and carved a path through a ridge of mountains. The Bihar government later proposed his name for the Padma Shri award, the fourth highest civilian award, in 2006 for his social service.

Recently, another such story emerged from the same area where a man Laungi Bhuiyan worked for 30 years and dug a three-km-long canal. Everyone applauded him and the Chairman of Mahindra Group Anand Mahindra fulfilled his wish by gifting him a tractor.

Daitari Naik, a man from Odisha single-handedly dug a three-km-long canal from a mountain stream. The government recognized his efforts and awarded him Padma Shri.



Photo Credit: Lokmarg.com

points that I observed. They all were determined and hardworking people. Their selfless acts for the betterment of the society cannot be forgotten.

Ironically, they all had requested respective officials or area representatives to construct roads and canals but in vain.

On one side, I feel that these are inspirational stories that teach us that nothing is impossible if we are determined. However, on the other side, one question often comes to my mind — Is this the best use of valuable human resources? How can we afford a man to spend almost half of his life just digging one canal which is the duty of the system and can be done in one or two months? No doubt, the whole village or area benefitted from such selfless acts of Darshrath Manjhi, Laungi Bhuiyan, and Daitari Naik, but I feel sorry for these men and their families.

These are the success stories of the trio, but also reeks of failures of officials and elected government, who could not take the responsibility of providing basic infrastructures. Next time, when you applaud people like Darshrath Manjhi, and your minister proudly proposes their name for civilian award or tweets for them, one must question the political system. Were the government and the officials deaf or were they in deep sleep that they could not hear the sound of chisel, hammer, and crowbars of these poor and innocent men for such a long period?

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

- BY PRATIK PILLAI, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, USLM

Marketing as a social-science attempts to study all the factors that impact 'exchange' – the exchange can be of goods for goods; goods for money; or abstract ideas. The contemporary behavioural approach to marketing is a deviation from economic approach which focuses on economic ideas of utility; surplus and consumer choice. The behavioural approach is altruistic; while the behaviour studied through economic lens focuses of maximising profits through carefully planned stimulus to induce a behavioural response in a competitive environment. Both of these approaches have their strategic relevance depending on the industry or sector we are talking about.

There is an increased focus on 'Communication' in the overall scheme of Marketing that situates its strategies in Behavioural School of Thought. Communication strategies, in this approach, pervade all aspects of Marketing from product strategy; pricing strategy; distribution strategy to promotion strategies. Behavioural approach provides a framework to craft communication-strategies that influence the perceived image of the brand and in turn create positive attitudes towards the brand. Behavioural approach also suggests communication stimulus like economic approach; however, in this approach – which is different from economic approach – communication stimulus is not only directed outwards through personal and mass-communication channels; it is also directed inwards, as a philosophy that directs and guides the functioning of the whole organization. One can appreciate this approach in FMCG companies who follow behavioural approach; while, the companies that participate in auctions for their businesses tend towards economic approach.

Customer-facing businesses need to adopt behavioural approach; and the way to do this is through communication. Communication is the centre of all strategic formulations as well as executions. In the case of a retail outlet, even this distribution centre should consistently communicate the ethos of the company for it to transfer into a reputed brand over a period of time.

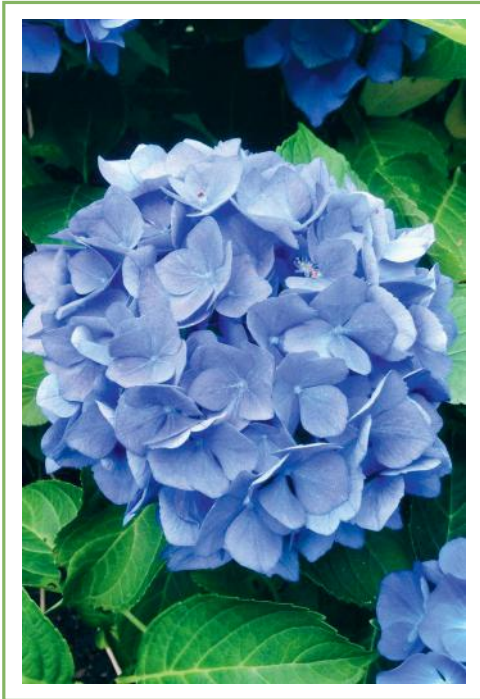
If you decorate a Kathiawadi restaurant with south-Indian artefacts, the consumer is bound to get un-satisfied. He has come to Kathiawadi restaurant to experience the traditional food and culture of Kathiawad. The marketing vision of 'Providing Authentic Kathiawadi Food Experience' has to be communicated at all touch points.

Advertising and Corporate Communication functions in Marketing department are not only execution units of strategy; but, also centres of communication-strategy formulations in consultation with the senior management, who devise authentic and relevant Brand-Stories which work as a stimulus within and outside the organization; and help the organization to meet its objectives. Creative articulation of communication-strategies through events; advertising; social-media campaigns; stakeholders meet etc are arsenals available to Marketing team, and behavioural approach provides a foundation for these activities.



THE HYDRANGEA FLOWER

- BY SUSHMITA NAIR, SEMESTER 1, USLM



Dear diary, the rains, the showers
I'm a beautiful hydrangea flower,
My self-esteem, the highest tower.
Everything I want in my power.
Petal by petal, a story to devour.

I'll tell you my story, passes the night.
Each story, romanticized but tormenting, oh! what a fight.
When I was a budding flower, just a sapling,
My story begins, heartbreaks and grappling.
The first petal falls, a story to recall.

A child, a baby, a young girl,
We don't take names here,
We're afraid of revolutions and shame.
All men aren't the same,

You say as you close your ears, my eyes, the tears
I live in fear, he's famous, the cheers.

And the first petal buried in mud, washed away in the flood.

Autumn's begun, shame, I was shunned.
The tears keep streaming down my eyes, my buttons undone.
Five years, we've known each other.
A celebration, a party, listen carefully, tragedy began.
Trust is a thread, you pull it, it's dead.
Gone with the wind, like they say.
He broke it, her trust and the hymen, a horrible, horrible day.
The petal falls, as the story, she recalls.
Summer nights, rains spring and fall.
The deed is done, a new story began.

The boyfriend, she loves,
favourite on the list, the top, above.
Sometimes he gets angry, some days he gets mad,
Don't feel sorry for me, some days he's furious, I lay flat.
Holding the handle, the door, I tremble in fear,
He's coming to choke me, he's coming near
He's coming near me, my mind goes numb, the symphony;

Symphony oh! the music, my heart its pumping blood,
The blood, it's on my face, scarred for life, haven't been hit,
But the thread broke, the trust is gone, there's fear,
And the petal buried in the mud.

The third petal on the ground,
This story, in my heart, never to be found.
The road not taken has finally been touched,
The bike stops and tears flood.
I don't understand why this happens to me,
My friends, the thread, sometimes my family.
Hurts, life, rough, I try to be tough,
But I can't and that's the truth.

My truth, the cold stories, my wounds they soothe.
They soothe me as the petals fall,
One by one, I rise, but I can't recall.
The stories, my stories, the assaults.
My assaults, they told me I was at fault.

I'm scribbling on the walls,

After all one can't have it all.
Beautiful romanticized tragedies,
Melodious horrible symphony.
Today, I forget everything,
But the tales, these fables, you need to sing.

Tell your kids, about me; me, the hydrangea flower.
Tell them how the flower was devoured.

I have dementia, I have a gift, these horrors I forget.
But some things, the waves can't wash away, they're here to stay.
Dear diary, read these out, don't let them walk away.
After all, today's the day I forget everything
Dementia, it all fades away, today's the mayday.

DOES ONLINE COLLABORATION HAVE ANYTHING IN STORE FOR THE ECONOMY?

- BY GIRIJA SHANKAR SEMUWAL, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, USLM

While the world belabors to adapt to new ways of life in the wake of the pandemic, many have voiced, with a sense of nostalgia, the kind of disruption the pandemic has brought to traditional organization of post-industrial production. Should such disruptions be received with a sense of apprehension or with an attitude of openness to the unfamiliar yet creative possibilities they promise?

While the world of work struggles hard to break the habit and incorporate necessary changes, partly becoming more efficient, and partly complacent, entrepreneurial mindsets have quickly identified and taken measures to seize opportunities to align working methods to the new spatially altered and physically constrained work environments. But rather than only closing a few doors, the opportunity has opened a few new windows. Some corners of the world of product and service creation and have been able to bypass bottlenecks and take over from where traditional approaches hit the dead-end.

A case in point are social platforms that enable creators and producers dispersed over diverse geographies connect with relative ease and work on collaborative projects in areas like product design, scientific data informatics, software development and entertainment and broadcasting. If nothing, the pandemic has proven to be a catalyst for productive (earlier read as only 'meaningful') online collaboration.

Case in point are new platforms like WikiFactory, GitHub, MyMiniFactory, Thingiverse and several others. You may have run across their aggressive promotions on social media like Facebook and YouTube. With a burgeoning user base, these collaborative platforms are bringing together communities of creative and industrious individuals and helping them create product and service solutions for a variety of sectors and fields.

From Medical 3D printing software to additive manufacturing to mobile application development – communities on these platforms have been working on diverse areas of product innovation; innovation being the buzzword in all industries and sectors in the past decade or two. In releasing innovation and creation from the confines and boundaries of laboratories, factory workshops and even thought-leadership conferences, online collaboration is fast building its own norms and practices of industrial contribution. Whilst innovations coming through from these online “factories” must still run through the same process of patenting, promotion, manufacturing or replication, and adoption, it has to a great extent freed experimentation from dictation by corporate and government boards.

Multi-million-dollar corporations as well as governmental agencies have been pushing innovation and development onto the industrial map aggressively and in a sustained manner; however, none had so far been able to provide concrete solutions that could up-scale innovativeness in society and economy. Whether the distributed model of product creation, promoted by startups and platforms supporting online collaboration, can scale up innovativeness or not remains to be seen. But it definitely seems to be a step in the right direction.



LIVING WITH OCD

- BY RAJIV PATT, SEMESTER 1, USLM

I had thoughts of having Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) in high school but was never sure of it until lockdown. I was sitting on the couch thinking how obsessive I get about things, how I feel for non-living things, how I get these obsessive intrusive thoughts, how I feel this urge to put things at their right place, how I feel that I am getting judged by everyone, how I first ask people for reassurance before taking a step, how I have this fear of getting physically hurt, how I think a lot before posting something on Instagram or sending a message to someone or putting my thoughts forward in a class, how I ask for reassurance if I look fine or check my appearance in the mirror, how I get restless for no reason at all.

Generally, people associate OCD with only cleanliness but it's a lot more than that. OCD has stopped me from dancing, a thing that I was really confident about. I get hesitant when it comes to socialising. Every night I check at least thrice if the alarms that I set are on or if my phone is not on silent mode. I have this fear of losing things I cannot let go of, things even if they are of no use. Some days, it gets really bad that I feel like doing nothing and just be in my room the whole day.

Living with OCD is a journey in itself and I am still learning to deal with it in my own way.



THINGS WHEN DONE CAN'T BE UNDONE & SONGS OF LOVE WHEN SUNG CANNOT BE UN-SUNG

- BY NISHA PATEL, SEMESTER 1, USLM

You care about the people
Who don't even notice your effort,
And leave those alone, those
Who are genuinely hurt.

Give all your love to those
Who don't really need it,
And forget the ones
Who'd actually return it.

Why do you run behind those
Who already have everything,
Rather than caring about those,
For you who'd give up anything?

There are people out there
Who'd do anything to see you smile,
Then why do you only smile for the one
Who doesn't even stop to see it for a
while?

You hurt those
You genuinely care about,
Only if you had told them how much you
cared,
Imagine how things would've turned out.

Small gestures and simple words
Could make someone's day,
Yet you try to do something special
For those who'd throw it away.

Someone actually cares enough
To do their best to impress you,
Too bad you run to impress those
Who'd laugh a little, then forget you.

And then cry and whine
That no one really cares about you
Look around carefully
Some has always been there for you.

Someone who stayed
Even when you didn't acknowledge
their presence,
Someone who cared
When no one else understood your
silence

Open your eyes,
Before it's too late;
You might end up losing the person
You made to sit and wait

Tell them that you care
Before they give up,
A small gesture, simple words
For them, trust me is more than
enough.

RAJA, PRAJA AUR FILMEIN

- BY KAVISHA CHOKSHI AND PRIYASI JOGANI, SEMESTER 5, USLM

The silver screen has forever been a source of delight for lovers of cinema. Recently, the students of Unitedworld School of Liberal Arts and Mass Communication to re-live the world of cinema when Mr. Sanjiv Shah, the director of the cult classics such as “Hun Hunsil Hunsil Lal”, took students on a journey into the world of movies and documentaries.

Mr. Shah, director of documentary “Place to Live” and editor of Ketan Mehta’s “Mirch Masala” for which he won the National Film Award for film editing, addressed the webinar ‘Raja, Praja aur Filmein’. The conversation was wide and open to many topics.

Sharing his thoughts and experiences on filmmaking as well as documentary making, he acknowledged the role of his education in architecture and then film making. He said he was personally more interested in making documentaries that talked about the problems such as urban development, rights to housing for underprivileged, changing landscapes of urban and rural, the disappearance of landmarks, etc.

The filmmaker said, “Filmmaking is a reaction to your surroundings, how you look at and connect to a particular city and its problems”. According to him, films are imagination captured in images and videos. He said it was all about experiencing and expressing what one feels about one’s surroundings and how one sees a city with a different perspective. There is a personal reason behind every action. For example, when one writes a poem, it may be symbolic or generalized but is rooted in some personal reasons. Films are also a reflection of some deeply engraved reasons.

Mr. Shah said he did not believe in objective filmmaking and that in cinematography the first important thing is engaging with people and empathising with them. The next step is film making. He stressed, “Film making is not just about learning skills or art. It is about learning everything from different perspectives.”

He said, “Filmmaking is not a particular art, it’s a culmination of many arts.” He firmly believed that movies aren’t art forms but artistic expressions having a story, actors and many other factors together.

Briefing about the history of cinema, he said it all started around the 1900s when it was an engagement of passion for people and exploring the art of communication. Till the war, there was passion in this process of filmmaking; there was money but a great investment in the creative process and in the studios. After the war, different kinds of money sources came into being and the makers started to look forward to earning money rather than creating movies. Due to that, by the 1970s Hindi Cinema turned pathetic, with glamour and money-mindedness.

Also, till the 1970s, there were no independent documentaries due to lack of funds and expensive celluloid. The culture started when Anand Patwardhan filmed “The Emergency”. Mr. Shah said that it was the first real independent work. In India, documentaries were then funded by some channels such as BBC and the government.

Talking about Gujarati cinema, he stated “This is Version VII of Gujarati cinema”. There are people committed to making good films but only four to five would be there without a commercial motivation; it’s now mostly for money.

Talking about different techniques he said, “Some works do translate over screen sizes, but some movies don’t work very well on small screens like mobiles. Some scenes aren’t meant for small screens like large landscapes; when you want something for mobiles, the shots should be close up ones and not very wide.”

Emphasizing the importance of skills and devices, he suggested that “I can’t shoot on mobile or DSLR, I am skilled to use big cameras. I will have to reskill myself to use it in order to make it efficient. You need to understand what you are doing.”

Hun, Hunshi and Hunshilal

Talking about his movie “Hun, Hunshi and Hunshilal”, the director quoted “I’ve always been personally fascinated with the grammar of non-fiction. I wanted to bring fiction and non-fiction together.” In the 70s, when India was opening up, it was a time wherein there were many restrictions on different viewpoints; so, in the late ’80s, the suppression inspired them to communicate the views through film indirectly – he averred.

The film refers to governments of the time, even though the movie resonates in the contemporary era. He said, “It is not about present or past. It’s about the situation, the desire or the control”. The movie had an objective to serve an individual with a larger national identity.

Sharing the experience, he stated that the shooting was very joyful and fun – “Probably no one in the crew was tired or bored,” he added. The shooting was for 60 days in 60 different locations. Mostly, they used locals and the crew themselves featured in the shots because of low funds, and those actually turned out to be natural shots. He said “I had no idea what the shots were like. We shot a lot of documentaries without the actors, and many shots were natural and with normal people. Those were the chances we were taking.” Getting to know about his experience with music recording for the film was equally interesting. “We recorded the songs of the movie in a basement, with live singing and music. We didn’t have money for a studio.”

He also touched on topics related to the economy, and housing issues. He said how housing and cities were different in the 70s as compared to today. People have lost landmarks that used to be a memory. He said before creating any documentary related to a city its memories should be included. The generation of 70s had seen landmarks and used to visit the same places in their journey from being a kid to being an adult so the feelings attached with the places were ingrained in their memories, whereas today’s generation doesn’t care about landmarks and lacks them in their memory.

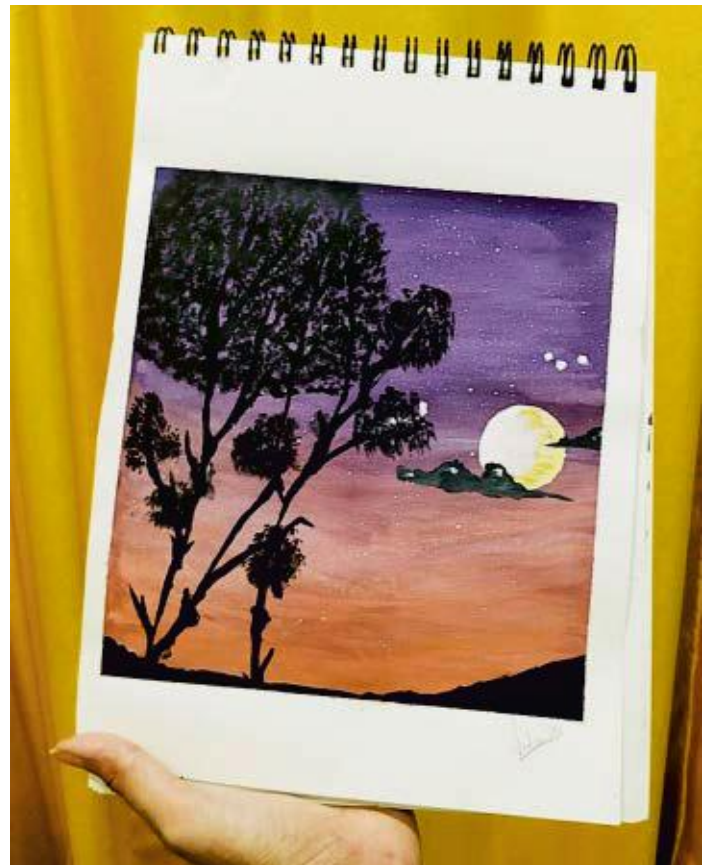
The filmmaker said that he likes to make films for empowering the underprivileged and working with the problems of people without housing and unfulfilled promises by governments to them. He also mentioned that he made some serials like “Right to Housing”, “State of Housing”. While making these serials and documentaries, he used his networks to connect him to underprivileged people across the country.

The problem of slums was huge in the earlier decades and is no less today too. “It is important to know who is going to live there, what all will be their need and their convenience,” he remarked. “Cities nowadays are made to look alike and have lost their individuality. Lucknow was a totally different city compared to Bombay; the same with Delhi, Ahmedabad, etc. Every city has lost its individuality. The world was more stable in the 70s unlike today and, thus, it’s now important (to figure out) what is it that connects you to the city.” He also elaborated on ideas like “Liberal and Neo-liberal Economies”. He shared his views on it and expressed, “Many people got the money without doing anything in this pandemic, and many others lost their jobs.” He said that the economy had been in a bad shape even before the pandemic. Just that, now it is worst. Unless production picks up, one can’t manufacture and can’t employ resulting in unemployment. He said there is a need for an increase in consumption and for consumption people need to have money. It’s a long-term project.



ARTWORK

- BY VEDIKA SETHI, SEMESTER 5, USLM.



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