

Beyond books



Dr. Amita Chauhan
Chairperson

Holistic education cannot be confined to the classroom. In fact, much of what children learn comes from the world around them - experiences that shape their personalities and prepare them for life. While classrooms do nurture scientific temperament and critical thinking, the world is their ultimate laboratory to engage, explore, and experiment. This is why, at Amity, we provide students with diverse opportunities to learn, interact, and grow through exchange programmes, international seminars and workshops, MUNs, and many such platforms. During these thoughtfully-curated programmes, students showcase their creativity, experiment with ideas, and test their innovations alongside peers from across the globe. Recently, two young innovators, Khushi Narula of AIS Saket and Aanya Agrawal of AIS Gur 46, participated in the AI @ Business Academy Summer Programme at The University of Hong Kong with 100 per cent scholarships from the Amity Career Counselling and Guidance Cell. They also won the gold medal for 'Best Idea' (page 11). The visit beautifully blended science, innovation, culture, and diversity. Such exposure during the school years makes children aware of the vastness and diversity of people, geographies, scientific thought, languages, and cultures, helping them make more informed career choices. More importantly, these experiences teach them to appreciate perspectives beyond their own. The world today is connected by technology, with communication faster than ever. Yet, meaningful connections between hearts and minds are what the world needs most. Such programmes become hubs for forging lasting connections, where diverse cultures and ideas come together to create better innovations, policies, works of art and literature - and, ultimately, better versions of ourselves and a better world. [GT](#)

Mindfully funny



Vira Sharma
Managing Editor

Nostalgia. This is what I feel when I look back at those simpler times, when humour did not need a stage or a million views. A family member's mimicry of a not-so-favourite relative, or even a friend's witty one-liner would have us in splits. In the 80s and 90s, laughter came in many such little packages. We looked forward to reading R K Laxman's pitch-perfect satirical take in 'The Common Man', enjoying the funny anecdotes in Reader's Digest, and chuckling at the absurdities of everyday life in TV shows like 'Flop Show' and 'Uta Pulta'. Later, sitcoms such as 'Sarabhai vs Sarabhai' and 'Khichdi' gave families another reason to laugh together. No one thought about what was trending. Today, comedy has travelled far beyond the living room. Stand-up and digital platforms have turned comedy into a serious profession (Read page 1). This is surely a welcome change, as in today's world, comedy, too, can become a thought-provoking tool. Yet, the larger the canvas, the greater the responsibility. In the name of being edgy or bold, humour can sometimes cause hurt. Sometimes, too much unfiltered language can leave the audience uncomfortable rather than amused. While a certain amount of tolerance is needed so that comedy can remain spontaneous and inventive, the person holding the microphone must also know where to draw the line. After all, comedy is an art. And the finest art does not merely make us laugh - it makes us laugh without making us lose our sense of dignity or our sense of responsibility. [GT](#)

Free-cononomics 404

The Price We Pay For Things That Don't 'Cost' Us

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This solicitous phrase, "Would you like a free sample, miss?" is often music to the ears of shoppers, and why wouldn't it be? After exhausting oneself in the shopping aisles, desperately fighting the urge to buy junk food, that single sentence from the salesperson makes them look like an absolute angel. But after standing in the queue for hours for the tiny package of a freebie, one is forced to introspect: is the sample even free or just a mere illusion?

The zero-price effect

Economically, the zero-price effect is a behavioural phenomenon in which demand for a product spikes disproportionately when the price is reduced to zero. In 2013, Baskin Robbins offered free ice cream across the UAE to celebrate Dubai being announced as the site for World Expo 2020. Huge crowds formed, with lines stretching for blocks and spilling out of malls. This chaos makes one wonder why people waited hours for a three-dollar treat. The hidden costs of zero-price effect are rarely materialistic, and are instead about emotional currencies such as our attention and time. People have stopped weighing normal pros and cons because 'free' feels like a risk-free win.

Convenience or ignorance?

And then, there are the environmental costs. What we get for free is one tiny sachet or bottle. That sample was made in a factory, branded,



packaged separately, boxed up in bulk, shipped across the country, and given to a person who may or may not decide to buy the product in the future. For the sake of convenience, we have normalised excessive single-use plastic waste, manufacturing resource depletion, and transportation emissions. But convenience can't justify the serious effects that we are blind to. Intentionally or unintentionally, we, the society, end up paying heavily for these hidden environmental expenses. Along with the air we breathe and the water we drink come the free microplastic pollutants; a freebie we never asked for.

The cost of free content

One may wonder the same regarding the content we consume on social media. Every time we scroll through Facebook, Instagram, or X, we pay with our privacy and data, which these platforms then

sell to advertisers. While the 'free' model of social media certainly benefits users in terms of accessibility and affordability, it also raises significant concerns about the commodification of personal information. There are other side-effects too: 'comparisomitis', FOMO, addictive behaviour, low self-worth, risk of depression, and the constant pressure to perform to please algorithms. And it isn't just a teen problem. At Pew Research, 59% of adults said social media negatively impacted their mental health.

A momentary mirage

What makes the 'free' illusion so convincing to us is its subtlety. The cost is rarely immediate and seldom visible to the one who is benefitting. What initially feels like a momentary gain, oftentimes stretches into a slow-burning loss. Free is just a word for a deferred payment. The currency might not be cash, but make no mistake, because you will always pay a weighty price. [GT](#)

APERSPECTIVE

Dear Editor,

Have you ever found comfort in a memory that isn't your own? The other day, I was scrolling through the GT archives, reading away years of stories, perspectives, and moments frozen in time. That's when I stumbled upon the May 7, 2012 issue, which was headlined 'My Dream Farewell.' Dedicated to the graduating batch of 2011-12, it featured reflections from students across every Amity branch, their smiles so radiant they seemed to spill light into my dimly lit bedroom. The farewell photos also



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served as a reminder of 2000s pop culture trends. Reading those twelve pages, published fourteen years ago, left me smiling and wondering where those teenage faces are now. It also made me realise how close I am to the end of my own school days, with a similar path ahead. I hope that someday in the near future, another student will discover this piece and feel that same, sudden wave of nostalgia.

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