

Xplore

A LEADERSHIP, INNOVATION & EXCELLENCE COLLECTIVE



AGE REVERSED

INSIDE

- Power of Storytelling
- Tackling Digital Monopolies
- Not Your Brain's Nemesis
- At the Tipping Point



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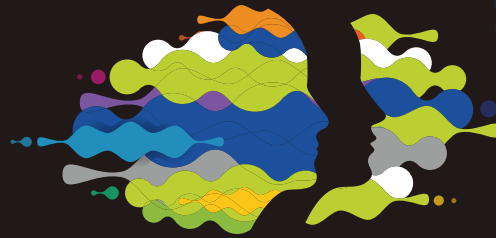
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Through thoughtful analysis and reflective storytelling, we explore various dimensions of modern life and the timeless questions that persist.

An applied science, Management requires exchange of ideas and thoughts between the academia and the industry.

Xplore provides the platform for those thought provoking exchanges to happen. Each edition of Xplore is crafted to foster reflections on the overt and the subtle undercurrents that influence our daily lives.

As in the past, this issue invites you to engage deeply with ideas that merit attention. Through thoughtful analysis and reflective storytelling, we explore various dimensions of modern life and the timeless questions that persist.

I invite you to embrace this opportunity to reflect, to understand more profoundly, and to connect more meaningfully with the issues at hand.

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Through thoughtful analysis and reflective storytelling, we explore various dimensions of modern life and the timeless questions that persist.

Xplore offers a sanctuary for thought, a quiet space amid the clamour of daily life where you can pause and reflect on the subtle undercurrents that influence our existence. Each edition is crafted to foster reflection, encouraging you to ponder not just the complexities of the external world, but also the internal landscapes of thought and philosophy.

This issue invites you to slow down and engage deeply with ideas that merit attention. Through thoughtful analysis and reflective storytelling, we explore various dimensions of modern life and the timeless questions that persist. Here, we value the quality of contemplation as much as the quantity of information.

Embrace this opportunity to reflect, to understand more profoundly, and to connect more meaningfully with the issues at hand. Let's cherish this moment of pause together, finding clarity and insight in the quiet.

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EDITOR'S MUSINGS

Welcome to this edition of Xplore, where each page contributes to a global dialogue on the pressing and pertinent issues that define our era. We gather perspectives from across the globe, each adding unique insights into the collective conversation that helps shape our shared future.

Our mission is to facilitate discussions that are not confined by geographical borders but are instead enriched by them. We explore themes that touch on universal concerns—innovation, culture, sustainability, and ethics—drawing connections between diverse ideas and fostering a broader understanding.

This issue doesn't just inform; it invites you to participate. Engage with the content, challenge the ideas presented, and contribute your perspective. Each voice enriches the dialogue, adding depth and breadth to our mutual understanding.

As you turn these pages, think of yourself as part of a global roundtable. Here, your insights and experiences are vital. Together, let's navigate the complexities of our world, embracing the diversity of thoughts as we forge paths toward enlightenment and agreement. Your participation is crucial in crafting a narrative that is not only comprehensive but also compassionate and inclusive.

Let this issue of Xplore be a meeting place for minds eager to discuss, debate, and decipher the world together, fostering connections that extend far beyond the written word.

Hari Govind Nair

Hari Govind Nair
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THE POWER OF STORYTELLING WITH DATA

Why They Matter, How to Master Them



Uncover the transformative power of data storytelling and learn how to craft narratives that make your insights resonate and inspire action

 by Giridhar Ramachandran



Data storytelling is not just a buzzword; it is a powerful tool that can transform how we understand and communicate information. This article explores two compelling stories: one about Dr Ignaz Semmelweis, whose life-saving insights were ignored due to poor narrative, and another about a journalist's experiment that turned insignificant objects into valued trinkets through the power of storytelling. These stories underscore the importance of not just having the right data but presenting it in a way that resonates.

The Risks of Data Speaking for Itself

In the mid-19th century, Dr Ignaz Semmelweis made a groundbreaking discovery that could save countless lives. While working at the Vienna General Hospital, he noticed a disturbing trend: women in the maternity ward attended by doctors had a significantly higher mortality rate from puerperal fever compared to those attended by midwives. Through careful observation, Semmelweis realised that doctors were inadvertently transmitting infections from cadavers to patients due to a lack of handwashing.

Semmelweis implemented a simple yet effective solution: he required doctors to wash their hands with a chlorine solution before examining patients. The results were immediate and dramatic, with mortality rates plummeting. He had clear evidence (more than 18 months of data, see figure 'Childbed Fever Mortality Rates



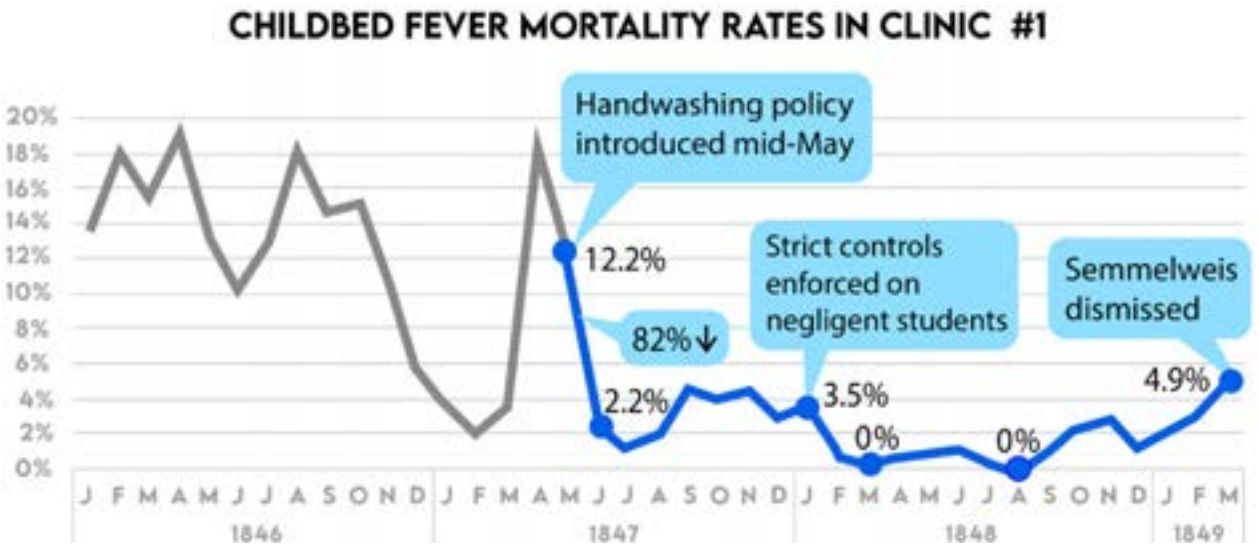
in Clinic #1' below), but was it enough? Semmelweis faced fierce resistance from the medical community. His peers rejected the idea, unwilling to accept that they could be causing harm. Tragically, Semmelweis' findings were largely ignored during his lifetime, and he died without seeing his life-saving practices widely adopted.

Even after possessing potentially life-saving insights from the data, presumably because he could not present them through a compelling narrative, his ideas were rejected.

From Ignored Insights to Valued Trinkets

In 2006, *New York Times Magazine*

Storytelling with data is not just about presenting numbers but about weaving them into narratives that connect with people on a deeper level



journalist Rob Walker set out to determine if storytelling was the most powerful tool of all. He began by purchasing two hundred thrift items of low value (the average cost of each item was \$1.25). These items were deliberately chosen for their lack of intrinsic value — a plastic banana, an old wooden mallet, a plastic motel room key, and similar trinkets. None of these items had any special significance on their own.

Next, Walker contacted two hundred professional authors and invited them to participate in his 'Significant Objects' study. He asked each author to write a story about one of the thrift items. All the authors agreed.

Walker then listed the items for auction on eBay, including the stories in the item descriptions. The results were astounding.

One notable example was a small plastic bust of a horse's head, which Walker had purchased for \$0.99. With a captivating story attached, it sold for \$62.95.

This wasn't an isolated incident. In total, Walker spent \$197 on the thrift items and sold them for nearly \$8,000 — a markup of over 6,300 per cent. The stories had transformed these otherwise insignificant objects into valuable items.

The Power of Data Storytelling

The stories of Dr Semmelweis and the

Significant Objects study underscore a critical lesson: having the right data is only part of the equation. The ability to effectively communicate that data in a way that resonates with the audience is equally crucial. This is where the power of storytelling comes into play.

Data storytelling is the process of translating complex data into understandable and engaging narratives. It combines three key elements: data, visuals, and narrative.

- 1. Data:** Accurate and relevant data forms the foundation of any good story. It's crucial to gather data from reliable sources and ensure its integrity.
- 2. Visuals:** Visualisations help simplify complex data, making it easier to understand. Charts, graphs, and infographics can transform raw numbers into engaging visuals that highlight key insights.
- 3. Narrative:** The narrative ties the data and visuals together, providing context and guiding the audience through the story. A strong narrative answers the "so what?" question, making the data meaningful and actionable.

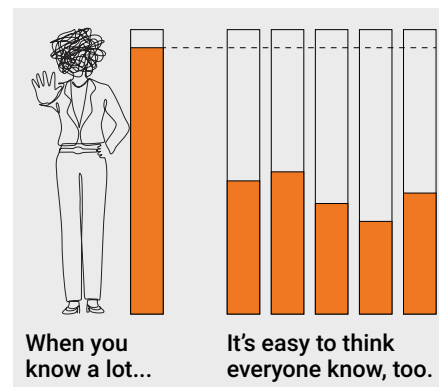
Obstacles to Good Storytelling

Despite its power, effective data storytelling can be hindered by several factors. Two major obstacles are the 'curse of knowledge' and not internalising the difference between

Deep understanding of a subject can cause us to forget what it's like not knowing, leading to communication gaps and difficulty empathising with less informed individuals

the paradigms of 'storyfinding' and storytelling.

The curse of knowledge

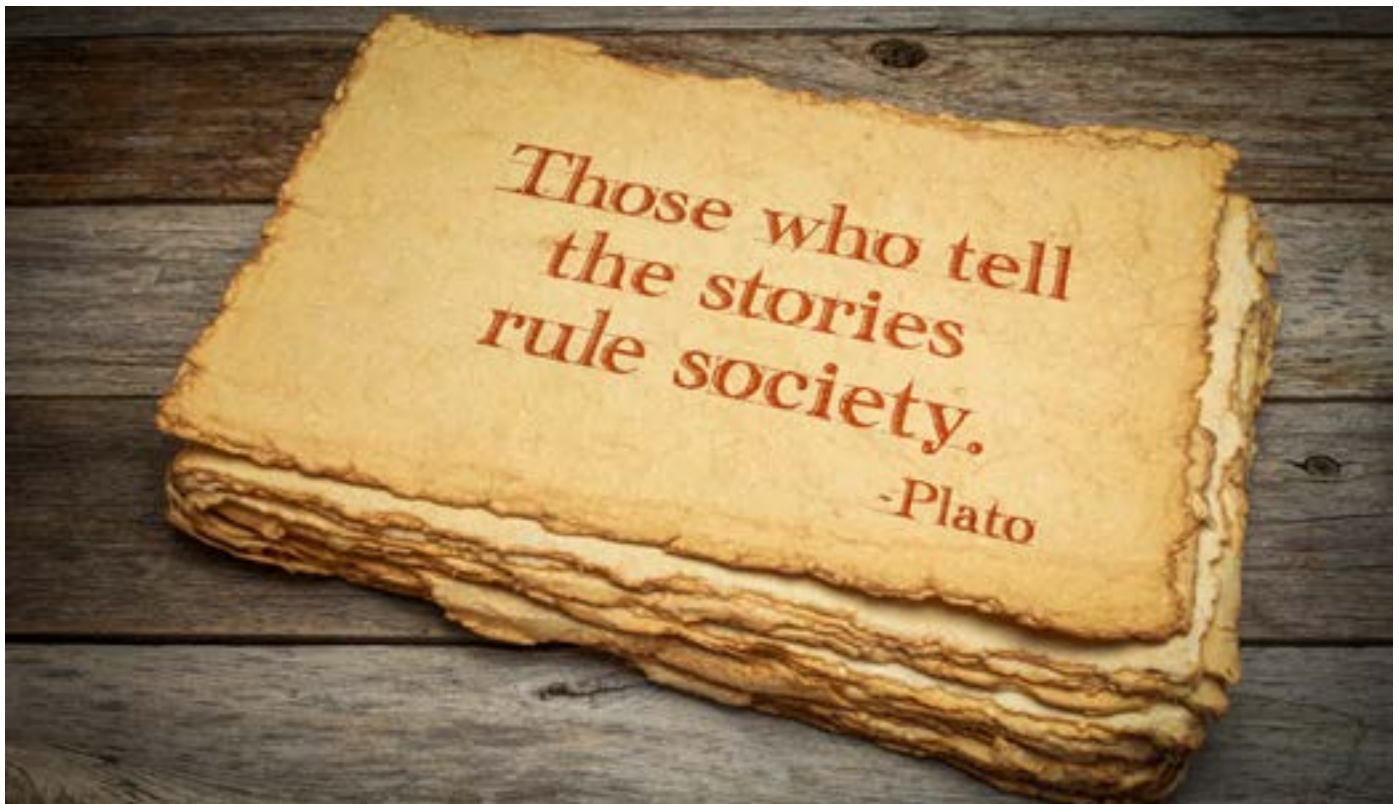


Have you ever wondered why experts often struggle to communicate effectively about their own domain to non-experts? It's largely due to the curse of knowledge. When we possess a deep understanding of a subject, it becomes difficult to remember what it was like not knowing it. This cognitive bias can prevent us from empathising with those who are less informed, leading to significant communication gaps. The more expertise you develop, the stronger this curse becomes.

Why it matters in data

visualisation: In data storytelling, falling prey to this bias can be the difference between creating an insightful visualisation that resonates and one that misses the mark. It's crucial not only to convey information but to ensure it's accessible and engaging for your audience.





Storyfinding vs storytelling

In the realm of data visualisation, two crucial paradigms exist — storyfinding and storytelling. Are you adept at one but struggling with the other?



- **Storyfinding:** This is all about exploration — connecting data sources, identifying relationships, and discovering what matters most. It's the essential starting point for any data analysis.
- **Storytelling:** This is about explanation — gathering insights and building a narrative that resonates with your audience. It's the 'last mile' of data work, where your findings are transformed into compelling, actionable stories.

Recognising the differences between these paradigms is crucial as it profoundly influences how we design our visualisations.

The GAME Plan: A Storytelling Framework

In the world of data storytelling, having a clear and structured approach is crucial. That's where the GAME plan, a simple yet powerful framework, becomes useful, guiding you through the essential components of effective communication: Goal, Audience, Message, and Engagement.

- **Goal:** What do you aim to achieve with your data story? Is it to inform, persuade, or call to action? Setting a clear goal is the first step in crafting your narrative.
- **Audience:** Who are you talking to? Understanding your audience's needs and expectations shapes how you present your data, ensuring it resonates and engages.
- **Message:** What is the key takeaway for your audience? Simplify your story to crucial points you want your audience to remember.
- **Engagement:** How will you capture and maintain your audience's attention? Choosing the right medium and channel, whether a presentation, social media post, or interactive webinar, is vital.

Weaving Data into Stories That Touch Lives

The importance of storytelling in the data science field cannot be overstated. By effectively combining data, visuals, and narrative, professionals can transform raw data into compelling stories that drive informed decision-making and inspire action. In a city like Jamshedpur, known for its industrial and economic significance, mastering the art of data storytelling can provide a competitive edge, enabling organisations to leverage data for greater impact and success.

In conclusion, storytelling with data is not just about presenting numbers but about weaving them into narratives that connect with people on a deeper level. As the saying goes, "Those who tell the data stories will rule this world." By honing this skill, professionals can harness the power of data to drive innovation, influence decisions, and lead their organisations to new heights. ◀



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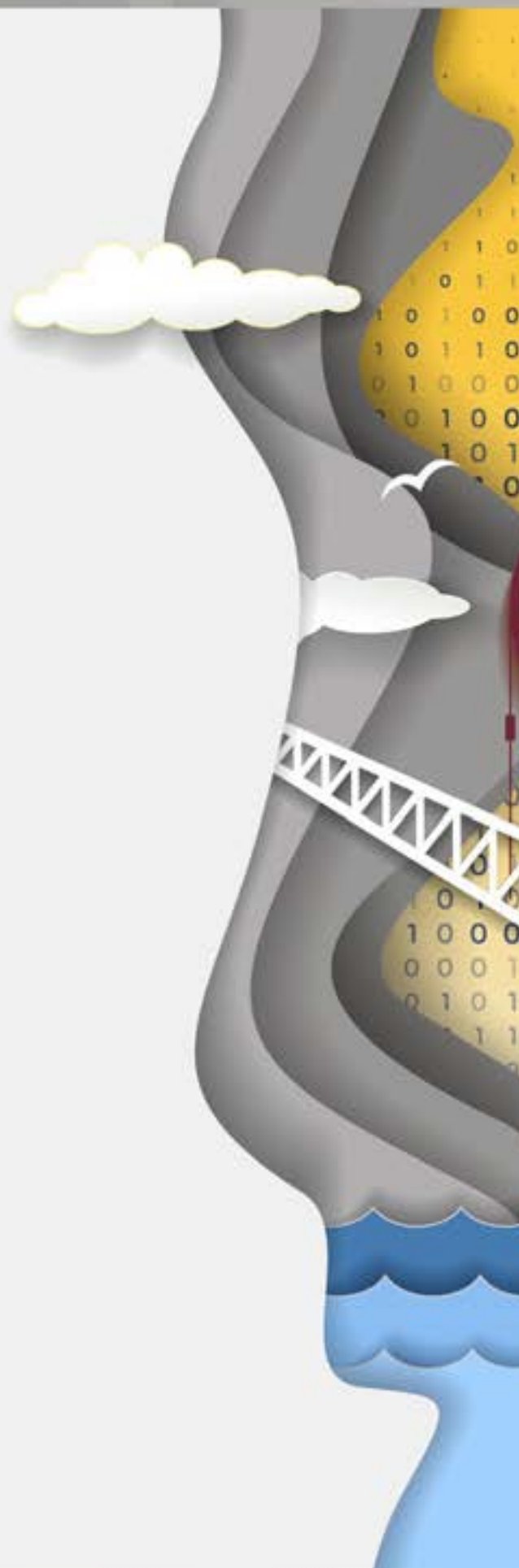
CEO LOUNGE

Harnessing Digitisation to **TRANSFORM OIL AND GAS**

As the oil and gas industry faces mounting pressures and evolving demands, leveraging digitisation is key to transforming operations, enhancing efficiency, and driving sustainability in the sector



by Kushal Dey





Oil and gas is one of the world's most highly regarded and sought-after industries.

According to Ektinteractive.com, "The first oil had actually been discovered by the Chinese in 600 BC and transported in pipelines made from bamboo... However, Colonel Drake's heralded the discovery of oil in Pennsylvania in 1859 and the Spindletop discovery in Texas in 1901 set the stage for the new oil economy."

Since then, the oil and gas industry has undergone significant technological transformations to achieve its modern-day accomplishments. Both upstream and downstream companies have harnessed the power of technology to deliver energy to consumers.

Today, with rising concerns among environmentalists and the scientific community, the oil and gas industry is poised for unprecedented change. The sustainability drive is transforming how the world is powered. It is no longer just about oil or gas, but the energy that lights up the world. However, these transformations bring modern challenges, necessitating more effective and constructive solutions to meet global energy needs. With the demand for energy at its peak,

efficient management and utilisation of natural resources lie at the core of organisational strategies.

Digital Drill: The Much-Needed Game-Changer

Digitisation is what the world is keenly focused on, and the energy industry is no exception. Many CEOs correctly see digitisation as crucial for achieving their desired outcomes. In the last 10 years, advancements in cloud computing, data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), and the Internet of Things (IoT) have enabled businesses across various industries to optimise complex processes, identify hidden sources of loss and inefficiency, and respond more effectively to volatility, shocks, and disruptions.

Consulting firm Deloitte, in its article 'Turning Downstream Disruption into Competitive Advantage,' says, "Making a commitment to digital transformation is not just about performing 'random acts of digital.' It involves adopting a digital mindset, launching new digitally driven business models, and examining all touchpoints and activities from the perspective of today's digitally empowered customer. True digital transformation in oil and gas also calls for establishing and

Despite technological advancements, only 30 per cent of oil and gas companies have scaled digital manufacturing, highlighting the sector's struggle with effective digital transformation





nurturing a customer-centric culture — one in which people are recognised and rewarded for delighting customers by providing an easy, seamless, and satisfying digital experience.”

In contrast, McKinsey finds it disappointing to see minimal adoption of digitisation in the industry. The firm notes, “Only 30 per cent of oil and gas companies have successfully scaled digital manufacturing. However, with a few targeted digital transformation strategies, oil and gas CEOs can achieve significant improvements in production KPIs.” This disparity highlights the ongoing challenge of implementing digital transformation effectively across the sector.

Proposed Solutions

The question is, given these challenges and opportunities, how can we effectively leverage digital transformation to drive progress in the oil and gas industry? The actions listed below may help us arrive at a likely solution for technology transformation and digitisation in the modern oil and gas industry:

- Identifying the digital maturity of a firm and its intention to change.
- Illustrating the value creation for firms

by adopting new digital technologies.

- Assessing the impact of digital transformation on the bottom line.
- Implementing large-scale cultural transformation and change management programmes to foster new skills and behaviours among stakeholders.
- Standardising technologies and digital platforms to integrate all business stakeholders.
- Adoption through testing and digital pilots.
- Implementation across companies.

Recent advancements in digitisation offer a substantial opportunity to fundamentally transform the management and operations of oil and gas facilities. However, many management teams find the vast array of new technologies, their rapid development, and the complexity of implementing them across large enterprises overwhelming. To navigate these options effectively, companies should prioritise a business-first approach to technology rather than a technology-first approach to business. Finally, one should remember that it's always the values and their impact on people that matter more than the mere product or service offered. ◀

To leverage digital transformation effectively, companies must assess digital maturity, standardise technologies, and implement change management strategies to drive substantial improvements



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“SCIENCE AND RELIGION CAN COEXIST AND ENRICH EACH OTHER”

Dr Kuruvilla Pandikattu SJ, the Chair Professor of the JRD Tata Foundation on Business Ethics at XLRI Jamshedpur, brings a unique interdisciplinary perspective to his work. With three Master's degrees and two doctorates, he has made significant contributions to the dialogue between science and religion, transhumanism, and ethical living. In an interview with *Afrin Pathan*, he emphasises the need for ethical frameworks in our technologically driven world, advocating for transparency, fairness, and sustainability. He says, “Nurturing empathy and creativity through the arts, literature, and philosophical inquiry helps maintain our humanity in the face of technological dominance.” Prof Pandikattu has authored over 50 books and 225 academic articles, fostering intellectual and spiritual growth across multiple disciplines.

Can you share the key milestones in your journey that led you to become a professor, philosopher, theologian, and physicist?

I had a humble beginning. I was born on November 28, 1957, in Areekara, Kerala, a small village near the home of the late President KR Narayanan. My parents, Uthuppan and Mary Joseph, emphasised the importance of hard work, deep faith, and committed education.

In 1974, I joined the Society of Jesus (Dumka-Raiganj province) and began my novitiate at Vinayalaya, Mumbai. This period was marked by

profound spiritual growth, forming lifelong friendships, and deepening my understanding of Jesuit values. My academic journey continued at Loyola College in Chennai, where I earned a BSc, and at St Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli, where I received my MSc in Physics.

My pursuit of interdisciplinary study led me to Jnana Deepa, Institute of Philosophy and Theology, in Pune, where I earned a BPh, and later completed an MPh and MPhil in Philosophy at the University of Pune. This period was marked by intense intellectual

exploration and a deep interest in philosophical anthropology and the dialogue between science and religion.

A significant milestone was my doctoral studies at the University of Innsbruck, Austria, where I completed PhDs in both philosophy and theology. This challenging period, including learning German and overcoming academic setbacks, taught me resilience and perseverance. My thesis work, focusing on Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics and Bede Griffiths' Advaita Vedanta, allowed me to integrate diverse intellectual traditions.

My academic career thrived at Jnana Deepa Institute, Pune, where I taught for 26 years and contributed to numerous conferences and publications. In 2022, I assumed the role of Chair Professor of the JRD Tata Foundation for Business Ethics at XLRI Jamshedpur, aiming to promote a life of integrity and excellence.

Who have been the most influential figures in your life and career, and how have they shaped your thinking and approach?

Several figures have profoundly influenced my life and career. My parents, Uthuppan and Mary Joseph, were my first mentors, instilling in me strong values of faith and education. My grandfather, Abraham Mukkett, who inspired me to venture into the unknown, also had a very significant impact on my life.

During my Jesuit formation, mentors like Fr Vincent Banon and Fr Emmanuel Stellini provided spiritual and academic guidance. Fr Banon guided me through significant spiritual



exercises, while Fr Stellini helped me excel academically.

At the University of Innsbruck, Austria, Professors Emerich Coreth and Lothar Lies were crucial during my doctoral studies. Fr Coreth guided me in philosophy, while Fr Lies supported my theological journey, focusing on inter-religious dialogue.

The supportive community at Jhana Deepa, including colleagues like Prof Job Kozhamthadam, was pivotal in my scholarly achievements. His work in the science-religion dialogue inspired my contributions to this interdisciplinary field.

Professors Kurien Kunnumpuram and Cyril Desbruslais challenged me to go beyond my limited perspectives and embrace others as they are. These figures have shaped my thinking and approach, fostering a commitment to intellectual rigour, spiritual depth, and compassionate action.

In today's rapidly changing technological landscape, what are the biggest ethical challenges facing businesses? How can companies best balance the pursuit of profit with social responsibility?

In our accelerating technological scenario, businesses face ethical

challenges such as data privacy, AI bias, and environmental sustainability. Companies must balance profit with social responsibility by adopting ethical frameworks that prioritise transparency, fairness, and sustainability.

Ethical leadership is crucial in addressing these challenges. Leaders must model integrity and ethical behaviour, fostering a corporate culture that values ethical decision-making. Engaging stakeholders in these processes ensures diverse perspectives are considered, enhancing the fairness and effectiveness of solutions. Ultimately, businesses that prioritise ethical considerations are better positioned to build trust, enhance their reputations, and achieve long-term success.

Beyond making profits and taking care of their employees, companies are challenged to look after the broader interests of society, especially those of the poor and marginalised. This includes adopting sustainable practices, addressing social inequalities, and contributing positively to the communities they operate in. By doing so, they ensure long-term societal and environmental well-being.

Do you see science and religion as inherently conflicting, or can they coexist and complement each other?

Sadly, there are a few people who believe that science is progressive and is opposed to the 'regressive' religions. I believe that science and religion are not inherently conflicting but rather complementary domains that can coexist and enrich each other. My work emphasises the dialogue between these fields, exploring how scientific discoveries and religious beliefs can contribute to a holistic understanding of existence.

Science and religion, when seen through the lens of dialogue and mutual respect, can address complex issues like transhumanism, artificial intelligence, and ethical living. Both fields seek to understand the fundamental questions of life, though they approach them from different perspectives. Science provides empirical insights into the workings of the natural world, while religion offers a framework for understanding meaning, purpose, and moral values.



Human beings truly need scientific knowledge coupled with religious wisdom and spiritual depth. Without them, our future looks uncertain

This integrative approach fosters a deeper appreciation of both scientific inquiry and spiritual wisdom, promoting a more comprehensive understanding of the human experience. Such an approach can truly make our generation one of the most advanced in terms of human flourishing, knowledge, medical facilities, and healthcare. By bridging these domains, we enhance our capacity to address the profound questions and challenges of our time.

Human beings truly need scientific

knowledge coupled with religious wisdom and spiritual depth. Without them, our future looks uncertain!

In an age of increasing technological integration, especially the rise of artificial intelligence, what does it mean to be human? How can we foster a sense of meaning and purpose in a world seemingly dominated by science and technology?

In an era dominated by artificial intelligence, defining what it means to be human involves recognising our unique qualities of empathy, creativity, and moral reasoning. AI technology, while powerful, lacks the depth of human emotional and ethical capabilities. Thus, fostering a sense of meaning and purpose in this context requires philosophical and spiritual reflection.

Integrating humanities with technological studies ensures that individuals possess technical skills and understand the ethical implications of their work. Emphasising the importance of ethical considerations in technological development can help ensure that AI advancements enhance rather than diminish human dignity and well-being.

Given that we may be living at the cusp of “technological singularity” and the emergence of transhumanism, we

carry tremendous responsibility for the well-being of ourselves and future generations. Nurturing empathy and creativity through the arts, literature, and philosophical inquiry helps maintain our humanity in the face of technological dominance. By fostering a sense of interconnectedness and moral responsibility, we can ensure that technological progress serves the greater good and enriches the human experience.

Throughout your career, you have organised numerous conferences. What do you see as the importance of fostering dialogue and exchange of ideas on these complex topics?

Throughout my career, I have been fortunate enough to organise numerous conferences and workshops, underscoring the importance of dialogue and the exchange of ideas. These forums provide opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, fostering innovation and mutual understanding.

Bringing together scholars from diverse fields allows for the exploration of complex issues from multiple perspectives. This holistic approach promotes comprehensive solutions to global challenges. For instance, addressing ethical concerns in AI development requires input from technologists, ethicists,

sociologists, and policymakers. Such engagement enhances the depth and breadth of understanding, leading to more effective and inclusive outcomes.

These dialogues are crucial for advancing knowledge and addressing global challenges. By promoting intellectual and cultural exchange, we can foster a more informed and compassionate society. Engaging in these conversations helps build bridges between different disciplines and communities, reinforcing the value of diverse perspectives in enriching our collective understanding. Dialogue not only broadens our horizons but also fosters a collaborative spirit essential for solving the pressing issues of our time.

What are some of the pressing issues you believe require the attention of philosophers, scientists, and theologians in the coming decades?

Looking ahead, several pressing issues require the attention of philosophers, scientists, and theologians. The ethical implications of AI and other emerging technologies are paramount. As AI systems become more integrated into

daily life, it is essential to address concerns about privacy, bias, and the impact on employment.

Environmental sustainability is another critical area. Philosophers, scientists, and theologians must collaborate to develop ethical frameworks that guide sustainable living practices. This involves exploring the moral dimensions of environmental stewardship and the responsibilities of individuals and societies to future generations.

The integration of scientific and spiritual perspectives is also vital. Advancing the dialogue between science and religion can help address existential questions about human identity, purpose, and ethical responsibility. This interdisciplinary approach fosters a more holistic understanding of the human condition and the world we inhabit.

By addressing these issues, philosophers, scientists, and theologians can contribute to creating a just and compassionate future. Their collaborative efforts can help navigate the challenges posed by technological and ecological changes, ensuring that advancements benefit all of humanity.

In your work, you integrate knowledge from diverse fields. What advice can you give to those interested in pursuing interdisciplinary study?

For those interested in pursuing interdisciplinary study, I advise cultivating a broad intellectual curiosity and a willingness to engage with diverse perspectives. Building a strong foundation

Businesses that prioritise ethical considerations are better positioned to build trust, enhance their reputations, and achieve long-term success





Advancing the dialogue between science and religion can help address existential questions about human identity, purpose, and ethical responsibility

in multiple disciplines, such as philosophy, science, and theology, enables a holistic approach to complex issues.

Collaboration and dialogue with experts from different fields enrich one's understanding and contribute to innovative solutions. Engaging in interdisciplinary research fosters creativity and allows for

the synthesis of ideas, leading to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of complex problems.

Emphasising the importance of ethical considerations is crucial in interdisciplinary study. By integrating ethical frameworks into research and practice, we can ensure that our work benefits society and upholds human dignity. An integrative approach that harmonises various domains of knowledge promotes a more comprehensive and compassionate understanding of the world.

What have been some of the biggest challenges you have faced in your career, and how did you overcome them? What accomplishments are you most proud of?

My career has been marked by challenges such as navigating academic setbacks and personal losses, including the death of close family members. Overcoming these difficulties through resilience and dedication, I have achieved several academic and professional milestones.

One of my biggest challenges

was during my doctoral studies at the University of Innsbruck, where I faced academic setbacks and had to re-register for my PhD. This period taught me resilience and the importance of perseverance. Another significant challenge was balancing my academic commitments with personal losses, such as the death of my father in 1996 and my beloved mother just last month. These were moments of profound shock and a sense of abandonment.

Despite these challenges, I have been able to publish over 50 books and 225 academic articles, organise international conferences, and mentor countless students. I do not take credit for these achievements; the credit goes to those who have placed their trust in me. My work in promoting science-religion dialogue and ethical education reflects my commitment to fostering intellectual and spiritual growth. These achievements, made possible by the active cooperation of my colleagues and companions, reflect my earnest desire to advance knowledge and make a positive impact on the academic and larger social community. ◀



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**Experiences
that Stir**

Life in Monologue

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CEO LOUNGE



INTEGRITY:

The Unbreakable Leadership Lifeline

Discover why integrity is indispensable and how it can be the differentiating factor that propels leaders and organisations towards long-term prosperity

 by Sukanya Chatterjee



In 1982, Johnson & Johnson faced a crisis when several people died after taking cyanide-laced Tylenol capsules. Despite the potential financial loss, the company made the bold decision to recall 31 million bottles of Tylenol, demonstrating their commitment to consumer safety over profit. This act of integrity helped rebuild their credibility and trust with the public, allowing them to recover and thrive in the long run. This story highlights the vital role of integrity in the professional realm.

Amidst ambitious targets, tight deadlines, and fierce competition, integrity stands as an unwavering pillar essential for sustainable professional success. Let's explore why integrity

is indispensable and how it can be the differentiating factor that propels leaders and organisations to long-term prosperity. We will also delve into how young professionals can develop and nurture integrity in their careers.

Integrity, Trust, and True Leadership

Integrity, at its core, refers to the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. It encompasses consistency in actions, values, methods, measures, and principles. For professionals, integrity translates into adherence to ethical standards, transparency in dealings, and an unwavering commitment to truthfulness. It is about doing the right thing, even when no one is watching.

Integrity, at its core, refers to the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. It encompasses consistency in actions, values, measures, and principles





Trust is the foundation of any professional relationship, whether it is with colleagues, clients, or stakeholders. Integrity fosters trust by ensuring that individuals and organisations act consistently and predictably according to ethical standards. When leaders demonstrate integrity, they build a reputation for reliability and honesty. This credibility is invaluable, as it attracts partnerships, fosters collaboration, and enhances the overall reputation of the organisation.

True leadership is not just about strategic vision and operational efficiency; it is also about embodying values that inspire and motivate others. Leaders with integrity lead by example, setting a standard for their teams to follow. They earn respect and loyalty by being transparent, fair, and consistent. This ethical approach to leadership cultivates a positive organisational culture, encourages employee engagement, and drives higher levels of performance and productivity.

While short-term gains can be

achieved through various means, sustainable success is rooted in ethical practices. Organisations that prioritise integrity are more likely to endure and thrive in the long run.

Ethical behaviour minimises risks associated with legal issues, scandals, and reputation damage. It also attracts like-minded clients, partners, and employees who value and seek long-term relationships based on mutual respect and trust. Integrity serves as a compass during challenging times.

In the face of adversity, professionals with integrity can navigate crises with a clear conscience and a focused mind. Their commitment to ethical standards provides a solid framework for decision-making, even under pressure. This steadfast adherence to values can mitigate damage, preserve stakeholder confidence, and facilitate a quicker recovery.

A Strategic Asset for Success

An environment rooted in integrity

Integrity eliminates the fear of unfair treatment or retribution, thereby fostering a culture where creativity and innovation can flourish



Integrity is more than a moral obligation; it's a strategic asset that builds trust, enhances leadership, ensures long-term success, and fosters a culture of innovation

encourages open communication and the free exchange of ideas. When employees trust their leaders and feel secure in their roles, they are more likely to take initiative, think creatively, and innovate. Integrity eliminates the fear of unfair treatment or retribution, thereby fostering a culture where creativity and innovation can flourish.

Google's early motto, "Don't be evil," encapsulated its commitment to integrity. This ethical stance encouraged a culture of innovation and creativity, attracting top talent who wanted to work in an environment that prioritised doing good. This approach significantly contributed to Google's rapid growth and success.

For young professionals, developing integrity is a crucial step in building a successful career. Regular self-reflection helps ensure actions and decisions align with core values and ethical standards. Seeking mentorship from individuals who exemplify integrity, staying informed about ethical practices, and holding oneself accountable for actions are practical steps to cultivate

this essential quality. Transparent communication and consistency in behaviour further solidify a reputation for reliability and trustworthiness.

Integrity is not just a moral obligation; it is a strategic asset that underpins professional success. It builds trust, enhances leadership, ensures long-term viability, and fosters a culture of innovation. For professionals and organisations alike, embracing integrity is the key to achieving and sustaining true success.

As we navigate the complexities of the modern business landscape, let us remember that integrity is not just an option; it is the cornerstone of enduring excellence and achievement. For young professionals, developing and maintaining integrity is a journey that will pave the way for a rewarding and respected career. ◀



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“ I’M RISK-AVERSE.
I DON’T SEE
MYSELF AS
TAKING RISKS ”

In an insightful conversation with *Deepak Yadav*, the legendary Chef **Sanjeev Kapoor**, honoured with the Padma Shri, discusses his belief in collaboration over competition and the evolving role of chefs in promoting sustainability and health. Renowned for his iconic cookery show ‘Khana Khazana,’ Kapoor has founded numerous ventures, including restaurants, catering services, TV shows, and the premier cookware brand Wonderchef. Despite his tremendous success, Kapoor humbly claims to be risk-averse, viewing his bold career moves, such as launching a food channel, as calculated steps rather than risks. Recounting memorable experiences like cooking for Prime Minister Modi and the royal family of UAE, Kapoor underscores the importance of values and mentorship in his career. His inspiring story exemplifies resilience, innovation, and the power of positive energy.



You are the original OG chef, pioneering personal branding before it became mainstream. You've achieved the Padma Shri, become a celebrity chef, and built a successful business empire. One standout aspect of your journey is your remarkable risk-taking appetite. You were thriving in your career when you chose to leave your job and venture out on your own. Then, one day you made the bold decision to launch a food channel at a time when television was still evolving. What inspired this daring move, and what drove you to embrace such a significant risk?

Regarding my so-called risk-taking, I always say I am risk-averse. When I quit my job to start my own venture, it was my brother, a finance expert, who encouraged me. He pointed out that I had little to lose since I was earning very little. So, I gave it a try. Even now, I don't see myself as taking risks.

I believe in collaborations. In any business, we bring my brand recognition and expertise, which can range from cooking to consumer insights. We partner with others who bring their own strengths. For example,

Wonderchef, our kitchen appliances brand, was founded with Ravi Saxena, and we raised money from investors. When launching my TV channel, we partnered with Astro from Malaysia for their expertise and funding.

Recently, we collaborated with BigBasket and Tata Group to launch a range of frozen foods for the Indian market, including single portions of Indian sweets like *ras malai* and *gajar ka halwa*, as well as green peas and dim sums. In each venture, I contribute my brand and expertise, and we build our businesses through strategic partnerships.

Collaboration is a key element of your success. Your social media reach is phenomenal, with around 9 million followers on Facebook and over 2 million each on Twitter and Instagram. Your YouTube channel has about 8 million followers. Beyond your celebrity chef status, what drives the growing popularity of your social media channels?

When people say 'celebrity,' I think the meaning has evolved. To me, anyone who creates a body of work worth celebrating can be a celebrity. It's not just about reach; it's about meaningful work. If you are sincere and your work benefits people — whether through products, services, knowledge, or experience — they will keep coming back. Like Mr Bachchan, who has a crowd outside his house every Sunday because of his consistent,

impactful work. A great body of work creates reach and magnetism.

How do you align with growing consumer expectations across all your businesses, and especially with the demands of social media? From a leadership perspective, how do you constantly transform and adapt to meet these expectations?

Actually, I don't actively try to stay relevant. I just live my life authentically. I wouldn't do something that doesn't make sense to me. Life naturally evolves; you grow and adapt. Sometimes you change the environment, and other times you adapt to it. It's a natural progression, not a special effort. Life would be boring if we stayed stuck in the past. It's simpler to evolve with the world than to let it pass you by.

How has the role of a chef evolved globally in the context of sustainability and health, which are key discussions today?

Globally, including in India, chefs have become influential figures in shaping food consumption, sustainability practices, and health awareness. Their impact extends to how food is sourced and presented in restaurants, influencing home cooking trends as well. Recognising their societal impact, chefs are increasingly adopting responsible practices.

For example, over 25 years ago, when I opened my first restaurant in



I always say I am risk-averse. Even when I started my venture, it was a considered decision, not a risk

Dubai, we stopped serving a popular fish called Hamour due to concerns about overfishing. The population of Hamour had declined significantly, prompting us to adopt more responsible practices. Initially met with scepticism, this decision eventually set a standard for responsible dining. Chefs understand their influence and strive to act responsibly. Those who haven't yet will likely become more aware and adapt in time.

You're right, it's crucial today for chefs to address sustainability and health, given their growing importance. This is a vital aspect of their role...

Influential figures drive conversations. And conversations shape consumer behaviour and consumption. More responsible discussions will lead to more sustainable consumption.

I greatly respect chefs and their leadership, as I believe it mirrors leadership in the corporate world. The kitchen requires an agile team due to its high-stress, high-performance environment. What is your philosophy or approach to creating an agile team

in the kitchen?

In French, 'chef' means chief, and it's true — you can't run a restaurant alone. A great chef depends on a great team. Leadership has evolved from 'I, me, myself', 'my way or the highway' to nurturing a team where everyone can contribute. To sustain excellence, leaders must create more leaders, not just followers. Agility is crucial, but so is fostering leadership among team members for long-term success.

Chef, could you share some communication strategies? You're one of the finest communicators I've met. How important are these strategies in the kitchen, and how do they extend to connecting with consumers? What are two or three key strategies you recommend?

Oh, that's a big topic; a whole session could be dedicated to communication. Even as children, we were taught communication skills. Let's talk about non-verbal communication, as it's often less structured than verbal communication. In our kitchen, I tell the team, even if you are not speaking to each other, when you are cooking, smile.

Initially, they might think it's silly, but I explain that positive energy results in better outcomes. When you cook with a positive mindset, the result on the plate will be excellent. This positivity extends beyond food; it creates an aura and opens doors for acceptance and communication.

People often say they always see me smiling. I joke that I even smile in my sleep. Smiling adds positivity, breaks barriers, and starts conversations. It's the ultimate icebreaker. Making eye contact and smiling at someone can significantly impact both internal and external interactions.

In any communication, clarity of thought is crucial. Before speaking, think about what you mean. I hired a young, eager assistant who used to interrupt me because she was so keen. I advised her to pause and count to ten before responding. Initially, it frustrated her, but now her productivity has increased significantly. She weighs her words more carefully, and I can already see the improvement.

Chef, let's discuss the thought process behind innovation. Today's new-age



Collaboration is key. We partner with others who bring their strengths, like in our Wonderchef venture and food channel launch



If innovation feels like a burden, you're in the wrong industry. It should excite and motivate you, not stress you out

chefs face constant pressure to innovate. When I visit a restaurant, I want to speak directly with the chef, not the server. How do chefs stay relevant in such a highly dynamic and competitive culinary industry, or any industry for that matter?

First and foremost, if innovation puts pressure on you, you're in the wrong industry. In any creative field, innovation can never be a burden; it's a source of excitement and motivation. Innovation should invigorate you. I was just talking about this with a friend from Australia last night. Back in 1992, I received a sample of black grape juice at our hotel. It was the first time I'd seen black grape juice in a tetra pack. In my sleep, I dreamt about creating a black grape juice *pani puri*. I woke up, made it, and excitedly woke my wife to try it. This excitement is what drives innovation.

Innovation is a scientific process that blends art, science, and mathematics. While you need artistic flair, it won't work without a scientific approach. People might not realise they're applying science, but there's always a mathematical aspect. Innovation involves mastering the basics. Look at Sachin Tendulkar, Virat Kohli, or Bismillah Khan Sahib — these artists have natural talent, but they also engage in rigorous *riyaaz* or practice. In culinary

arts, this practice is akin to *riyaaz* — the continuous learning and refinement of skills. The key to innovation is excitement about learning, understanding the science and maths behind it, and practising. The more variables you understand, the more permutations and combinations you can create.

I like this thought because I believe innovation must flow through your veins. In any field, even in sales, if you don't innovate, you become stagnant. People lose interest and don't want to engage with you. Innovation is essential, no matter the industry; it's human nature.

Absolutely, it is human. It's like our cells. When people talk about rejuvenation, they're essentially talking about innovation. Sometimes it happens in a good way, sometimes not so much. But it's always happening. Newness is vital; without it, we wouldn't survive.

How do you approach mentorship in the culinary field? Before the rise of culinary schools, many chefs earned their stripes by working under experienced professionals. Now, with established culinary schools, the approach has changed. What are your thoughts on mentorship, and how do you see this shift?

Mentorship is incredibly important because no learning can happen in isolation. Tools like books and sources of information are essential, but guidance from someone who has been there and done that is invaluable. It cuts the learning time significantly. Leaders love to mentor because they have either benefited from it or understand its importance.

For instance, my daughter once asked about a friend who wanted to approach Harsha Bhogle for advice. She asked if I could help. I told her to write an email, find his address, and send it herself. I could say I'll send it, but I don't want to do that, right? She laughed because it was exactly what I told her when she needed an internship.

Mentorship happens every day, from the moment we are born. Parents, siblings, teachers, and society all mentor us. If we can't give back, what are we here for?

In your busy schedule, do you find time to mentor chefs who seek your guidance?

Absolutely. WhatsApp is very popular, and if you look at my status, it says 'never busy.' That's not conditional — I'm never too busy to help someone. Regarding the whole celebrity chef

phenomenon, chances are nine out of 10 chefs have been mentored by me directly or indirectly when they started. I believe in passing on the skills I learned because no one was there to teach me.

When I started my TV channel, our partners at Astro asked how I planned to manage 24 hours of programming and mentioned that it could get boring. I told them I wanted to create ten Sanjeev Kapoors. They asked if I was creating competition for myself. I explained it's not about creating competition. If leaders won't foster new talent, who will?

Today, with instant feedback and social media reviews, criticism is abundant. How should chefs, or anyone for that matter, handle criticism?

Criticism should always be received in the right spirit. If you're sincere in your efforts, you can discern whether the criticism is constructive or not. Reflect on whether the feedback can help you improve. It's important to remember that criticism can come from various sources, including those who genuinely want to see you succeed. The world is not made up of all critics; there are many who are supportive. So, if you receive feedback that seems critical but offers a chance for improvement, consider it a valuable lesson. They might have paid you with their feedback, so appreciate the opportunity to learn and grow.

It's fabulous to see such a positive approach to criticism, especially from someone as creative as you. But I must disagree with the notion that many creative people take criticism well.

That's an interesting point. All great individuals take criticism constructively, often thanks to their mentors and teachers. Imagine a scenario where coach Ramakant Achrekar criticises Sachin Tendulkar's shot and dismisses it as rubbish. Sachin, instead of getting discouraged, learns from it. Today, everyone has the opportunity to teach and influence others, unlike before when influence was more limited. The key is to identify valuable lessons from anyone, not just traditional teachers. For instance, planting a tree can teach you patience and care. Learning comes from various sources, and criticism is part of the vast information we receive. Embrace it and use it as an opportunity to grow.

I've always been a promoter of women in leadership and believe their journeys should be shared. In the culinary field, a chef is a chef, regardless of gender. How are kitchens today promoting diversity, and how are you involved in pushing this front?

In our organisation, we have more women chefs, and that's something we strongly believe in. We're currently renovating our office to reflect our

commitment to diversity boldly. Despite our efforts, the scales are often not in their favour, so we need to talk more about this issue and offer greater support and promotion. In kitchens, inherent talent often lies more with women, but they don't stay long enough in professional kitchens due to other roles and responsibilities. The professional kitchen can be a tough environment, but it remains one of the few professions where gender doesn't define your role.

The Army is trying to make changes to increase female representation, but the kitchen still seems to lack enough women.

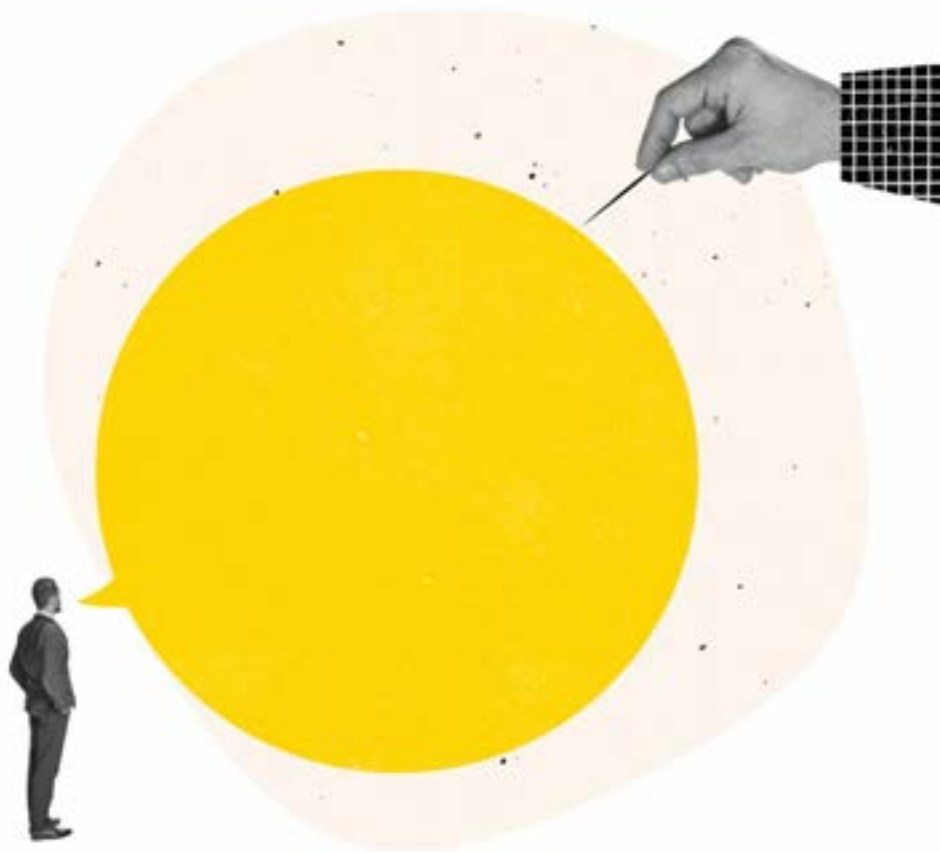
That's correct. Last year, I had the opportunity to witness the first batch of women at NDA, and it was remarkable. However, the pace of change is still very slow. It's essential that we push for more progress. During our office renovation, I insisted on having more women's toilets. While some argued for equal numbers, I felt that women's facilities should be more generous. The rationale was simple: just as in airports, where women often face longer queues for smaller facilities, it's important to accommodate demographics properly. You must promote and provide for these needs to drive real change.

Overall change can be challenging, but it's a great point. You've been a brand

A great chef relies on a great team. Leadership has evolved from 'my way or the highway' to creating more leaders, not just followers



Criticism should be received in the right spirit. Reflect on feedback to see if it offers a chance for improvement and growth



ambassador for the Tatas for a long time, and I think Puneet Chhatwal's decision to open an all-women hotel was commendable. Chhatwal, the CEO of Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), a part of the Tata Group, has led various initiatives to promote gender diversity. I haven't been there myself, but I understand that at Taj Wellington Mews in Chennai, the entire staff, including the kitchen and security, is female.

Yes, it was a significant achievement, though not without its challenges. I received many requests for recommendations, and it's clear that creating such an environment isn't easy. However, it's important to note that even large hotels, like ITC Maurya, have dedicated floors managed by women. These examples show that progress is being made, but it requires effort and dedication.

Let's take a trip down memory lane to the kitchen. Could you discuss a dish that was particularly challenging to perfect? And how did you overcome that challenge?

Actually, most dishes I have cooked have been very challenging initially. The challenge lies in the process — until you master it, it's difficult. Once you know how to do it, it becomes peaceful. Even today, there are some things I find challenging. For instance, in our hotels, we have tandoors and we can easily make *rumali roti* and regular

roti. However, making a simple home-style *roti* is not a skill typically taught in culinary schools. When I got married, despite being an executive chef, my wife's rotis were better than mine. It's all about practice. Another example is making *gujiya* — the way my mother-in-law creates the perfect pleats is something I continuously practice to perfect. Any dish, until you get it right, requires practice and perseverance. You just need to challenge yourself and keep at it.

Was there ever a moment during one of your live shows or events when something drastically went wrong? How do you turn that around?

Oh, that's easy. If you have the presence of mind and you're smart, you can handle it. Once, in Mumbai, we had an event at the first mall that opened in the city. It had an atrium lobby and there was a big public show with 800-1,000 people watching. The prime sponsor was a brand that made glass cookware. It was their first time making or importing it, and the MD of that brand was with me on stage.

I have this habit of chatting and talking during my shows, so I said, "Ask me any question or anything." The MD and I were happily talking on stage as I started cooking a dish and introduced the new cookware. I put it on the gas, and at the same time, someone from the crowd was also talking to me. I was starting with a soup, so I poured stock

into the cookware and it just went boom.

The biggest sponsor was there, and they were promoting their supposedly unbreakable cookware. The moment was tense, but I quickly turned it into a joke, saying, "This is a great product. Just make sure when you're cooking, don't invite the MD because he talks too much. Focus on cooking and don't take questions from your friends and family." Everyone laughed, including the MD.

There have been other times when the electricity goes out during a show. I would start miming the cooking process, and people would say they could not hear. When the power came back, I would continue miming — you make the act a part of the whole show. It's all about having the presence of mind in those moments. In live shows, you need to be adaptable and ready to turn any such incident into part of the act.

Was there ever a time when cooking for a dignitary became particularly challenging? Any memorable moments?

Oh, quite a few, actually. A recent example was in Abu Dhabi, where I was invited by the rulers of the UAE to cook for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Initially, it seemed straightforward. Mr Modi is a simple eater, so I thought there wouldn't be any major issues. We were cooking at the hotel where we were staying, preparing just a dinner.

However, at around 4:30 in the

afternoon, as Mr Modi was arriving at the hotel, I was suddenly asked if we could provide snacks as well. I explained that we were only prepared for dinner and had a specific menu planned. Despite my reservations, we agreed to prepare some snacks on short notice.

Then, someone from the PM's team informed us that Mr Modi was fasting due to Navratri and would not eat. We were like, we've been preparing keeping him in mind. I said we should still be ready and prepare some fasting food, something suitable for him.

As we scrambled to adjust our preparations, we received another update: the royal family had special dietary restrictions. They did not consume dairy, gluten etc, which was an additional complication. We had to quickly adapt our menu within an hour.

Eventually, it turned out that Mr Modi decided to make an exception to his fast and would eat after all. Just as we transported the food to another hotel for the dinner event, we learned that the entire royal family had chosen to have a vegetarian meal because of Mr Modi's presence. We had prepared a non-vegetarian meal for the royal family and carried our food to this place, which had nothing but a reheating facility.

This unexpected shift meant we had to adjust our food on-site, but we managed, and everyone was happy. How we managed

— [he laughs] *Woh daal mein paani ghar mein hi nahi padta, aur kahin bhi pad jata hai* [the daal is diluted with water at times not only at our home, but elsewhere too] [laughs]! The dinner went off well, and I had a chance to meet Mr Modi the next day. He was pleased with the meal and had a remarkable knowledge of food.

When I mentioned that the entire meal had turned vegetarian, he said he hadn't realised it and found it quite amusing. I referred to it as "food diplomacy," a term he found fitting. It was a challenging experience, but ultimately, it was rewarding and showcased the importance of adaptability in such high-stakes situations.

Your daughters, Rachita and Kriti, do they show interest in your business? Are they considering taking over, or are they exploring other paths?

I'm sure they are interested in the inheritance, but no, I'm actually very fortunate. See, it is not something I want to force on them because that's how I was brought up. My parents never forced me into anything, and whatever I did, it was my choice. My wife and I have kept it like this. It's their choice what they want to do. It's a great platform, but if they want to make their own choices, we will give them that freedom and respect. I think that's the only way. But, are they capable? Both of them are very sincere. They've studied with sincerity and have done well, so I'm

sure if they want to take control, they can. We have a fairly large team, which is like family. Let's not exclude them.

Who's the funniest in your family, Chef? It can't be you [laughs]...

I'm sure I can't answer that if it is not me [laughs]. Naturally, you think that you are funny, but kids always say these are dad jokes, right? So, actually, when they say it's dad jokes, I say it's really dad bad.

Chef, what legacy is most important in your family?

Values. The values we were brought up with, such as the family bond and helping those around us — whether they are family, friends, or colleagues. These values reflect in everything we do, professionally as well. When I had my first employee, a chef, we worked from the guest room of my house with just one table and one computer. Even then, we provided medical insurance for both my family and that first employee. We've continued this practice, believing it's our responsibility to look after the families of those who work with us as well. For example, one of my drivers had his wife admitted to Nanavati Hospital recently. I called the CEO to ensure she was well taken care of, beyond just the insurance coverage. Values like care, hard work, innovation, compassion, and passion are part of a long list that defines our legacy. ◀

Mentorship cuts learning time significantly. Guidance from someone experienced is invaluable, and leaders must also foster new talent and skills





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MAKE AI YOUR SMART ASSISTANT

Not Your Brain's Nemesis

Artificial intelligence enhances efficiency, yet overreliance threatens essential human skills. Explore how to harness AI while safeguarding cognitive, social, and practical abilities

 by Galla Chetan



Artificial Intelligence (AI) has brought tremendous changes to many aspects of our lives, introducing new levels of efficiency and convenience. However, there is an increasing fear of overreliance on AI and its implications for replacing fundamental human skills.

While AI can be a powerful assistant,

it should not replace basic human skills, such as cognitive, social, communication or practical skills, which are crucial for development and interaction.

The Impact of AI on Human Skills

One of the major risks of overreliance on AI is the erosion of *cognitive skills*. Cognitive skills, such as memory,

Too much reliance on digital devices for storing and looking up information can lower our ability to memorise and work with information effectively

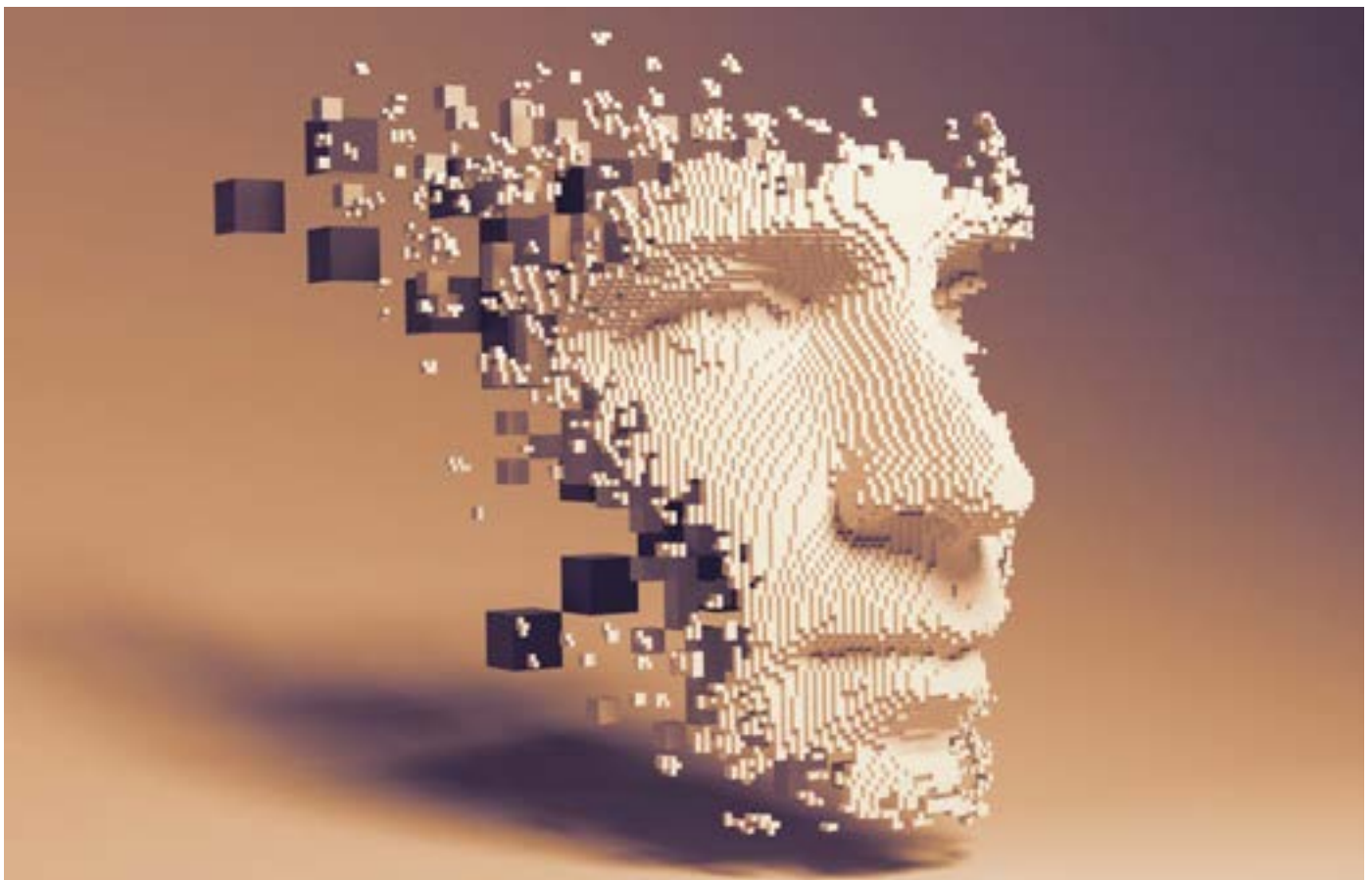
attention, and problem-solving, are key learning skills essential for personal development. Studies show that heavy use of digital technologies may damage cognitive abilities. For instance, too much reliance on digital devices for storing and looking up information can lower our ability to memorise and work with information effectively. This phenomenon, often referred to as “digital dementia”, underscores the importance of having and using our cognitive skills independently of AI.

In addition to cognitive skills, *social skills* are also at risk. Social skills encompass empathy, cooperation, and effective communication for interaction within society. AI tools have exhibited varying effects on social interactions, especially within learning environments. For instance, AI systems such as ChatGPT and Claude AI, while enhancing learning outcomes, can sometimes spark more anxiety and reduce creative learning. Overreliance on AI tools within social contexts diminishes face-to-face interactions and limits interpersonal skills.

Good *communication skills*, both personal and professional, is key to success. AI in communication tools can improve productivity through automated responses and managing communications. However, excessive dependence on these tools might hinder the development of finer communication skills, such as active listening, emotional intelligence, and persuasive speaking.

Research indicates that spending excessive time on screens and engaging in digital communication may have short-term impacts, potentially reducing attention span and the ability to engage in meaningful conversations. It is important to strike a balance where AI aids communication but does not replace the human element.

Lastly, *practical skills* cover a spectrum of abilities required for both mundane and highly specialised activities in daily life. While AI applications in smart homes and workplaces can greatly facilitate these activities, overreliance on such AI may allow our abilities in this regard to atrophy.





For instance, evidence suggests that the use of GPS technology is associated with reduced spatial memory, which relies on the hippocampus (a part of the brain responsible for memory and spatial navigation). This underscores the importance of continuing to exercise our navigational skills. Practical skills are crucial to self-sufficiency and resilience, and should be developed alongside any AI automation.

Balancing AI and Human Skills

While AI undoubtedly offers many benefits, it is important to use it as a tool to enhance human capabilities rather than to replace them. Following are a couple of strategies to maintain this balance:

- 1. Educational integration:** Integrate AI in education to supplement learning without replacing traditional teaching techniques. Let students critically engage with AI outputs to build on their cognitive and analytical skills.
- 2. Promote human interaction:** Design AI systems to facilitate, rather than replace, human interactions. For instance, AI

can support group projects and discussions, thereby enhancing collaboration and social learning.

- 3. Cognitive engagement:** Ensure that AI systems provide intuitive explanations to encourage users to critically engage with information, rather than passively consuming it.
- 4. Skill development programmes:** Integrate programmes that develop practical skills alongside AI training. This way, people will be skillful in both manual and automated processes.
- 5. Ethical and responsible AI use:** Promote the development and use of AI systems that adhere to ethical standards and promote human well-being. Design AI to support, rather than undermine, human skills.

AI should help us be more effective and improve our quality of life. But we must never forget that AI should act as an assistant, not a substitute, for our cognitive, social, communication, and practical skills. A balanced approach to AI integration allows us to reap its benefits while preserving and enhancing fundamental human skills. ◀

We must never forget that AI should act as an assistant, not a substitute, for our cognitive, social, communication, and practical skills



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AGE REVERSED: WHEN MENTORSHIP FLIPS ITS SCRIPT

In Mumbai, at the Xplore roundtable, the usual hierarchies dissolved; wisdom wasn't handed down, it circulated, connecting generations in unexpected ways.





Dissolving the usual guardrails of age and experience, the latest Xplore roundtable, hosted by XLRI and CEO Lounge in Mumbai, became a crucible for challenging every preconceived notion about mentorship and leadership. Here, traditional roles were upended as industry pioneers and emerging talents collaborated to forge a new paradigm of intergenerational learning and leadership.



Attendees:

Alok Tandon, PVR Inox; **Amar Babu**, Lenovo; **Gunjan Arya**, OML; **Gautam Khanna**, Hinduja Hospital; **Kabir Ahmed**, Tata Communications; **Nitin Khanna**, Inorbit Malls; **Sauvik Banerjee**, Rezolve AI; **Unmesh Pawar**, Dentsu; **Chandan Agrawal**, Hindalco; **Satheesh Krishnamurthy**, 360 ONE; **Chef Sanjeev Kapoor**; **Vijay Jain**, Organic India





Corporate Activism: Balancing Act Between Profit and Principles

The session ignited with a piercing examination of corporate activism. Leaders sparred over the risks and rewards of embedding social stances into brand identities, dissecting how this could either fortify or fracture their connection with the public.

Decoding Gen Z: Navigating New Consumer Landscapes

Focus shifted to the pulse of Gen Z, uncovering the layers of what truly engages this next wave of consumers. The dialogue peeled back the curtain on strategies that meld authenticity with agility to win over a demographic that demands brands stand for something more than profit.



Revolutionising Financial Strategies with Technology

In the realm of finance, the conversation turned to cutting-edge tools transforming the sector. From AI-enhanced advisories to blockchain

innovations, experts debated how best to leverage these technologies to secure financial futures in an unpredictable economy.

Reverse Mentorship: A New Era of Learning

The heart of the roundtable was the vibrant discourse on reverse mentorship, where traditional roles were inverted to foster a culture of mutual learning. This segment showcased how empowering younger mentors can inject fresh perspectives and drive technological adeptness throughout an organisation.

Mumbai's roundtable reshaped the contours of professional interaction, proving that when it comes to leadership and learning, the best approach is a shared journey. As we move forward, these insights beckon us to rethink not just how we lead, but how we learn. Join us as we continue to challenge the status quo in upcoming sessions. ◀



How India's First Ex-Ante Law Will Tackle **DIGITAL MONOPOLIES**

India's Digital Competition Bill, 2024 introduces significant ex-ante measures to curb monopolistic tendencies and foster innovation in the rapidly expanding digital market



by Anmol Singla

The digital space in India is growing rapidly. The markets in the digital space are different from the physical markets considering the increasing returns to size; that is, the increasing number of users on the platform leads to an increase in utility. This can result in the establishment of a dominant position and the creation of a monopoly or digital

oligarchy before the regulator can take any steps to alleviate the same. Thus, a need was felt to evaluate this issue and the Committee on Digital Competition Law was established under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

Gaps in Digital Regulation

The provisions of the Competition Act of 2002 were deemed insufficient to



regulate this space. At present, the Act only allows for action to be taken after an event has occurred. This leads to a delayed redressal. In the digital enterprise industry, such intervention can occur at a stage where the markets have already tipped in favour of large digital enterprises.

The concern is not unfounded; an article in *Forbes* published seven years ago, also highlighted the rise of the digital oligarchy (Steve Andriole, 2017). The committee proposed an ex-ante manner of regulation for digital enterprises with a significant presence and influence in the Indian digital market.

Regulating SSDEs & Enforcing Compliance

The legislation is specifically applicable to 'Systemically Significant Digital Enterprises' (SSDEs). Certain features allowed these enterprises to gain influence in a short span. These include user data collection, usage of network effects, and economies of scale. The services that require ex-ante regulation for SSDEs include search engines, social networking services, operating systems, and web browsers. They are classified based on certain thresholds like financial strength and spread. They are analysed from parameters like market capitalisation, number of end users, turnover and more. Quantitative thresholds will be assigned, and the committees fulfilling them will report themselves to the CCI to be designated as SSDEs. There is a possibility that

there are other enterprises involved in the provision of digital services which are a part of SSDEs. They are to be classified as Associate Digital Enterprises (ADEs).

The Bill mandates that SSDEs refrain from undertaking certain practices. These include favouring their own products and services, using non-public data for business, restricting third-party applications on their service, and requiring the usage of their core digital services for other products offered by SSDEs. To enforce these provisions, the Director General appointed under the Act is to investigate contraventions by the CCI. The penalties will be of a civil nature, with global turnover used to determine the penalty amount, recommended to be capped at 10 per cent of the global turnover of the SSDEs.

High entry barriers, dominated by established giants, have stifled domestic innovation and led to talent outflow to these dominant companies





Strengthening Regulation

The Bill is significant as it attempts to address the gaps in the Competition Act regarding the regulation of certain digital enterprises. The digital space differs from the physical space in that the time taken for a monopoly to become established is extremely limited. Moreover, a few companies already enjoy a lion's share of the market, leaving little room for innovation and new entrants.

The Bill prima facie seems to further the objectives of the existing Act and create a specific regulatory framework for SSDEs. It introduces an ex-ante framework, a regulatory measure taken before potential anti-competitive behaviours or market failures occur, making it preventive in nature.

The ex-ante framework in the Bill has been adopted by the European Union in the Digital Markets Act Regulation. Similar laws have also been introduced by Germany and Australia through amendments to their previous anti-trust laws. Japan has implemented a similar instrument, the Transparency and Fairness of Digital Platforms Act. This

indicates that the ex-ante framework is widely accepted.

Fostering Innovation and Competition

The Indian digital sector has been growing rapidly with a lot of domestic companies also attempting to enter the IT space. India has often been dubbed as the 'Sleeping Giant' (Indian Science: Awakening the Sleeping Giant by Jayant Krishna, 2023) when it comes to IT, and the entry barriers to such an industry have been relatively high due to the presence of established giants. This has stifled domestic innovation and has resulted in talent outflow to the dominant companies. Such a move will prevent abuse of market power and provide them with room to thrive.

The ex-ante nature would prevent the stifling of competition. It would also allow alternatives to come up in the market which will increase competition and further innovation. The existing tech giants will continue to enjoy a significant market share and will also be forced to innovate to compete with the new players in the market. The regulation can be a win-win situation for all parties involved. ◀

The ex-ante approach will prevent competition stifling, enable market alternatives, and drive both increased competition and further innovation



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“WE’RE AT A TIPPING POINT FOR AI”

Paritosh Anand, Chief Data Scientist & Head of Digital Platforms and Strategic Initiatives at Reliance Industries, is at the forefront of AI innovation. He asserts that every business is now designed for AI, with companies building AI into their core technology strategy from the ground up. In a discussion with Arpita Choudhury, Anand anticipates a major shift as generative AI reshapes consumer behaviour and emphasises how initiatives like Telugu GPT and Hindi GPT will democratise information.

What are the most exciting innovations in data science that you are currently working on, and how are they impacting the market?

We are witnessing rapid technological advancements, especially driven by generative AI. Over the next few months, we anticipate significant adoption and integration of this technology into mainstream consumer behaviour and information interaction. This is truly a tipping point for AI. As computing power becomes cheaper and more accessible, the adoption of generative AI will increase. Various generative AI use cases tailored for India, such as Telugu GPT, Hindi GPT, and Tamil GPT, will democratise information, bringing the revolution to every corner of India and triggering a true explosion of applications.

How are you integrating these emerging AI technologies into your existing data strategy?

A data strategy for an organisation is no longer a byproduct of past technology investments. Whether the business is B2B or B2C, it is now designed to be digital from the outset. In the last few years, data science was often a result of technology investments. However, now, technology investments are made with data science and AI in mind, which has fundamentally changed the landscape. Every business is now designed for AI. A decade ago, companies tried to integrate AI or data science into their existing setups. Today, every company has programmes to build everything from the ground up, with AI as the core of their technology strategy.

Can you point out some of the biggest challenges in managing and analysing large datasets?

With advancements in infrastructure, managing large datasets has become easier, but it’s still compute-intensive. As datasets grow exponentially, investments in computing and infrastructure, such as edge computing, GPUs, and quantum computing, are crucial. We need precise and highly accurate models, which demand significant computational power.

Can you share an example where data has significantly transformed a business?

Data’s primary purpose is to facilitate better decision-making. With the quality



Over the next few months, we anticipate significant adoption and integration of generative AI tech into mainstream consumer behaviour and information interaction

and quantity of data available today, businesses across various sectors —manufacturing, finance, human resources — are making faster, better, and more agile decisions. For instance, in the insurance sector, underwriting and extending consumer credit have become much more efficient, even reaching unorganised sectors like microfinance.

How is data science helping industries achieve their sustainability goals, especially in reducing carbon footprints?

There's an old saying: if you can't measure it, you can't improve it. Data science enables accurate measurement of carbon footprints, which is the first step towards improvement. In the ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) space, data provides a framework of measurements, driving changes and improvements in sustainability.

How important are collaborations with academic institutions and startups?

Collaborations with academic institutions are crucial. They help address both current and future problems. While corporations focus on immediate challenges, academic institutions can drive long-term innovation and research. These partnerships are vital for envisioning how technology will impact the future, including governance and societal changes.

Can you discuss the role of startups in the current technological ecosystem?

This is an excellent time to be an entrepreneur. The ecosystem now supports new innovations, ideas, and markets, which wasn't the case a few decades ago. The democratisation of technology has lowered entry barriers, providing opportunities to solve and monetise numerous problems. The current workforce has unprecedented access to talent and resources, making it a great time for entrepreneurship.

Given the rise in cyber threats, what challenges do companies face in ensuring cybersecurity?

Any technological innovation comes with inherent risks. As AI becomes more mainstream, it also poses new cybersecurity threats. Humans alone cannot counter these threats; we need machines to battle machines. Therefore, cybersecurity, ethical AI, and governance around AI technologies are essential to maintaining data privacy and security for consumers.

What are your thoughts on new data privacy laws and their impact?

Data privacy is becoming a significant agenda for both corporations and countries. While we're still scratching the surface, it's clear that an ethical

framework for AI is crucial. The next five years will likely see increased government involvement to ensure safe and ethical AI development.

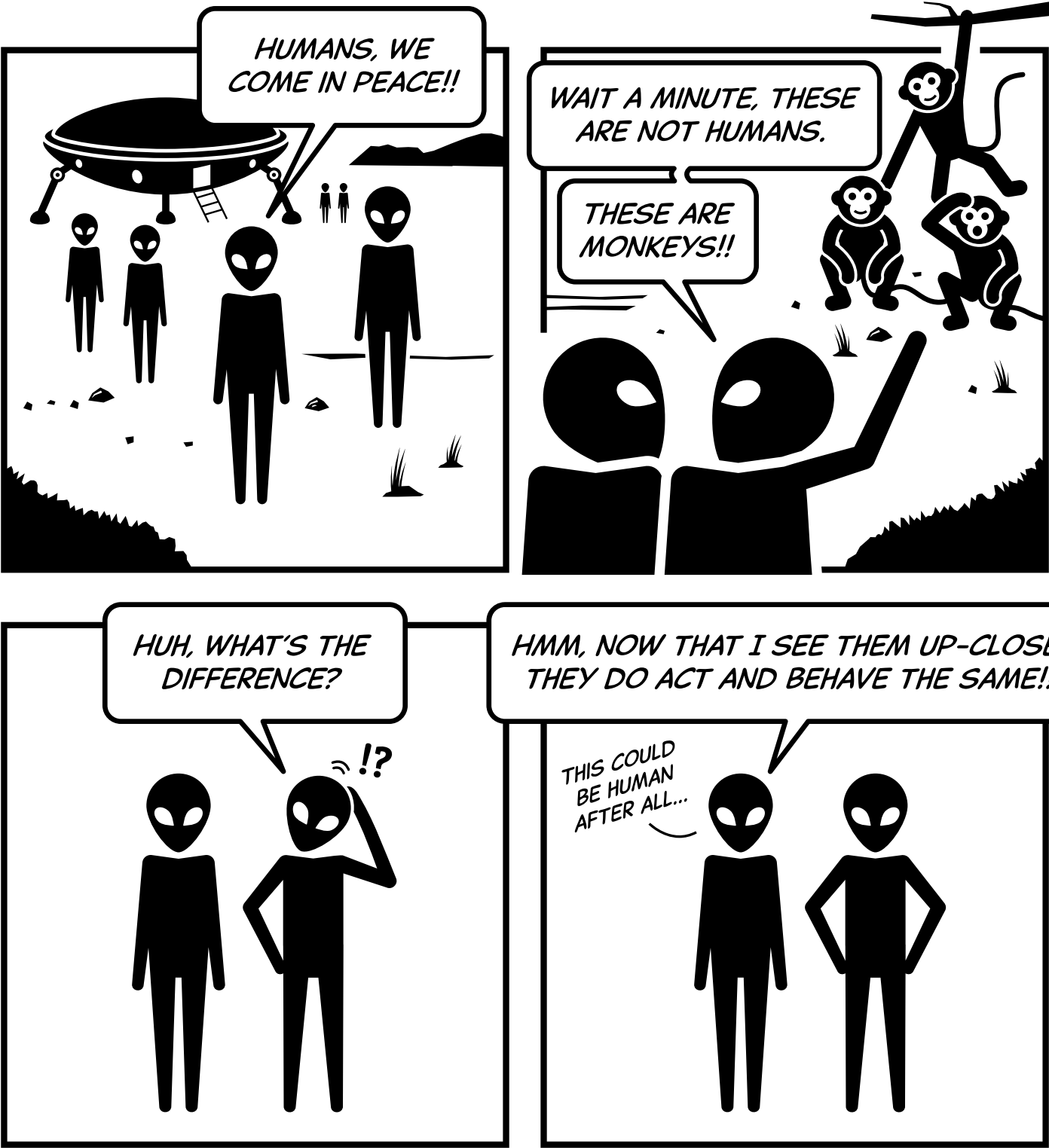
What new opportunities and challenges do you foresee in leveraging new technologies, especially in India?

The collective intelligence of AI is expected to surpass human intelligence eventually. We've progressed from connecting places to people, and now we are connecting devices. The next era will involve managing trillions of connected devices, which presents both opportunities and challenges. How we navigate this interconnected world will determine the success of these advancements.

How challenging is it to convert a traditional operational setup into a fully digital environment?

Digital transformation hinges on three principles: data set, tool set, and mindset. While data sets and tool sets have advanced significantly, changing mindsets remains the biggest challenge. The key is to focus on why the change is necessary and beneficial. When people understand the reasons behind the transformation, adoption becomes easier. Communicating the 'why' rather than the 'what' and 'how' is crucial for successful digital transformation. ◀

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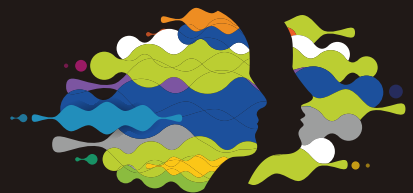
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