

Winter..
..is here.

THE PINE CHRONICLE

News, Views and Creative Expressions

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EDITORIAL

By the time you read this editorial, the memories of 2020 will slowly fade from memory. In a couple of years it will be relegated to a footnote in history where the only reference will be about a pandemic called Covid 19 and how it shut down the world. What was the human cost of it, the misery and chaos it wrought and the pain it caused? Will those be remembered? No they will be replaced by a figure: the number of casualties. This is what we have done to the other pandemics, such as the Spanish flu, which we refer to mostly in terms of the numbers killed and the year of occurrence. This time around, would there be any lessons learnt apart from the human avarice and the tendency to make a quick buck? Would there be a change in the way we live our lives? If history is anything to go by, it is highly unlikely. Though the year that went by may have made people more aware of their own mortality yet how that would result in any tangible behavioural change is yet to be noticed. Maybe a large number of people have started becoming nice to one another. But at the same time it needs to be questioned whether this niceness is a result of genuine compassion but out of mere politeness. Interestingly, the word "nice" has an interesting etymology. In the beginning it was a term for being foolish! Gradually it was used to denote being wanton, to being reserved and fastidious to eventually emerging as a bland and opaque way to describe a particular trait. Studies in the realm of personality psychology stresses that it is important to make a clear distinction between the two personality traits of politeness and compassion that is associated with the use of the term "nice". Normally, politeness is usually associated with behaviour that is linked with what is politically and socially correct. It is essentially a display of behaviour patterns that are external to the person. On the other hand, compassion may be understood as something internal to an individual and may not necessarily be displayed in the external behaviour of the person. In other words, a rough and foul mouthed individual may actually be

someone who is extremely compassionate whereas a polite and soft spoken person may be absolutely without an iota of compassion for the other. Interestingly, it is also seen that that emotions related to politeness and compassion are also linked to different brain components and hence display a difference in their working systems. It is shown that the function of politeness is linked to those areas of the brain that also govern aggression. On the other hand, it is seen that the function of compassion is related to those brain areas that are linked to regulating social bonding and affiliation. Clear patterns about this difference is also evident in neuroimaging research, where different areas of the brain light up subject to different stimuli. It was seen that compassion showed a clear association to structural differences in brain regions involving empathic responses in participants. However, similar responses were not visible in the case of politeness. Taking the understanding forward it was noticed that the trait called politeness may be used to specifically understand human tendency to be respectful and accommodating to the others view point. This may be accompanied by lack of any genuine compassion and respect for the other. The reverse of this behaviour would be seen as being aggressive. In other words, politeness may be more about displaying good manners and adhering to societal rules and norms rather than any genuine concern for the other. In contrast, *compassion* refers to the human tendency to be emotionally concerned about the welfare of the other. In other words, though a lot of emphasis is laid on politeness it is important to be mindful of the fact that mere politeness does not equal compassion as the two virtues stem from two separate strands of human nature. Humans must strive for both and arguably compassion needs to be given more emphasis.

ABOUT NUKSA

Nuksa The Pine Chronicle is the monthly news magazine of IIM Shillong.

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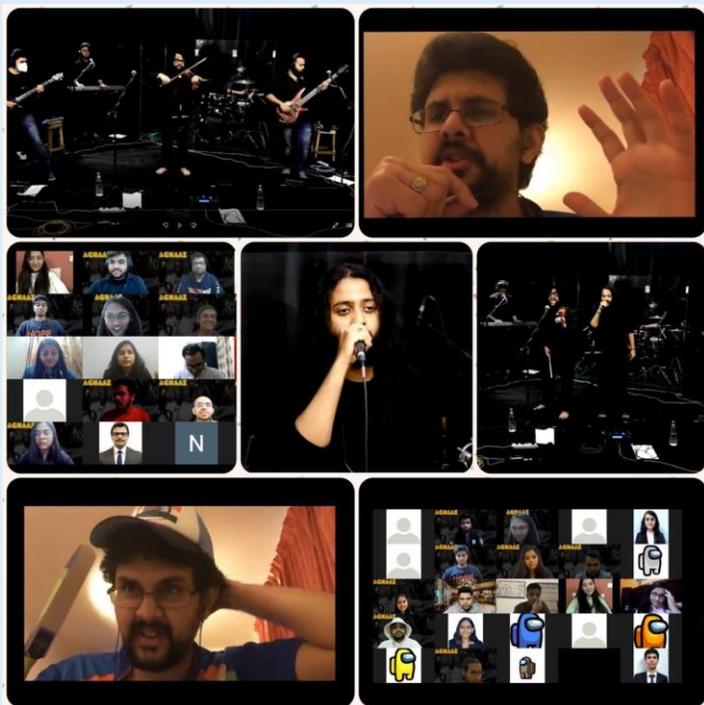
TIMELINE

Aghaaz 2020-21

The year 2020 has been a rollercoaster ride with no one exactly sure of which were the highs and which were the lows! With the virtual world making distances melt, the IIM Shillong fraternity decided to come together and celebrate life and living with 'Aghaaz 2020-21', a two-day extravaganza.

Crafted as an event with beautiful symphonies, laughter, and poetry, it turned out to be the perfect way of bidding good bye to the year gone by and welcoming in the new.

Day one had the famous Kolkata band T.R.A.P. swayed everyone off their feet with beautiful melodies and in between insights of their journey kept the audience enthralled.



An invitation to take a trip down memory lane was provided through the Harry Potter and GoT theme and enigmatic Bollywood mashups along with the few originals such as 'Manzil' that reminded everyone of their eventual destination.

The second day of the event saw a hilarious act performed by Ashutosh Dikshit (Ashu) a first batch alumnus of the Institute. Irrepressible Ashu regaled everyone with a little segment of 'Gupshup with Dikshit' wherein he shared his memories and brought everyone closer to the 7th Heaven. This was followed by a hunt for the hidden gems in an event called 'Guess the Imposter' wherein performances ranging from playing the piano, poetry recitation, singing, and music production were seen.

Aghaaz certainly set the right tone to live life and welcome the New Year with hope and confidence.

ADIEU

December 31st, 2020 was a day of farewells for the institute. With her superannuation after almost 12 years of association with the Institute Prof Keya Sengupta was bid farewell. An academican and an able and decisive administrator, she served the institute in different capacities including Dean (Academic), Centre Coordinator of the Dr APJ Centre of Policy Research and interim Director on two occasions.



The Institute also bid adieu to Prof Nitin who had served the Institute between August 2018 to December 2020.



Podium Season 09



IIM Shillong had the pleasure of hosting Mr. Praveen Kamath, General Manager, and HR Head, Global Delivery & Enablement Functions, Wipro Limited on 26th December 2020 for a Podium session on "Changing Times and Our Preparedness".

Mr. Kamath with over 25 years of strategic HR & leadership experience working in large scale Manufacturing, IT & ITES organizations and a proven track record of leading global leadership teams. A passionate teacher, he spends his weekends with some of the best-known premier B Schools in India and abroad. He also holds honorary board positions in multiple Engineering & Business Schools. He is a Mentor & Coach for many young CEOs & helped in their entrepreneurial ventures.

An amazing feature of his talk was the meticulous research that was apparent in each reference he made.

For him, career and lifestyle is a priority at his stage in life. He is passionate about travel, literature and world politics. Our mill owner, on the other hand, has already secured the admission for his kid in the same school we studied from. He owns a Maruti Ertiga so that his entire family can be accommodated. He always spoke of business, money and rising in stature amongst the business community in the region. In his opinion, opening a bakery shop in our native place was a very good business idea and he himself was mulling over it.

This has got me into thinking about many different people that I have met and gained acquaintances with. The needs, wants and ambitions of these people are often different from each other. What seems to be a logical decision for some seems like a 'no way' to a few others. Then I opened up my window to the outside world – Twitter and LinkedIn (This could be Facebook and Instagram for some others). The feeds were painfully monotonous. Similar to the search engine recommendations, all my friends were from very a limited set of professions and background.

In LinkedIn, one of my friends was giving his opinion on how to make a right hiring decision. A few others were posting screen shots of an office meeting, tagging the people in the meeting and saying how productive that meeting was. Other posts were about life lessons that we could learn from Biden's election campaign to the subtlest of things like how a rag picker would keep his eyes down to move up in his life. Most of us end up falling for this trap of recognition amongst our social circle and show that we have sorted everything in our lives. The excessive and meaningless bragging about oneself or one's opinions triggers a sense of anxiety and a false narrative to the outside world and their friends. Seeing them, others tend to develop similar habits out of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) and a longing for followers, notifications and a buzz around their social profiles. We end up comparing our own lives with others, often on status, lifestyle and finances. Things that are initially not part of one's aspirations, are now compelled to be taken up post this comparison. Luxury vacations, social media follower counts and an urge to buy brand new mobile phones are some examples of this. The marketers from the same social media cohort cash in on the same compulsion marketing and sell their products and services.

It's good to be competitive, self-aware and be abreast of everything around us. But on the other hand, it is important for us to understand the lives that we lead are different. It is perfectly alright for us not to be part of a race that we are not competing in. Let's choose our paths and priorities first and our posts on social media little later. Perhaps, we could give time again for those introspections, like we all did before the times of social media.



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