



BEST OF NTMN – VOLUME 1

[News That Matters Not](#) was one of the premier satirical websites in India between 2009 and 2015. The website was one of the earliest to make a mark in its field in India, winning its young team two international awards for its impactful content.

NTMN was known for its witty takes on the politics of the day, social issues, the media, youth, everyday life, and popular culture. **Here, we present some of the best stories published by the website in its heydays.**

This e-book celebrates the legacy of some of the sharpest satire published on the Indian web before comic videos went viral and fake news became evil.

Stories in this volume cover these topics:

HUMAN QUIRKS

MEN & WOMEN

SANSKAAR

This volume has stories written by:

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HUMAN QUIRKS

Student who does not understand the Budget defends his views passionately

PRATUL BAGRI, SHUBHAM AGARWAL, KUMAR PRATIK and VISHAL DAYAMA,
February 28, 2015 | *Human Quirks*

This story was published soon after Finance Minister Arun Jaitley presented the Union Budget for 2015–16 in the Parliament.

Calling it “like the best Budget ever”, an MBA student from IIN Ahmedabad has taken the social media by storm, with his viral statements that show his factually incorrect understanding of the annual government document.

Faizal Aslam, who first tuned in to watch the Union Budget on Star Sports, was seen making his family uncomfortable by his lack of comprehension about how the economy works.

Most of the words Aslam used to discuss the Budget were borrowed from the media. His conversation dictionary for today included phrases such as “reformative”, “obtuse”, “intellectually honest”, and “*mara lo apni*”. His Twitter account, whose describes him as a “hipster intellectual”, got over 2,000 new followers today.

In his tweets, Aslam used some fancy terms such as “regression” and “statistical techniques” from his IIN course to explain why he was better equipped to understand the Budget than the smartest man in the country, Chetan Bhagat.

With three backlogs in the current semester, Aslam posted pictures of him explaining the Budget to his friend with five backlogs.

When we met Aslam for his views, he said the only problem with the finance minister's Budget speech was that was no allocation for free WiFi. He ended his day furiously tweeting his baseless and unfounded opinions about the Budget.

After four days of street-fight, both men forget why they started fighting

TANAY SUKUMAR, March 24, 2012 | *Human Quirks*

A street fight in East Delhi entered its fourth day today, but onlookers said the original trigger for the fight has now been lost somewhere in the dust, fists and a lusty choice of words.

Experts at the fight venue, some of whom have watched the fight ever since it began, vaguely recall that the trigger was probably one of the men parking his son's toy tricycle in front of another man's house – despite a “No Parking” sign. The other man is then said to have deflated the tyres of the small cycle.

There were, however, some other stories floating as well.

One witness said that when he reached the venue, the topic was which man's father had died taller in height. Another, who joined only on the second day, heard the men fight over whether Sachin Tendulkar should retire, and a third thought the men had taken their shoes off to decide whose child went to a better school.

Both men are still alive – the current major reason the fight is still on.

We tried to talk to the two men during a five-minute break:

“Over the last three days, I have developed a certain love towards hating him,” one of them said, adding that he had forgotten why he began to fight. The other said that with the media covering the fight, he could now find a place in Bollywood or *Bigg Boss*.

As the break drew to a close by the third minute, the first man grabbed his enemy’s neck, shook him, and said four unprintable words very politely and lovingly.

“For the first time, I have seen a Lok Sabha in real life,” one onlooker told us. He favours the first man, and is actively designing innovative Hindi swear words for him to use.

Man takes it upon himself to correct stranger's grammar on the internet

PRATUL BAGRI, January 3, 2016 | *Human Quirks*

Ramesh Tandon, lovingly known as “that annoying little prick” among his friends and enemies alike, has taken it upon himself to correct other people’s grammar on the internet.

Tandon, whose Goodreads bio describes him as “sapiosexual wanderer” and “voracious reader”, is finding solace in giving unsolicited grammar advice to internet users.

A chartered accountant by profession and a huge disappointment by nature, Tandon says this indulgence is a mental exercise to keep his brain sharp by causing damage to other people's brains. "It's all relative you see," says that annoying little prick.

On being asked why he has restrained this behaviour to the virtual world only, Tandon says that in the real world, his "enlightenment" was met with some comments about his mother and sister, and an occasional ass-whopping.

Doodhwaalas all over India say they are in awe of Maggi's milawat

KHYATI SHARMA, June 4, 2015 | *Human Quirks*

After Maggi was found to have unsafe lead content, a milkmen's association has called the instant noodles the first product ever to manage more milawat than their milk.

"We are awed and inspired by Maggi," the national group said in a statement. The doodhwaalas said they are inspired by this new market challenge and have discovered a role model in Maggi.

Kids all over India are heartbroken after the ban on Maggi, but the doodhwalas are excited that the possibilities of finding material to add to milk are endless. Lead is the newest member of the list that has traditionally included water, detergent, acid, urea and starch.

“Humein toh sasura vishwas hi nahi ho raha iss baat pe,” Ram Lochan, a milkman for the last three generations, told NTMN. “So many talented people are there in this country! This is not *milawat*, but *milawat ka baap*.”

Milkmen are learning from the events, but some people involved with the government’s midday scheme are confident that they are worse. “No big MNC can match our standards, nobody can go beyond what we serve,” said one. “Ill-health at its best is our motto. What chemical can be worse than live lizards and roaches in food? There is no contest.”

We approached Maggi’s manufacturers for a comment, but we gave up after being told this several times: “Just wait for two minutes, we will answer all your questions.”

Cooking classes take a hit as Maggi makes a comeback

DEVASHISH PALKAR, November 12, 2015 | *Human Quirks*

The return of Maggi has destroyed the business of cooking classes, which emerged briefly after the ban on the popular instant noodles. The market that catered to hostellers, bachelors and women planning to get married is finding few takers after the ban was lifted last month.

Until a few months back, girls of the marriageable age were confident of their cooking skills, and were proud of their two-minute recipes of Maggi noodles, Maggi sandwich, Maggi pakodas and Maggi omelette.

However, the sudden ban on the sales of Maggi had suddenly handicapped them and their marriage prospects. The past few months saw a great boom in the cooking classes business. In parts of Delhi and Mumbai, there were more cooking classes than IIT-JEE coaching centres.

The ban, however, has now been revoked. Owners of these cooking class businesses are the worst hit.

Girls are again using Maggi to check off their cooking skills in the matrimonial forums.

A sad owner of one such cooking class we talked to said: “Where did they hide all the lead? We’re ruined.”

However, the return of Maggi has been a blessing for hostellers and other bachelors, for whom the two-minute noodles are a staple. “This was much awaited,” said a student of Yet Another College of Engineering (YACE).

“I was sick of eating healthy food,” he said. “Broccoli is no substitute for Maggi...especially with *daaru*.”

Wife demands another son, so that elder sibling's clothes can be used again

PRATUL BAGRI, February 17, 2015 | *Human Quirks*

A woman in Noida has publicly demanded her husband for another son in order to reuse the clothes of their elder child again. She is on an indefinite dharna in her colony.

Addressing reporters, the husband accused her of “emotional-blackmailing” him over this.

“Failure to impregnate within three months will lead to divorce,” Monisha Sarabhai said flatly in a Facebook video. “My two-year-old is already growing out of his clothes. What do you expect me to do? Throw the clothes away? Terms are non-negotiable. I want another son.”

She further said: “We do not believe in charity. The clothes will be used by my son, then by his next sibling. After that, I will use them to make clothes for the family dog, and finally the clothes will be used as *pocha* (rag).”

The husband, Sahil Sarabhai, is not pleased. He has called it a ploy to have sex. “I am not a baby-making machine, she should stop looking at me like a sex object,” he said.

The woman’s dharna and her commitment to uphold the cheap Indian mentality has moved middle-class women to tears. Many have flocked to her colony to show their support. One of them, Rani Ahuja, is the mother of a cricket team, and talked to us.

Ahuja explained how the reuse-clothes model could help save money. One old jeans equals three brand new shorts for younger kids, she said.

“Take two full shirts of contrasting colours,” she said. “Cut off their sleeves. Switch them and sew them on. Voila, you have two John Abraham-type funky looking shirts. And, wastage of clothes? Zero. Tell me that is not a brilliant idea.”

She raised a placard saying, “You have no idea how much we can save from this.”

Woman ecstatic after she wrote her name in Hindi for the first time since Class 10

TANAY SUKUMAR and AASHISH ARYAN, August 23, 2011 | *Human Quirks*

A young woman in Jaipur has written in the Devanagari script for the first time in at least half a decade, thanks to a boyfriend who turned up late for a date.

It all began with what was supposed to be few moments of leisure. It had been twenty minutes since Rajat had assured his lover that he was almost there and would reach in just five minutes. Sonakshi was excited about meeting him after a month of his foreign visit. But, cometh the boyfriend, goeth the excitement.

Sitting in the restaurant, with a pen in hand, with nothing else to do, Sonakshi scribbled her name in the Devanagari for the first time ever since she passed out of school over five years ago. The excitement was such that Rajat's arrival failed to excite her.

“Oh woman! I was bored; I chewed fingernails, made hearts on the paper, all shapes and types, but nothing seemed to help,” she later wrote on Facebook. “And before I could know, I was writing my name in Hindi! The pen wrote on its own, while I was lost in my thoughts... and a minute later, it looked like some alien language that I knew in the past.”

She said what she wrote unintentionally reminded her of her Class 10 board exams.

In comments, Sonakshi's friends shared their own stories of how her post had motivated them to try this exotic art. They shared pictures of expletives they wrote in the Hindi script. Some tried writing their names.

One friend said he had thought the Hindi alphabet ran like a, ba, sa, da, and so on, until he searched for it online to take this Hindi-writing challenge for validation among friends.

Nakula, Sahadeva not as cool as other Pandavas, people admit

PRATUL BAGRI, August 14, 2015 | *Human Quirks*

Accepting the harsh reality, people all over India have finally admitted that Nakula and Sahadeva are just not as cool as their other brothers from a different mother.

Saying much could have been done with their characters, many have admitted that the youngest brothers were not given any justice and were overshadowed by the Kunti *putras*.

“I thought that the TV adaptation might rectify some glaring problems with the book,” said Karan Dibakar, a Mahabharata fan. “But unfortunately, no depth was given to Nakula and Sahadeva. People should realize that they are just as awesome and strong as the others, well, not stronger than Arjuna obviously. But still, they have been reduced to two-dimensional characters.”

“All I know about Nakul is that he was the most beautiful man,” said Swati Ranjan. “That’s it. Where is the depth? He has been reduced to just a pretty face, an eye candy.”

A television production house told us that in the light of this survey, Nakula and Sahadeva will be getting their own spin-off Mahabharata series.

Terrorists cancel bomb blast plans, after very few Indians bother to turn up at Republic Day functions

SASWATA DE, January 27, 2012 | *Human Quirks*

A terrorist strike at a Republic Day event was averted after attackers were let down by dismal attendance at the proposed strike location in Ahmedabad. Lack of interest in flag-hoisting and patriotic celebrations by Indians may have saved scores of lives, intelligence sources said.

A relative unknown terror group has claimed responsibility for the attack that did not happen. The group claimed it abandoned its plan as it was not willing to waste costly explosives and detonators on “just a few people”.

The group has reportedly sent death threats to senior officials of intelligence agencies as they blamed them for sabotaging their plans. However, intelligence sources said they had no idea about the attack in advance.

“We got to know about the attack that did not happen only after the group claimed responsibility,” a top official said. “The terrorists were trying out a new location. Thank heavens the people had enough sense to remain indoors, wake up late and watch TV.”

India's intelligence officials are now planning to conduct surveys to understand the pulse of the nation, so that they do not spend unnecessarily on security arrangements at events that are not likely to see many people.

Man starts feeling hot after TV report says it's the hottest day in many years

TANAY SUKUMAR, April 18, 2010 | *Human Quirks*

A 45-year-old man started feeling very hot and was taken to hospital on Saturday night after he heard on TV that the day was the hottest in the last 1,024 years. The man was quite normal before the news bulletin, family members said.

“He had his dinner at around 10 pm, and then went to have a stroll outside,” the man’s 19-year-old son told reporters. “Then the whole family watched TV. India TV was reporting something about this Sunday being ‘Super Sunday’ because Saturday had been hottest in around 1,024 years, and Sunday was expected to be hotter.”

Family members said the news report seemed to have disturbed the man, who could not believe that the day had been the hottest. He suddenly started feeling hot and stripped down to his undergarments. He started sweating and breathing heavily, his family said.

The family doctor was called and the patient admitted to a nearby nursing home. Doctors are puzzled over this rare case, and have called it a psychological problem rather than a weather problem.

Most roadside fast food sellers won't consume their own food even if hungry, finds survey

DEEKSHA, August 3, 2011 | *Human Quirks*

Nine out of 10 feriwallahs in India swear on the hazardous quality of the fast food they sell, a survey suggests. Almost 92% of the street food vendors polled for the survey said they would never eat their own food even if they were hungry.

We conducted the survey on 867 vendors across marketplaces in eight cities. Here are some responses we received:

A hawker from Mumbai said: "Diarrhoea is a part and parcel of our customers' lives. But the ones who are loyal keep coming back and eventually develop immunity against the germs. I don't want to boast, but our hand-cooked fast food is far more effective than any vaccination in the country."

Sixteen-year-old Ramu, who sets up his stall amidst the sky-high office complexes of Gurgaon, said he is thankful that he never got education. "After all, it's the educated lot that comes to my golgappa stall near a garbage house and a polluted street the most," he said.

Shyam, a panipuri vendor in Pune, agreed: “I would never consume the brown watery concoction that goes into my golgappas.” His customers, however, swear by the taste of that concoction and keep calling “once more” even after they have had their panipuri.

A momos vendor outside a multiplex in Bengaluru told us: “What we dump into our dumplings, even I don’t know. But they do sell by the dozens here. My mum would be proud that I finally started cooking, though I haven’t yet retrieved my two fingers that went missing in the process.”

“Samosa at Laloo’s without any aloo” is a one-of-a-kind shop in Patna, which is run by S. M. Jha, an ardent follower of former chief minister Lalu Prasad Yadav. Jha said, “I will continue to sell samosas with the most unexpected and unhygienic fillings to Bihari janata until Lalu ji comes back to power. This is my way of paying my respects to the great neta.”

Raja babu, who has a flourishing business of bhajis and puris on Marine Drive said: “People keep coming back to taste the exotic mixture of condiments that I use in my pao-bhaji! And it works great, for if they had seen the macerated, decaying vegetables that go into it, they would have lost their appetite, just like me. But the spices mask the effect of the rotting vegetables and maybe even kill the bacteria, who knows!”

Aslam is the owner of a famous century-old sweetmeat shop at Chandni Chowk. None of his family members have ever tasted the much sought-after jalebi, as Aslam claimed: “We have been blessed with a great family heritage. What goes as ingredients into our jalebis might be as old as my late great-grandfather. So we prefer not to take chances with our health.”

Although conservative in their own eating habits, the feriwallahs of India know that they have nothing to worry about. Come rain or KFC, their sales scale new highs as they continue to tantalize the Indian taste buds.

NASA discovers Earth-like planet to exploit and strip of resources

PRATUL BAGRI, July 24, 2015 | *Human Quirks*

NASA's Kepler mission has discovered Kepler-452b, an Earth-like planet millions of lightyears away. The planet becomes next in line to be exploited, and all its resources will now share the same bleak future as ours.

People all over the world are rejoicing at this opportunity to study this wonder planet and invade it, stripping it bare from all its wealth.

“This planet is in the habitable zone, this means that there is a whole new atmosphere and water to contaminate,” said the United States president. “Talk about all the fossil fuels we can burn there.”

Ordinary locals in ordinary cities were no different. A schoolteacher on a street in New Delhi told us: “Wouldn't it be great to slowly destroy its atmosphere and watch the planet wither in pain and lose all its natural beauty?”

Indian habit of “always being late” is actually a genetic phenomenon, research reveals

BROTOTI ROY and KUMAR PRATIK, September 1, 2012 | *Human Quirks*

Bengaluru-based researchers have found conclusive proof that the Indian habit of “perpetually being late” might be a genetic phenomenon, and not merely a lifestyle trend.

The study was carried out after the prime minister recently turned up late at a global convention, and received heavy criticism from the global press. In their report, the researchers said the only thing in India that starts on time is cricket matches, “maybe because the umpires are not Indians”.

The researchers took blood samples from 789 Indians with diverse backgrounds, job profiles and locations to study them. They compared these samples with an equal number of samples of American, Australian and British blood.

“I knew we were working on something substantial when all the Indian volunteers arrived 15 minutes late of the scheduled time at the research centre,” said one of the four research scholars involved in the study. The report was released two months after it was scheduled.

Ajmal Kasab, the terrorist who attacked the Mumbai shores a few years ago, has backed the claims. “By the time the Indian government finally hangs me, I could produce my very own cricket team of kids,” he said.

Acting swiftly on the report, the government has promised to ask biotechnologists to find a cure for this “disease”. For now, students at government universities and staff at government offices will be allowed to

reach up to 45 minutes late. Exceptions can be made if a “genetic report” is produced at the time of entering the class or office, a minister said.

#GeneticProblemHaiYaar was among the top five global trends on Twitter last week. A user even apologised to Nestle for criticising Maggi 2-minute noodles in the past.

The study was released a month ago, but the author happens to be Indian.

“Elite” Bihari living in metro city starts using “Bihari” as derogatory word

TANAY SUKUMAR, KUMAR PRATIK, and AASHISH ARYAN, September 29, 2012
| *Human Quirks*

A Bihari software engineer living in New Delhi has started using the word “Bihari” as a derogatory word like other Delhiites do. He uses the word for people who behave in a *gawaar* (illiterate) way, or simply those who make him angry.

It all began when 30-year-old Rajiv Ranjan got irritated with people who mocked him for being a Bihari. He found the way out: he now poses as a Delhiite, even if it means having a hatred for people who come from his own state.

Rajiv, who works in a reputed software firm, was born and raised in Patna, Bihar. He moved to New Delhi in his early 20s, leaving all of his friends preparing hard for IAS. He says he has suffered a lot of discrimination in Delhi

because of his accent, which is eerily similar to that of Lalu Yadav in his younger days. “The best way to deal with a trauma is to levy it on others. It’s the common human psyche,” he says.

Once an extraordinarily smart kid with a beautiful mind, Rajiv (or Raj, as he calls himself now) found it emotionally taxing to fight off stereotypes of being a Bihari since he moved to Delhi. He stopped eating with his hands, and had to resort to using spoons and forks, even for eating roti-sabzi. He stopped using mustard oil and middle-parting his hair, and switched to spiky hairdos with the “sexiest” of gels. He is now suffering from dandruff and hair-loss, he told us.

Rajiv also had to switch from a mild-mannered polite man to rude and haughty, just to convince people that he does not belong from the land of Pataliputra. “Biharis are the most unhygienic people around,” he shouted at us when we visited him. “They don’t have any manners, they are illiterate. The other day in the metro, I saw a Bihari staring at my touchscreen phone and asking his friend what is there in my hand! And, when he saw a big shopping mall on the way, he was so amazed that he tried to open the metro gate to get out! Biharis are dumb. And I am not one.”

Some of Rajiv’s friends tell us that long ago, he used to talk to his parents and relatives for hours on the phone. Now, he doesn’t even pick their calls, referring to them as “an embarrassment”. Rajiv has also started visiting pubs and discos, and smokes two packets of cigarettes a day to prove to his peer group that he is no more a Bihari. Apparently, anyone who does not smoke or drink is labelled as a Bihari by him. The guy has also stopped bathing regularly to use more deo and smell good.

When NTMN’s reporters met him, he called us “Biharis” because he spotted one of us picking the nose.

This guy admits he uses earphones even if there are no songs playing, just to look cool

TANAY SUKUMAR, February 23, 2012 | *Human Quirks*

Kamaal Rashid Khan, a 21-year-old student in Delhi University, has told NTMN that he uses earphones even when there is no song playing. “I keep them plugged into my ears whenever I am outside home, just to look cool and sexy,” he had admitted.

To prove that he is indeed not listening to any songs when his ears seem to be blocked from the outside world, he shows us his mobile phone: it has an external memory of 10MB, and he has only two songs in the music apps.

When asked if he isn't bored of having only two songs, he retorts, “No, I am not bored of them yet, since I haven't even listened to them enough! I told you, I just plug in earphones but I don't listen to any songs! I hate music, but I love earphones.”

KRK, as he wants us to call him in this report, believes girls tend to go for guys who use earphones in public, as it looks cool and carefree. “For guys who can't manage expensive shoes and dresses, having a choice in music is the best best,” he says. “I saw a survey that said 99% of all guys who had a love marriage had listened to earphones at least once in life.”

Worth it?

So, what goes on in his mind when he pretends to be listening to music? “I observe people around,” he says. “Girls actually. I listen to their talks.”

KRK did not reveal which are the only two songs on his phone's memory card, but assured that they were not Himesh Reshammiya songs. “I have saved English songs to leave better impression upon girls. I read somewhere that

having a cheap handset can be safely compensated by listening to English music.”

So, has it worked? Does he have a girlfriend now? “Well, sometimes girls do seem to like me, but they have no idea that my phone doesn’t even have FM radio,” he says.

Indian groom asks pandit to hurry up with his marriage customs

TANAY SUKUMAR, April 30, 2011 | *Human Quirks*

An Indian bridegroom, who got married the night after he watched the British royal wedding live on television, complained of “boring” and “tiresome” customs, and kept asking the pandit to “hurry up”. The groom threatened to leave the mandap if the pandit didn’t finish the procedures quickly.

The groom told the pandit it was late in the night, and that he was feeling sleepy and tired. “What all are you making me repeat? I don’t understand Sanskrit,” 26-year-old Rajat Kapadia from Lucknow asked the pandit, before requesting him to chant shlokas in English or Hindi. But the pandit said he had forgotten the actual meanings over time, and refused to do so.

The groom then had to stay at the mandap for three more hours, before finally ending up with all customs and traditions. He asked the family elders a number of times to go and watch the wedding of British Prince William that had taken

place the previous evening, where the main events of the marriage lasted not more than half an hour.

“It was damn boring, I yawned so many times, and a couple of times I wanted to yawn directly at the pandit’s face,” Kapadia told NTMN later. “I was hungry also, and no one even offered me food, even as they all acted as if I was the most important person on earth. The pandit made me repeat stuff I didn’t even understand. Then there was this walking around with my bride seven times! I mean, what purpose does it serve?”

Despite Kapadia’s protest, the pandit continued the procedure even after the muhurt timings had passed by. The wedding customs had moved on to April 30 instead of April 29.

100 kg of Diwali greeting cards found to be contaminated with fake wishes

TANAY SUKUMAR, November 3, 2010 | *Human Quirks*

An analysis of 100 kg of Diwali greeting cards collected from garbage all over India has revealed that many people are indulging in sending fake wishes to friends, family members and relatives.

“If you thought only milk cakes, petha and mawa can be contaminated, think again,” the psychologist who headed the survey team said. “We’ve observed that people’s feelings can also be severely adulterated in today’s life.”

Another team member explained: “The touch and the language of the card tell a lot about the feelings attached with it. Every card has a story to tell, which only our team can decode.”

While the final report has not yet been released, the team member told us about two cards on the condition of anonymity. “The most interesting sample we found was a set of ten Happy Holi cards sent for Diwali,” the member said. “All ten were sent from the same person. We believe the person hadn’t checked the card before sending. Besides, we saw that the ink used on the envelopes was that of an expensive pen, but the Holi cards inside were a year old and worth Rs 5 only.”

He added the story of another card, which was accompanied by a letter from a man to his elder brother who had now been promoted to a recruiting position at his office. The man even apologised for not being in touch for two years and said he was looking for a job. “The letter is heavily adulterated with contaminated feelings,” the team member said. “The words ‘Yours forever’ are like pesticides in mawa and milk.”

Autopsy report says youth died as he didn't forward a WhatsApp SMS to seven people

TANAY SUKUMAR, May 1, 2010 | *Human Quirks*

The 20-year-old college student who was found dead last weekend in Vasant Kunj, Delhi, did not die of a road accident, as thought of earlier.

The autopsy report has found that the youth died because he had not forwarded a WhatsApp message to seven friends about a month ago.

The student, Varun Gehlot, was found dead early morning on Sunday. Initial reports had suggested an attack from a raging bull, while some speculations said that a speedy car killed him. The police, however, ruled out the possibility of any road accident since no evidence could be found.

“During investigation into the phone records of Varun Gehlot, we found a WhatsApp message he had received from a friend on April 2,” the autopsy report said. “The message said: ‘Tomorrow is the birthday of Sai Baba. Fwd this message to seven people otherwise you will die within one month.’ But he sent it to only one person and therefore met his death.”

Meanwhile, Varun’s father and sister, who also received a similar message on WhatsApp earlier this week, have anxiously started forwarding it to as many people as they can. His brother and relatives who didn’t receive any such message are typing it out.

Young siblings declare war as elder ones refuse to do their holiday homework projects

KHYATI SHARMA, July 9, 2015 | *Modern Life*

Taking the nation by storm, elder siblings in a historic revolt have refused to do the summer holidays homework of their younger brothers and sisters.

In a unanimous decision, the elder siblings agreed that they will no longer conform to the shackles of this age-old tradition.

Younger siblings are enraged by this development and have promised an equally drastic reaction to this action.

“Forget your secrets!”

We caught up with a bunch of kids who challenged their brethren: “They think they can do anything. We have always been the second choice. At least doing our holiday homework was a way to make up for repressing us.

“No. We refuse to accept this. Doing our projects is a payment for always playing with Mario, do you think we like playing with Luigi? He is absolutely the worst.”

Another one said, “They should forget all their so-called secrets now! We will make sure that their secrets no longer remain secrets.”

Stationery shop owners come out in support of younger ones

Stationery shop owners are heartbroken and have come out in large numbers to support younger kids.

Mr. Bholu told us his side of the story. “*Dekhiye inn chart papers ko*. What will we do with them? This thermocole? Who will make useless projects out of them if not the elder siblings?

“And don’t even ask about the sketch pens and glitter pens that never last more than a month. Total loss!”

Root cause: mobile phones?

While young kids are battling it out with their big brothers and sisters, parents were quick to blame it all on mobile phones.

Mrs Pados Wali Aunty said: “Sab cheez na iss phone ke karan hoti hai. Jab dekho phone pe lage rehte hain yeh bache.”

Meanwhile, a bunch of engineers have seized this opportunity and have started a coaching institute, to teach kids how to get through life without doing any work.

God diagnosed with diabetes as lakhs of students offer prasad and prayers to clear exams

KUMAR PRATIK, May 25, 2013 | *Modern Life*

With semester exams imminent, college students all around the country are going to temples to offer prayers and prasad in return for the favour of passing the examinations with flying colours. This has resulted in the unfortunate situation of God being diagnosed with diabetes.

Leading the charge are engineering students, who are credited as the pioneers of “finding easy ways to pass an exam”. Medical students also have adopted the means of offering prasad as the last resort after months of studies, stating that they cannot take the risk of depending solely on their hard-work. Commerce and Delhi University students are said to be simply following the trend.

NTMN caught up with Hatash Vidyarthi, a student from Yet Another College of Engineering, who has offered a record amount of sweets and prayers at shrines across the nation.

“I remember it like yesterday,” he said. I was playing FIFA ’13 the night before my first end-semester exam. I still had about eight chapters to study, out of the eight-and-a-half in the syllabus. The clock struck twelve, and somehow I instantly knew that I would never be able to finish the course in time. After the divine realisation, I started running, and kept running until I had found myself in the nearby temple.”

Hatash Vidyarthi then rang the temple-bell till his hands were dead enough to “not be able to even lift a pen”. He offered a bag of laddoos to lord Ganesha, and pledged to walk to the exam-centre with bare feet. “Next day, I had the best paper in my life,” he said. “And that’s how it all started.”

After consuming sweets offered by lakhs of such students from the country, God has shown hazardous sugar levels in blood tests. He has thus become angry with the students and is said to be thinking about breaking his promise. Doctors in heaven have warned students and adults to stop bribing God with sweets and promises.

Students are still seem adamant to seek short-cuts. They have written to the doctors asking if sugarfree sweets can be offered to the sick God.

(concept: Satat Mishra)

Teen visits Starbucks just to “check-in” on Facebook

PRATUL BAGRI, February 24, 2015 | *Human Quirks*

Harshal Gupta, a middle-class boy studying in Yet Another College of Engineering (YACE), has developed some tastes of the elite class, or at least that’s what he believes. He thinks it is a fad to visit Starbucks, check-in on Facebook, and leave without ordering anything.

“This is the cheapest way to look rich,” says the 17-year-old whose self-esteem is tied to the number of likes he receives on social media.

Family and friends concerned about mental well-being

Harshal’s family is quite concerned about his mental health, terming this behaviour as obsessive compulsive disorder to save themselves from the shame of their son’s idiosyncrasies. “We have no idea why he does this; sometimes there is only a check-in but most of the times he includes his pic,” says his mother who is not quite fond of her only child. “And it is always the same generic pic, him standing somewhere where *Starbucks* logo is clearly visible and making a V-sign with his fingers.”

“My mother is just upset because I don’t go to Café Coffee Day,” says Harshal, failing to grasp his mother’s genuine concern about his deteriorating sanity.

Living it up on the social media

“This is just another case of projecting your cool lifestyle on Facebook,” says Swati, Harshal’s oldest friend. “But I have seen him photoshop a random girl in his display pic, so I don’t know if he really needs to resort to this.”

Harshal on the other hand, does not see any problem with his lifestyle. “I was the first in line when Starbucks opened in Delhi,” he reminisces one of his biggest accomplishments in life.

Stuck in a lift during power-cut, dad finally gets time to talk to his son

SATAT MISHRA, April 3, 2013 | *Human Quirks*

On Tuesday evening, when Mr. Giridhar Sharma was stuck with his son in a lift, he encountered an event he had never imagined before. His son Aditya, just 10 years of age, rescued both of them without the slightest bit of fear. Moreover, the two got to talk to each other for the first time, given that Mr. Sharma has a busy life in a top IT company.

As Aditya returned from his third tuition class for the evening and his dad returned from office, they took the lift to reach their sixth floor flat. But there was a power cut and the lift got stuck between the fifth and sixth floors. Mr. Sharma, not used to listening to his son, tried calling the building operator to help them out, but it was of no use due to poor signals. To avoid his son getting a panic attack, Mr. Sharma tried talking to Aditya, and was in for a surprise.

Aditya, as Mr. Sharma found out, is considered the best classical singer of his batch by his school's music teacher. A hobby he enjoys and the dream of entertaining a fully-filled hall of music lovers in his heart, Aditya hardly gets any time to practise due to his numerous tuitions. Mr. Sharma was disappointed as he had spent countless hours hunting, lining up and donating money, to make sure his son gets into the best school in the city. He had dreamt of his son obtaining 99% marks and getting into the prestigious IITs.

Mr. Sharma was annoyed on learning that his son teaches and plays with poor kids of their neighbourhood. He came to know Aditya's exam results that were announced two months ago, and told Aditya he shouldn't waste any time on TV and comics. He told his son that in a world where success is judged by salaries, happiness from hobbies is of no significance.

Aditya was also hearing all these instructions for the first time from his dad. But unperturbed by his father's advice, Aditya thought of ways to help himself and his father get out of the lift.

The entire town is used to frequent power cuts and with entrance exams coming close, parents are likely to sit beside their children under candlelights to make sure they study. Aditya, born a creative genius, couldn't think of a way to reach out for help except for one. Aditya cleared his throat and started singing in his beautiful voice his favourite classical song which he had learnt recently from his teacher. On hearing the voice coming from the corridor, curious neighbours rushed in to see what was going on. They were thus able to help Aditya and his father come out of the stuck lift.

In an interview with us, Mr. Sharma told us about his experience, "Well, his song might have helped us from the lift, but daily bread cannot be earned from music. He has to prepare for his exams and he has already wasted 40 minutes today. Kindly excuse us so that he can go back to his studies."

(concept: Apoorva Tapas)

Primary school students go on mass bunk; teachers, parents shocked

TANAY SUKUMAR, August 11, 2010 | *Human Quirks*

A whole class of fourth-grade students remained absent from school this Tuesday, despite it being a working day. It has come to light that the

kids, around nine years old, had planned to organise a “mass bunk” on the day, so that they could have some outing.

All 39 students – 18 girls and 21 boys – of class IV-K of St. Jude’s Primary School were part of the mass bunk.

Teachers described feeling as if they had been “slapped hard” with such an event. Mass bunks are a common practice in colleges, but unusual in primary school.

Kids of the class, according to reports, had planned the mass bunk last week. Parents and teachers were unaware of the plan.

We caught up with a student, who told us the story on condition of anonymity, lest his classmates get angry, “Class monitor once told some of us. He said about mass bunks in college and high school. We liked the idea. We said we will also do.”

According to the child, the students wondered whether they could also do mass bunks. Soon after, most students understood what was to be done. Some children, called nerds by some classmates for unknown reasons, also succumbed to the pressure and promised they wouldn’t tell their parents. One boy, known as Tom, said he would get the money from his parents for the picnic.

During the bunk, the kids picnicked at the zoo, played rugby, danced, entertained themselves by doing rampwalks, mimicries, and cracked jokes they describe as “non-vegetarian/carnivorous”. Some nerds, however, played games like chidiya udi, while constantly cribbing that what they were doing was wrong, the student said.

The news broke out when guards at a multiplex stopped the bunch of little kids from entering the hall to watch a U/A-rated movie at around 11 am. The children were questioned and the school principal called.

A student, who uploaded photos of the bunk on Facebook, has been asked to delete his account. Parents have been called for a meeting, where they will be invited to keep quiet and listen to counselling lectures. There are now reports of government school teachers asking their students to go for mass bunks.

MEN AND WOMEN

New Android phones owned by guys to explode if they ping too many girls

KUMAR PRATIK, September 22, 2015 | *Men and Women*

In what comes as a major relief to single, committed, married, pregnant, as well as dead women all over the country, Google has announced an India-only feature on its upcoming Android version.

The feature, called New Pig on the Block, will identify guys who ping too many girls. Once the app knows the phone owner has pinged too many

women, the phone will instantly explode without a warning, setting fire to the hand, face or whatever other part of the body the phone is in touch with.

A ping is worth more than a thousand stares

Experts say this tendency to ping random girls on social media is trending in India as old lame moves such as liking all profile pictures of a woman, inviting them to music concerts, or the old-fashioned call-several-hundred-times-till-she-picks-up, failed to yield any concrete results. These methods, men found, only annoyed the women.

We tried to contact some such *pingus*, but we got responses such as, “Hiiee beautiful”, “Will you go on dinner with me” and “Wait, I’ll send you my nude pic”.

This NTMN reporter is still reeling from the aftereffects of the traumatic experience.

uStalk, iExplode

Apple insiders say its iOS platform may have such a feature very soon too, under the name “uStalk, iExplode”.

If this happens, *pingus* will need to resort to now-obsolete techniques of staring from a distance, molesting or simply urinating on the streets to assert their dominance, a polite *pingu* said.

Beware: The Android phone can detect your desperation

The Android core team is also working on a feature that can detect the desperation in a guy’s ping by looking at his history of pinging, patterns in the profiles of the girls who he has pinged, and the speed at which he asks for a date if she even dares to respond.

Shameless bridegroom-to-be says “no to dowry”, faces legal action

GARIMA SHARMA, December 27, 2012 | *Men and Women*

In a bizarre show of snobbery and blatant attack on cultural values and traditions, a prospective bridegroom has said “no” to dowry. An FIR was filed in Delhi last week by the victim, a 32-year-old unmarried woman. The woman has been contemplating suicide after such a shameless refusal for dowry from the groom who might never become a groom again.

The angry, courageous lady was not bogged down and dragged the un-Indian man to the police station. After hours of torture, he confessed to the crime: “Yes, I refused to take the dowry.” Within no time, the police station was seized by the public. Members of the ruling party, opposition parties and various moral brigadiers who don’t see eye-to-eye, were seen holding hands, hugging and giving speeches. They expressed solidarity with the victim, whose father had spent his entire life accumulating wealth for his daughter’s marriage.

The media came flocking and conducted interviews of the visibly shaken crowd. Several people reached India Gate to protest against the government’s inefficiency in stopping the decline in dowry practice. “If the groom doesn’t take any dowry, what is the guarantee that he will keep the wife happy?” said one protestor. “Today it is her, tomorrow it could be me. Kudos to the lady for coming out in the open to protest against this ever-increasing Westernization of the society.”

In a hastily-arranged address to the nation, the Prime Minister noted that he also had a wife and three daughters (he double-checked this data from the

sheet of paper he was reading from), and so he understands the pain of the woman's family. He said, "Today, we are shamed as the nation that pioneered the Sati concept in the world."

The groom has been booked for outraging a woman's financial modesty by refusing dowry, and for waging war against a nation that holds household disrespect to women sacrosanct.

The police said they were earlier convinced that the girl was lying and even asked her what sort of clothes she was wearing when the man refused the dowry. They also considered booking her for false allegations against a respectable boy who is not so respectable any more.

The parents of the groom, who were trying to flee the country, were also detained for interrogation. The mother of the groom, crying inconsolably, declared, "This man cannot be my son! I had five daughters before him only so that I can have a son who can bring in a lot of dowry, and this is how he repays me. I have spent so much money on him, and made him a software engineer. How I dreamt of being a spiteful, mean, taunting mother-in-law all my life, and now it's all over!"

The brother of the accused, meanwhile, is ready to pay for the sins of his brother, and has offered to marry "my brother ki dulhan" with all the dowry intact and more. However, the bride-to-be has tuned down the offer and is receiving marriage proposals from Syria and Sudan.

Relatives from the groom's side have come out with theories for his unmanly actions. Some of the reasons they suggested on social media: the guy could be gay, he might be already married, compulsive wife beater, disoriented aka "mad". Disturbing stories have surfaced from the groom's childhood where he was never mama's boy, has always followed traffic rules, never eve-teased a girl or a guy for that matter, and has never been in a fight. Some claimed of

never seeing him smoking or drinking too. This incident has brought forth the bigger issue that such behaviour should be identified in the beginning, and as widely agreed by doctors and elders, the difference between boy and girl must be explained to boys early in life, so that men do not end up respecting women.

Money-saving men's deodorants to be launched soon – they will work only in female presence

TANAY SUKUMAR, July 2, 2012 | *Men and Women*

“I waste a lot of deodorant on men everyday. Like, recently, I used a hell lot of a body spray before going to my school's alumni party. But it turned out to be sort of a bachelor's party. None of the girls turned up. I had to stay around men for that whole evening, and obviously they were not going to get seduced and dance around me like the girls do in the ads.”

This is the story of a dismayed Romeo, 23, who laments how a huge amount of his modest budget is spent every month on faking his body odour among girls he comes across. But, for some unfortunate reason or the other, the perfumes are destined to be wasted on male companions on many occasions, he feels. “It is sick wastage... who cares what odour I am spreading around me when I am with guys, huh?”

If a popular brand is to be believed, Romeo will soon have a pocket-friendly solution. “We conducted a survey, and found that an astounding 94% male consumers believe that it is a waste of money to smell good among other guys,” said a company spokesperson. “We will launch the SexSensor line of

deodorant body sprays and perfumes by the end of the year. The SexSensor will look for female presence around the user, and it will deactivate the odour of the spray if there is no girl around. The effect will be conserved for later on.”

Young men who are alive on the hopes of having a sex appeal like the male models in deodorant advertisements, have applauded the announcement. It can help them save hundreds of dollars every year.

Bridegroom Fair: Greedy parents find ‘legal’ way to get dowry, costly grooms go for sale in Delhi

RAVI SINGLA, May 8, 2012 | *Men and Women*

The All India Greedy Grooms’ Parents’ Society kicked off today the three-day Global Indian Bridegroom Fair at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. Parents from across India are taking part in the event, along with their daughters, the prospective brides.

Every prospective bridegroom up for sale must wear a cardboard tag, which states his name and Non-Negotiable Groom Price, along with his vital stats: profile, company, earnings per annum, contact number and other salient features. There are separate stalls for various communities such as NRIs, Kayastha, Aggarwal, Yadav and Marathi. Each stall is further divided into shops on the basis of professions. The shops featuring IT engineers were overcrowded when this reporter visited the venue.

For the convenience of 'buyers', digital displays in each stall mention the "starting price" and the number of the available grooms. Continuous announcements are made to lure visitors to shops. The NRI stall, the most lavish of all, is also proving to be a big crowd-puller.

Indian Bridegroom Expo

The 'buyer' parents have termed this an excitingly revolutionary move. Mr. Lachar Malhotra, the quite aged father of Tinky, a commerce graduate, said: "It's a move towards transparency. As it is, things work only this way. Matrimonial ads reveal nothing important. Everywhere it's mentioned that an educated, well-groomed, beautiful, not to mention fair, girl is needed for so-and-so well-settled boy. But then when I contact them, all they seem to care about is the 'offer'."

He continued, "When I ask them about their 'expectations', they generally say it depends on me: whatever I can and wish to provide. And when I say that I can spend only Rs 20 lakh, they react as if I have insulted them in the worst possible manner. Here, at least, we can make an informed decision which falls under our 'budget'."

Wedding experts said this initiative is a much-needed innovation for the Indian marriage industry.

Matrimonial website starts competitive exam to choose life-partner, toppers get scholarships for dowry

APOORVA TAPAS (ed. **Brototi Roy**), April 25, 2012 | *Men and Women*

Keeping up with the trends of fierce competition and marks-oriented judgement, a matrimonial website has decided to conduct AIJE: Another Intimidating and Judgemental Exam (pronounced 'aayi-ji'). The exam will make selecting a life partner even more complicated and biased as compared to existing Indian standards.

Mrs. Sathe, an elite high-caste Brahmin and founder of www.abshaadikumarhogayi.com, announced this new feature last week. She said: "The next logical step in an Indian's life after education is arranged marriage. If the standards for getting a good education are based on marks, then why not apply the same for a life partner too? After all, what is life without cut-throat competition and judgement?"

She added: "When my brother's wife's sister's daughter Kavita returned from Amrika to find A Suitable Boy, she had to face so many rejections because she was tall, dark and intelligent. It was bringing so much shame to the family. We thought our noses will be definitely cut now, until my son Rakesh, he's in IIT you know, came up with this superb idea of conducting exams for marriage."

Rakesh told his mother not to be old-fashioned. "How can you decide a person's worth if they don't have a mark sheet?" he told her. "You should conduct a competitive exam."

It was then that the Sathe family decided it was time to bring revolution and launch an all-India exam. "Once Kavita tops the exam – I will personally coach

her – she will find a husband and finally be able to show her face in public again,” Mrs. Sathe said.

Mrs. Sathe and her team of leading matrimonial experts have designed the unique test, which compares the scores and résumés of candidates to match the most compatible pairs.

The exam consists of a written round of MCQs with options: a) Yes b) No c) Will ask Parents d) I’m an NRI. This will be followed by Personal Interviews and finally Horoscope Matching.

The first round will be conducted online, and the interviews will be held at specialised centres across the country. The test algorithm is currently being coded by Rakesh and his gang of highly eligible bachelor friends at IIT.

An enormous database of candidates has been prepared and categorised according to religion, caste, status in society, package, complexion, height, education, romantic history and many more such factors vital to choose a life partner. The groom-selection process gives a computer-generated list of five potential candidates.

When a reporter said why the program would offer five choices instead of choosing the perfect match, Mrs. Sathe said: “Well, after all, decision they will only make, no? We are very open-minded. We are only eliminating problems like inter-caste marriage and premarital you-know-what.”

The website will also have scholarships for top 50 meritorious candidates, to fund dowry, health insurance, and future marital disputes. Special prizes like designer saris and all-expense-paid foreign trips for exceptionally bright candidates will be available, the website said.

Homosexual atheist son disowned by family after he chose humanities instead of science

PRATUL BAGRI, February 8, 2015 | *Sanskaar*

In distressing news coming in from Delhi, a family has disowned their homosexual atheist son because he opted for humanities instead of science in Class 11. This is a severe case of prejudice against the arts that has plagued the Indian middle class, sociologists say.

“Saw it coming”

Ashish Jha, who will take his Class 10 exam this March, was not surprised by his family’s reaction.

“We are a middle class family, always have been,” he said. “I did not expect them to welcome my decision. The middle class is inclined towards the sciences and my parents have always been pro-engineering.”

Huge shame

The Jha family had accepted their son’s sexuality and religious beliefs (or lack thereof). “He has always been an atheist, always trying to find logic in faith,” said Ashish’s mother, recalling the time her son ate non-vegetarian food on a Tuesday.

Ashish’s father saw his son’s decision as a betrayal. “Is this what I get for my sacrifices? Atheism is no problem—I myself skip pooja sometimes. Hell, I don’t even give good quality oil to the shani maharaj,” he said, breaking into tears.

“He came out of the closet half a year ago and we supported him. But choosing arts instead of science is where I draw the line!” Mr. Jha said. “Neighbours have started ostracizing us. *Jha ke ladke nei arts lee hai, jhadu marega*, they taunt.”

Meanwhile, this incident has sparked a huge controversy in the online world. Internet users are lending their support by updating their WhatsApp and Facebook status to “Je suis Ashish.” The hashtag “ForTheLoveOfHumanities” was one of Twitter’s top trends yesterday.

Ashish is now staying at the house of a friend who describes himself as a “humanities sympathizer”. He is taking help from a pro-humanities organisation that supports people in such a situation. The organisation is also planning a pride parade to fight against such discrimination.

14-year-old girls can go for night outs if they aren't my daughter, confirms open-minded dad

PRATUL BAGRI, September 19, 2015 | *Sanskaar*

Sahil Tripathi, an open-minded dad who identifies himself as “liberal” and “modern”, has strongly condemned statements by a politician against night-time freedom for girls.

“These views are the type of regressive and patriarchal mentality we can only expect from our politicians,” Tripathi said. “We live in a modern society, so of course 14-year-old girls who are not my daughter should be allowed night-outs.”

He continued: “India has come a long way from being a male-dominant society. Women here have equal rights now, we have modern values. I say that every teenage girl who I do not know and is in no way related to me should go for a night-out to protest such statements.”

When asked how safe night-time endeavours are, Tripathi said there is plenty of security at night for women who do not have any kind of relationship with him.

“Parents should not worry about the dangers of nightlife. They should trust that a 14-year-old girl has the capacity to make wise decisions. I therefore urge every parent who is not me to send their daughters out at night.”

Government blames Western influence for rape, bans Hollywood films

SHRIDHAR KURLAGERI, September 14, 2015 | *Sanskaar*

A ban on Hollywood films is the latest in India’s series of bans and the government hopes it will bring down the incidents of rape and sexual assault.

The decision followed research by a government think-tank, which found that Hollywood films are a key reason behind the rising number of rapes in India. The government has taken swift action upon this revelation and has banned all Hollywood films from theatres.

“Hollywood films promote rape because they lead to an increase in the consumption of chowmein and girls start wearing revealing clothes like *salwar kameez* and *burqa*,” said an official in the information and broadcasting ministry. “Phenomena like co-educational schools, Valentine’s Day and eating non-vegetarian food during the month of *Shravan* are also reasons that are directly attributable to Hollywood.”

Apart from the ban on films, the government is planning some other bans to prevent rapes:

Meat ban during the month of *Shravan*: The logic is that consuming only vegetarian food during the holy month of *Shravan* would purify the soul and keep sexual thoughts at bay for the whole year, sources said.

Ban on chowmein: Upon the advice of a khap panchayat leader, a ban on chowmein for six days a week is on its way. It will be available in restaurants only on Sundays. This one day of laxity is likely because of the popularity of chowmein among the youth, a key vote bank, an adviser to the health minister said.

Ban on Valentine’s Day: February 14 will instead be celebrated as a second Raksha Bandhan, to provide girls another chance to tie *rakhis* to boys who were successful at avoiding them on Raksha Bandhan. The more *rakhis* the girls tie, the lesser their chances of getting raped.