SYMBIOSIS
CENTRE FOR MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

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ART, CULTURE & LIFESTYLE SUPPLEMENT

From Japan, with Love

India Reimagines the Wabori art in tattoos

Reminiscing on Identity

A Journey to the Roots

Food Tales

The Migratory Tale of Indian delicacies

A Whiff of the East

Indians are embracing Korean Culture

The Music of Migration

A new era of music is born out of fusion

WORD SEARCH

By- Vidushi Singh

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MODERNISATION
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FAMILY
TRADITION
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INFLUX
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ASSIMILATION
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HERITAGE
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HOME

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SYMBIOSIS CENTRE FOR MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

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ABOUT THE THEME

Indian culture is a product of change. Stories of the land, as old as time, speak not only of traditions and rituals, but also of assimilation. The Indian shores welcomed ingredients that we know today as our own: potatoes, tomatoes, chilli. Across a history of battles, Indian culture carved a home for the Mughal way of things into its food, its language, its architecture. Even our colonizers left a trace on our cultural habits – but we seamlessly folded it into our life, as we have always done. The diversity of art, culture, food and architecture in India invites you to ask: how much of it is a product of migration?

Every day, people leave their hometowns and migrate to a different part of the country – for jobs, for an education, for a new life. They are not alone: they bring with them a trousseau of their native habits, festivals, recipes. Years of migration within the country, coupled with a strong desire to stay rooted to your identity, has given birth to an India of many cultures in one. We see this in small migratory communities nestled in big cities, keeping their identity alive in their habits of food, clothing and celebrations.

Most interestingly, even migration is not exempt from change. It's no longer restricted only to the physical migration of people or commodities. With technology tightening its grip on the world, India is a host for many products of virtual migrations: musical influences from the West, technological trends, even vast amounts of popular cultural influence from countries like South Korea. This edition of the SCMC arts & culture magazine will explore and narrate stories of migration: how crossing borders – physical and virtual – has shaped India into what it is today.

Anushka Mukherjee

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COLLEGE

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY AT SYMBIOSIS

Passang Lhamo

Students from different parts of the world come to Pune in a search for better education, the Oxford of the East. Besides education, numerous platforms are provided which encourage students to express themselves through various means of arts and talents; especially international students. Symbiosis University is one such place for all to have a taste of every culture, experience delicate nuances of cultures from the various nooks and corners of the world, through events like International dance competition and International food festival.

To inculcate a feeling of belonging and togetherness, international students celebrated Symbiosis 49th Foundation day at the Dr.Babasaheb Museum by showcasing their traditional dance and dress.

As the host ushered in the performance by Mauritius, three beautiful women donned skirts in Mauritius's national flag colours green and yellow; three elegant men with bright red shirts and straw hats were on stage when curtains rose. They were later joined by lovely girls in sky blue and yellow skirts with dazzling small flowers pinned in their hair. The lights on the stage turned bright and the rhythm started to pulse into them. The spectacle was so exquisitely vibrant and colourful that the audience tapped their feet to cheer, and gave a standing ovation admiring their beautiful traditional dance.

Students from Mauritius performing Sega, a traditional dance from thier country.

Mauritius traditional dance is widely known as "Sega Dance". The Sega dance is all about the undulating movement of the hips to the beat, and vibrant colour. The dance itself is the rhythmic swaying of the hips to the pulsating rhythm of the *Ravanne*. Sega dance starts with gentle swaying, to a slow tempo and solemn tune. It starts as a group dance, and then breaks off into pairs. The tempo gradually increases as the girls shuffle towards the boys, wiggling and hip-balancing. Dancers are often seen circling each other, and the dance often resembles a type of playful courtship.

> "Sega is the musical expression of Mauritian way of life. It talks about love, joy, loneliness or address everyday challenges"

Sega is the musical expression of Mauritian way of life. It talks about love, joy, loneliness or addresses everyday challenges and concern with the meaning often enacted through the choreography. Watching the Mauritius students performing on the stage, the audience responded to the rhythm by moving their shoulders, tapping their feet or simply snapping their fingers. It was difficult to resist the urge to join in the dance. Everyone was drawn in by the enthralling music.

Students from Nepal showcasing their traditoinal dance moves.

Mauritius won the best costume award in African category. Shika Babajee from Mauritius, final year student at Fergusson college said that she felt honored and privileged to represent her country and she expressed her gratitude to Symbiosis for giving an opportunity to experience and enjoy the diverse culture. "We are proud of winning an award for my country, but we are true winners as we won the hearts of the audience through energetic Sega dance," she said.

When it was Uganda's turn to showcase their culture, two boys emerged on the stage holding

their national flag and the slow, emotional music began to play. The boys remained silent as the song was a tribute to their country. After that the fast tempo track was played and other performers adorned the stage with smiling faces and beautiful dance moves Uganda's dance involved a flawless 'circular' movement of the waist and a tip toeing movement of the feet with hands spread out from the shoulder joint but bent forward or upwards at the elbow joint. The dance moves were dictated by the lyrics or meaning of the song, and mostly by the tempo of the song. Uganda's music is an expression of its rich history and culture.

Lifting the coveted title of the best dance in the African category, the Ugandan team's joy knew no bounds. Jovan Kiggundu, who is studying at Symbiosis Institute of Technology, said that it was pleasure to represent Uganda, the pearl of Africa. Their creativity and hard work was recognized, and celebrated.

Bibhav Basyal from Nepal, who had never danced before, said that he actually learned and honed his dance skills after participating in the competition.

> "There are lot of similarities between Indian and Nepali culture. The food, script and some of the traditions like Holi, Makar Sakranti, are same in India and Nepal."

"Earlier I used to dance for myself, but in Symbiosis, I danced for my country," said Basyal with a proud smile. He gained some confidence after taking part in the event and he said he will cherish that moment forever.

While asking about the similarities between Indian culture and Nepali culture he said that there are a lot of commonalities between the Indian and Nepali culture. The food, script and some of the traditionals festivals like Holi, Makar Sakranti, are celebrated with the same pomp and happiness in India and Nepal.

The traditional Nepali dance is performed on light-hearted beats played by some widely used traditional musical instruments. Widely presented in groups, it includes the movements of hands, legs, waist and also some sweet romantic elements between the parties dancing which adds life to the dance. Nepal took the best dance award from the Asian category.

Sri Lanka, India's neighbour, has always reminded us of our own culture. The beats, costumes and the movements of the dance were very similar to Indian classical dance. Dancers wore remarkable costumes. Female dancers draped a large white cloth to form a kind of loose trousers and donned silver ornaments around their neck, ears, arms and ankles. The male dancer sported a skirt-like dress, chest decorated with exclusive silver regalia and a stunning headgear. Sri Lanka picked the best costume and props award in the Asian Category.

In addition to striking costumes, the dancers had to match their movements with fast rhythms known as *GataBeraya*. The dance mimics the different movements of animals such as elephants and peacocks. While dancing, the feet are spread out, while the arms are at the shoulder level and the fingers are stretched forward in the shape of a flower.

Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Zambia and many other countries also took part in the event and represented their culture.

Every event organized by the Symbiosis International University for the international students is always fascinating and memorable. Of all the events, dance competition is the one that I always looked forward to, as I got to take a break from my studies for a while and enjoy the music and dance from different parts of the world. Participating in such events has brought me immense joy and pride, especially when I'm representing my country. We are all students from different countries - but in small bits and pieces like dancing in our traditional costumes or celebrating festivals together, we find a way back to our roots. Migration may have driven us away from our homes, but it brought us to each other – to a new family. Watching the cultures of so many countries come together is a colourful, warm reminder of only the fact that the world is a family, and we are here for each other.

Students from Turkey performing their tradtional dance on Republic day celebrations

MAGEN DAVID SYNAGOGUE:

A HIDDEN TREASURE OF KOLKATA

By Angkuran Dey

"Bhaiya, could I just enter the synagogue and click a few pictures? Don't say no this time." I was really determined to enter the synagogue this time, after being denied entry the previous Sunday.

He let me in through the arched gates and there I was, inside the Magen David Synagogue, the largest synagogue in Asia. Welcome aboard on a journey to know a bit about the Jewish Community of Kolkata, and life through the lens of one of the caretakers of the synagogue.

The Israel-Palestine conflict has already taken over a thousand lives, and shows little signs of abating. Here in Kolkata, the synagogue's caretakers have a rather distinguishing feature: they have all been Muslims since the time the synagogue came into existence. The synagogue is now being protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), but it is controlled by the local Jewish community who have taken excellent care of their heritage – and it remains a distinct landmark on the Synagogue Street in Kolkata's bustling Chinabazaar area.

Judaism is arguably the first foreign religion to arrive on the shores of India. They came as traders from Baghdad and are popularly known as the "Baghdadi Jews". The first Jews landed on the Kerala coast in Cochin to make some money out of the booming spice trade, which, over the years, became the tipping point for the companies that were competing to get a bigger share of the trade. The Jews were "business wanderers", going from one city to another on their ships, and even travelling all the way down to Jakarta for trade.

The majority of Jews in Kolkata came from Baghdad, with a few coming from Aleppo in Syria. The first Jew to settle in Calcutta, in 1798, was Shalom Aharon Obadiah ha-Cohen, with more of his brethren following the course. By the 1800s, the community was thriving. The present-day Pollock Street in Kolkata used to be the site for many of the Jewish clubs and community centres, and they would hardly venture out of their community. While the city burned during the Calcutta killings in 1946, the Jewish community was left untouched.

Anwar Bhai, caretaker of the Synagogue

The Jews worldwide have faced persecution like no other community, be it in Germany or Russia. However, India has always provided them with shelter and the same respect as any other citizen in the country.

There were more than 6,000 Jews in Kolkata, leading a life which they could never imagine in the times of persecution. What followed the dark times of the Second World War was the Indian Independence in 1947, and the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. Many believed that their businesses would get nationalized, and it would be difficult for them to stay on in Kolkata. People started leaving the city in throngs to go and live in the Promised land of Israel, even at the cost of a comfortable life in the city.

Meeting Anwar Bhai

Anwar Bhai is one of the caretakers who lives just behind the synagogue and has been looking after it for over 22 years.

He puts on the *Kippah* (skull cap), accompanying me on my mission to take as many pictures as I could. I was given a special guided tour of the Synagogue, as I went on clicking pictures. Anwar Bhai is a Muslim, which sounds a bit contradictory to the whole ongoing conflict and the issues between Jews and Muslims. The whole issue of bigotry has been put to rest through people like Anwar Bhai.

"Aapne convert kar liya kya bhaiya?"

"Bhaiya, convert karne ka sawaal hein nahi uthta ji."

He is as a devout Muslim who reads the Namaz five times a day and takes a holiday during Eid to go to his home town of Puri, the land of Lord Jagannath in Orissa. These are stories that stand out: Anwar Bhai, a Muslim, comes from a Hindu pilgrimage centre, to take care of a Jewish place of worship.

It is saddening, however to realize the rather fast deterioration of the Jewish community in Kolkata. The "City of Joy" will soon lose its cosmopolitan edge. What will remain is just the faint, beautiful traces of their culture.

TATTOOS: A SEMIOTIC ART

Govind Choudhary brings us story of a Japanese art making in roads in Pune tatoo circles

"History in its broadest aspect is a record of man's migrations from one environment to another."

--Ellsworth Huntington

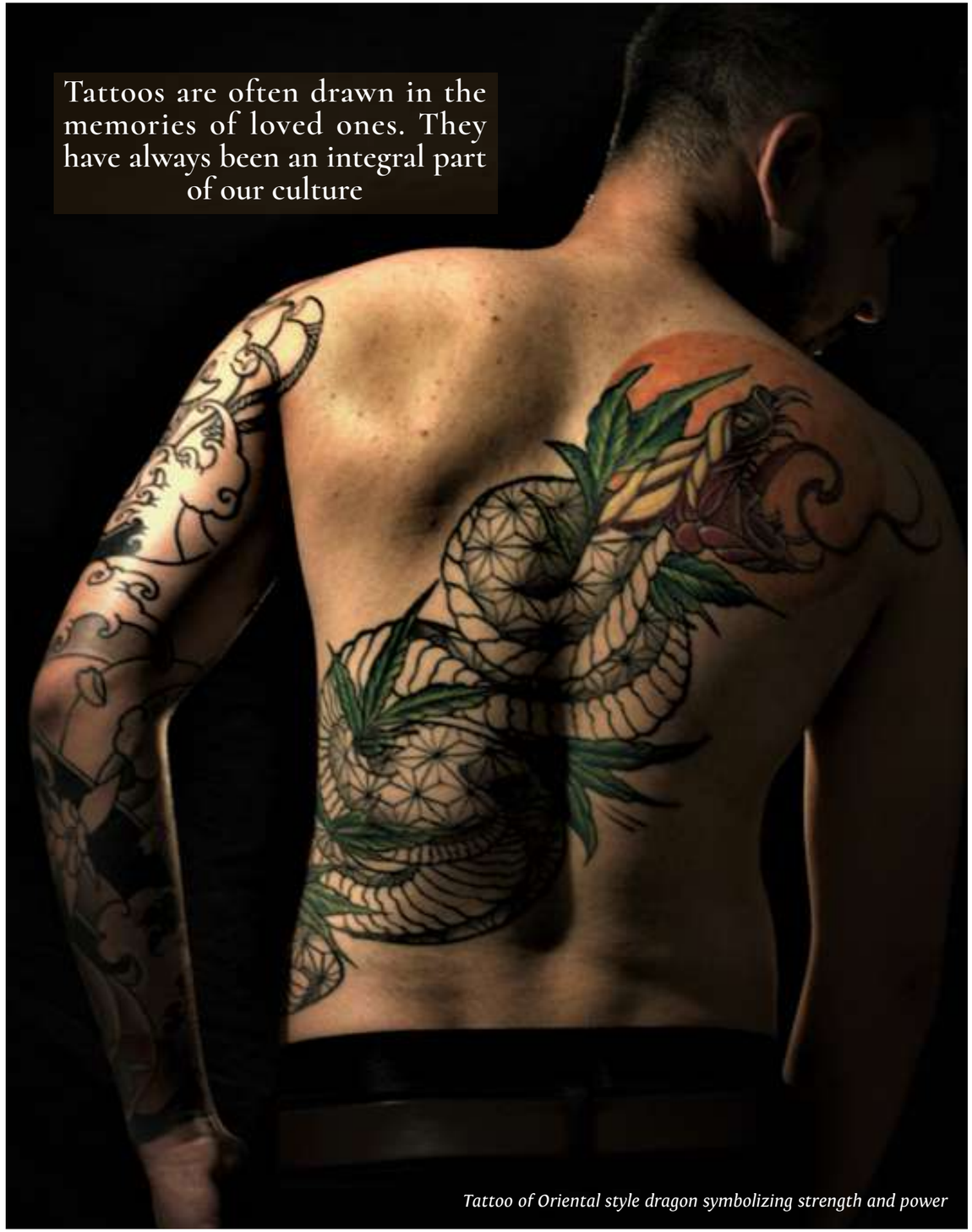
Anything that is done in a unique way, edging away from the usual, is art. It depends on the aesthetic sense and imagination of each individual that defines the art. In fact, art often migrates with people.

Tattoo-making is an art popular worldwide. Different regions of the world have their own traditional forms of this art, that later developed into modern techniques of tattoo making. Every art form has its connotations. Expressionism, one such connotation, often brings out rebellions through art. Hence, tattoos are bound to prevail as a unique art form, even in the modern era. One such migrated art form is the Japanese traditional art of tattoo making, known as *Wabori*.

Mangesh Rane, an independent tattoo artist from Pune, brings the traditional and modern aspects of this japanese art to tattoo-making in India. He believes in certain old school techniques. According to Rane, "The history of tattoo-making in Japan is connected with crime. Convicted criminals were tattooed, so that people could identify them easily. The size of tattoos on the criminals indicated the level of crime. Today these Japanese tattoos are not stigmatized anymore. They have developed into curated meaningful stories. These soulful stories involve artistry, mythology and legendary tales. This native style of tattoo making is popularly known as *Wabori* in Japanese."

Rane claims to be the only *Tebori* (hand carving) artist in India. It is the oldest Japanese technique of carving tattoos that uses bamboo to carve tattoos. "Hygiene plays a crucial role in tattoo-making so that cross contamination does not take place. A new needle is used every time. The chances of infection are higher in *Tebori*. Therefore, I use long, sterilised steel needles in place of the traditional bamboo sticks while following *Tebori,*" he says.

'Dragons' and *Oni* remain the most popular design of Rane that employ the Japanese style. Dragons signify power. Sometimes, it is drawn as a symbol of a mythical creature that protects something valuable. A man carrying a dragon simply means toughness. Women carrying a dragon means that her personality is strong, and she values her own opinions more than others. There are different styles of dragon tattoos. For example, Oriental



Tattoo of Oriental style dragon symbolizing strength and power

dragon style is drawn in a vibrant and colourful design. It is based entirely on the creativity of the tattoo artist. The Dragon and Tiger style are also popular styles of tattoos. Dragons and tigers are often considered as rivals in ancient Japanese folktales. Both the creatures are compiled together in tattoos, compared to the yin yang (symbol of dualism in chinese literature) prevalent in Eastern Asia.

Oni is a demon popularly known as *Namahage* in Japanese folktales. This creature stands outside the temples. He is the sin and virtue keeper of the humans in the world of spirits. Sometimes it is the depiction of dark, evil, and distressed emotions of humans. People interested in black magic and the dark world are often drawn to the *Oni*.

Apart from Japanese style, Rane's work also reflects realistic, hyper realistic, and neo-traditional style of tattoos. He also gives an insight into the modern tattoo industry in India. According to Rane, "A fad for tattoos has emerged in India. People come up with strong beliefs and ideologies to get their thoughts converted into a tattoo. Due to the increase in the travelling culture, the independent youth want to exercise their freedom through tattoos. Clients are more open now about their tattoo ideas, and credit for this goes to Instagram. Smart tools are used in CorelDraw, Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator to place the tattoo design on the image of the customer's body before actual drawing these days. People are highly influenced by foreign tattoo artists and their native customs."

Rane's process of designing a tattoo begins with sketching it on paper, and filling it with painting colours as per the design. Rane started tattoo-making in 2009. He says, "I did not take any kind of formal training in tattoo -making in early days of my career. Online platforms were my primary sources of learning the art. There were hardly any tattoo studios back in the 2000s to promote this art. TV shows like Miami ink, LA Ink, and Tattoo Hunter have been my inspiration to learn the art. I struggled hard to support the art, because of lack of response from people. While I was working in Sabby's studio (biggest tattoo artist in India), it broadened my horizons. My journey took a turn when I participated in Pune's tattoo festival, and won four awards in categories like the Best Cartoon Character, and Abstract. That was the moment when I got a scholarship from American ink-making brand 'Radiant Colors', and later I worked with them for some time."

The craze for tattoos is rising very rapidly in India. Tattoo festivals and conventions are now very prominent. Rane plans to conduct multiple workshops in Goa and Pune to expand the art. Recently, he conducted a workshop in Navi Mumbai in collaboration with 'Inkaholics Studios'. He believes that budding tattoo artists need to learn each and every aspect of the business.

> "'Rabari' women in Kutch practise tattoo making to show their belief in the power of magic."

Rane added, "India is moving ahead as tattoos are no longer considered a taboo. Clients above 60 years of age are also getting tattoos these days. Celebrities have been a great influence in India. The Maori style of New Zealand is very popular among Indians because of WWE wrestlers like The Rock and Roman Reigns. Tattoos satisfy people as it stays with them life-long. People with needle phobia often get tattoos to overcome their fear. Tattoos are often drawn in the memories of loved ones. They have always been an integral part of our culture and the tattoo industry is all set to rise in the near future".

Tattoos have always been an integral part of India. Tribal India has a great history of tattoo culture commonly known as *Gudna* that stretches from the dense forest of the NorthEast to the dry Rann of Kutch in the West. Unfortunately, the hygiene and health consciousness is highly compromised by the tribal groups, since they use traditional tattooing techniques. Abduction of women is a common phenomenon in tribal areas by their neighbouring tribal men. Therefore, women of Apatani tribe in Arunachal Pradesh draw tattoos on their face to look unappealing.

Rabari women in Kutch practise tattoo making to show their belief in the power of magic. Several other tribal groups in India tattoo their men and women to either symbolize wedding traditions or victory in the tribal wars.

Different regions of the world perceive tattoos differently. Ancient Chinese folktales tell that bandits used to have tattoos in China. In Europe, some made tattoos to symbolize heroism in war, whereas others felt pride to get tattoos as a sailor especially the ones who crossed the equator. Women were no less. They got tattoos on their lips as part of their permanent beauty treatment.

It is hard to trace the exact history of tattoos, but it is believed that the word 'tattoo' has evolved from the Samoan term *tatau*. Ancient tattoos were much different from modern day ones. Samoans used the turtle's shell and boar's teeth to carve tattoos. The oldest known tattoo has been found on a mummy that is believed to be from between 3370 BC and 3100 BC in Otztal Alps. The fact that tattoo-making has been practised for so long indicates its aesthetic endurance. With ever growing partrons, and keen artists like Rane, and others like him around the world taking it forward, tatto-making will live long as an art form.

AN INFLUENTIAL CULTURE SWEEPING THE GLOBE

Tshewang Choden tracks a new culture taking India by storm

The K-POP band BTS, (L-R) Suga, J-Hope, Jimin, Jungkook, RM, Jin, V, performing their song Not today in Metlife stadium.

The mini-bus has finally reached the pickup location, took forever. It's 9:30 in the morning, the youngsters hop on eagerly. The audio system comes on almost as soon as they board. The cold Pune air doesn't seem to dampen their spirits as they move their bodies to the upbeat tunes. Pune-based dance group Ddaeng are travelling to Mumbai, and K-pop Mania is their destination.

The crew is going to perform at the event later in the day. Formed in 2019, Ddaeng today consists of 13 members in total, of which currently only eight of them are active.

"It was a BTS event and we planned on doing a flash mob," Kunal Waghmare, 21, the leader of the Ddaeng dance crew recalls fondly, referrring to Bangtan Sonyeondan, a seven-member Korean boy band formed in 2010. "I got two of my friends to join the project, meanwhile we also asked the ARMY (the name for BTSs fandom) if they wanted to participate, a lot of them turned up. We ended up practicing and performing at PVR mall. After it was done, I decided to make it a formal dance crew," he says. The group has participated in multiple festivals and competitions within and outside Pune. According to Kunal, the most memorable event the crew took part in was the Kosufest organized by St. Mira's College where the crew bagged the first prize against many teams. The other one was when the crew got paid for the first time after performing at the Korean New Year Event.

"We started with a lot of trial and error, and we are currently kinda like a pro K-pop dance crew of Pune," remarks Kunal.

In recent years multiple groups like Ddaeng in India have come up in the wake of a global trend widely known as *Hallyu* or the Korean Wave. It refers to the phenomenal growth and spread of South Korean culture which includes its songs, movies, drama and much more. The Korean Wave started somewhere during the mid-1990s. When South Korea entered into diplomatic ties with China in 1992, Korean TV dramas and songs gained huge popularity amongst Chinese teenagers, and it soon spread to Japan in 2003. The "Korean Wave" soon expanded to various aspects of the Korean Culture such as food, beauty, fashion, dance and more. It's ripples were felt around the world in 2012 when PSY's Gangnam Style went viral. The music video today has a staggering 110 million views on YouTube, making it one of the most watched music videos on YouTube. A couple of million listeners had tuned into Korean culture by then. It was at that moment when everyone started to feel its presence as it began slowly seeping into daily lives.

In India, K-pop first gained popularity in the North-eastern state of Manipur. When separatist groups in Manipur banned Indian entertainment content in 2000;, people looked to the Far East for entertainment, that's when they connected with K-pop. It is often known to be the starting point for Hallyu in India. It didn't take much time for it to establish itself. The market today is grappling in the Korean content frenzy. K-pop directly contributed to marketing Korean product across the world. From fashion, film, cuisines, cosmetics, automobiles, songs, anything one can think of has been influenced by this popular culture.

Social media is standing proof

> "In 2018 BTS came out with their song Fake Love and the album Love Yourself, its message was so strong that it got me into K-pop."

as to how much Korean culture has taken over the Indian lifestyle.

Young people's fondness for this culture has manifested into all these fan-pages that one can find online. Across Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, diehard fans track every movement of their favourite K-pop artists and many more. These pages vary from following celebrities to fashion, cuisine, and décor. The fan accounts also shoulder the responsibility of organizing events such as birthday celebrations, fan get-togethers, streaming party, etc., as a way of displaying their love and support towards the idol or a group they admire.

However, many of these K-pop enthusiasts have also expressed the downside of this trend. Unrealistic beauty standards, body shaming and social pressure to stay all-round perfect send a negative message to viewers. Sometimes, the artists themselves, unable to cope with the pressure, succumb. and end up taking their own lives.

Headlines, across all sites, are splattered with news about BTS, BLACKPINK, EXO, some of K-pops famous idols. There have been instances where Twitter had to shut down because of fans spamming the feed during their favorite artist's birthday or during their comeback.

"In 2018, BTS came out with their song, 'Fake Love' and the album 'Love Yourself', the message of the album was so strong that it got me into K-pop," says Mayank Tripathi, 19-year-old BTS ARMY, and a college-goer who, apart from his studies, spends most of his time catching up with the latest Korean trends, covering Korean songs and dance on his YouTube channel.

"The meaning behind the lyrics of BTS song was what got me hooked. Of course, the beat too was catchy," he adds. "Loving and accepting yourself as you are right now doesn't mean that having dreams, goals or aspirations for self- improvement is wrong. You can have ambitions and still love yourself as you are," a soulful thought by Mayank, which would put a poet to shame.

Many students living in Pune, like Mayank, agree that the meaning behind the lyrics was what got them into K-pop in the first place. K-pop songs on YouTube were their first contact with this culture, followed by the movies, drama, fashion, and beauty. Much of their content focuses on bringing out the aesthetics with a creative twist, which they feel is missing from the mainstream Bollywood movies.

Korean movies are the amalgamation of Korean pop culture. They incorporates beautiful aesthetics, good plotline, good editing skills, trendy fashion, etc. A lot of K-pop artists work in the movies, which is how they get to interact with as well as increase their fan base.

The demand for Korean movies, dramas, and songs are at an all-time high everywhere, even in India. Channels have started broadcasting Korean dramas and songs, leaving their impact on fashion and beauty trends.

The 10-Step Korean skincare is the buzz word today. People want their skin to be glassy and glowy like the K-pop artists they see online. The demand for Korean cosmetics and skincare is increasing at a staggering rate. Nihir Parikh, Chief Business Officer of e-commerce site Nykaa, said in an interview with the Times of India that "Korean skin care products are amongst the top 10 brands, and contribute close to 8% of the overall sales and have pushed our skincare sales by 15%".

Many claim that the kind of music and fashion Korea has is missing in the Indian culture. A vast variety of genres, accompanied by a great sense of fashion, clubbed with soulful lyrics, keeps listeners hooked.

Many students also say that they wished Indian culture was as open to changes as Korean culture is. Stories were shared where most of them had faced a similar problem of their family and friends criticizing, and not being supportive of their decision to devote their time to Korean culture. "My family was skeptical about me getting into K-pop," says one of the students.

A group of Korean students at Symbiosis International University, Pune, have formed a club they call 'Kodian' – an amalgamation of the words Korean and Indian. The clubs aim at promoting Korean culture and traditions, among others. The students say their observation of the rising popularity of Korean culture promptem them to start the club for others who are keen to learn more about Korea.

> "The migration of this influential culture has brought with it these wonderful experiences and learning to the generation who is a part of it."

Yeju, one of the core members of Kodian, says there are a lot of students in the city who wanted to experience Korean culture, but are unable to do so, and therefore they want to help make a change.

The club started in 2017 with 10 core members, all of whom were Korean students. Today, today there are nearly 50 members, out of which 37 are Indian students, mostly from Symbiosis institutes.

The club holds various activities for their members such as Korean language sessions, cuisines, games and even singing and dancing sessions.

All around India, the number of clubs, specifically focused on teaching more about Korean culture is ever increasing.

Pune is known for being the hub for youth, with that, undeniably, come the latest trends, and K-pop is one of them. People can be seen jamming to Korean songs at parties and wearing fashion inspired by Korean style.

The migration of this influential culture has brought with it these wonderful experiences and learning to the generation who is a part of it.

INDIA'S MULTICULTURAL FOOD: IMMIGRATION'S SECRET

Through recipes and historical anecdotes, Sharwari Kale brings out the role of migration in some of India's favourite ingredients and dishes.

India is a vast land that houses an extensive diversity of people. This melange is not only represented vibrantly in languages, dialects, cultural and religious ethnicities; but also in the traditions, festivity and cuisine. Climatic conditions, geographic locations, seasonal produce, availability of livestock and resources are some essential factors that condition this medley. One such distinctly myriad facet is Indian cookery. With each state offering something unique and deep-rooted in their age-old traditions. But by far, Indian cuisine is not a singular entity, but a culmination of divergent countries that have influenced the palate and culinary customs of this subcontinent.

With each incursion, the native ingredients of the subcontinent saw incorporation of hundreds of new ingredients and cooking techniques to the already variegated vivers.

When Alexander the Great conquered parts of India in 350 BC, he brought with him the Greek cuisine, a fusion in itself of the Roman empire and Turkey. Their aromatic herbs like coriander, mint and oregano, essential oils like the olive oil, spices like fenugreek and fennel which are so integral to the Indian cooking style, vegetables like eggplant and zucchini are the evident remnants of Greek influence. With the prospering trade relations with Rome and other Mediterranean countries, spices like saffron became customary. Usage of fruits, nuts, oils, grains, cheese and other such elements gave panache, nutrition and an indulging flavour to the traditional food. After all, their food is all about fresh catch of seafood, sundry meat, salad dressed in wholesome olive oil, non-processed cheese, exotic herbs, seasonal fruits and vegetables, legendary yoghurt and tropical condiments! The taste of Jammu's well-known *Kalhari* is inspired from the Greek cheese *Kasseri*.

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Authentic Greek delicacies like *souvlaki*, fresh grilled fish, courgette balls, *kleftiko* and *moussaka* with many others can be easily found at restaurants across India with their original taste retained.

Greece holds its Indian counterparts too, especially in Athens, which is a hub for traditional Greek cuisine. *Melizanosalata*, is a well-known dish made from bristle puree or grilled egg plant, dressed with olive oil, tomatoes, herbs, garlic and onion. Doesn't it give the idea of our own *baingan bharta?* Similar is the *Tzatziki*, a yoghurt mixed with cucumber, oil, garlic and vinegar; a rese mblance of our *raita*. Another prominent dish is the *Dolmadakai* where vegetables and rice are stuffed in cabbage or vine leaves and steamed, exactly what people in western region of India do with yam and acacia leaves.

The Mughlai cuisine is by far been the most popular food for a long time. Not all know that it's a perfect amalgam of Indian and Persian cuisines. Evolved during the medieval period and blossomed in the royal kitchens of the Mughal empire, its domination is still seen in the culinary methods of Northern regions of India like Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, Southern regions like Hyderabad and Telangana and a few places in Central Asia. Coming from West Asia during the twelfth century to invade India, with Mughals came their royal food heritage. Indian cookery was introduced to the use of milk, heavy cream, butter and *ghee* in numerous curries and gravies making them more scrumptious and finger-licking. Dry fruits like almonds, pistachios and cashews gave a different perspective to garnishing. Their peculiar combination of quite exotic, tasteful, and aromatic spices like cardamom, nutmeg, saffron and mace added richness, spice, heaviness and a unique aroma to the food. They gave

India the most indispensable ingredient of today: onions. From garnishing with caramelized onions to using it as a base for curries, rice and meat, it gave India the title of "onion heaven". Meat of varied sorts like goat, sheep, fowls, chicken, rooster and venison became a vital ingredient and started getting used for main meals. Cooking practices also went under changes, especially with the advent of spit fire roast, giving us the delicious kebabs and tandooris.

Mihir Dhudat, restaurant owner of Camios in Pune shared his knowledge about Mughal influence with us. "Traditional India has supreme diversity in its food. The northern parts were always *Dal Roti* and the Southern parts were *Dal chaval*. *Dal* being common across. Meats were consumed rarely, and by the nobility on their hunting trips. As for the ingredients, pre-Mughal food was very lightly spiced and balanced - coming from the space of *satvik* food," he explains. "As for the common ingredients found today, most of them have come to India via trade. The Mughal emperors introduced richness to cuisines and the use of spices and dairy products. As for the cooking methods Mughals introduced Indians to slowly cooked gravies and meats," says Mihir.

Babur is said to have brought with him the tradition of dried fruits and grilled meats. His son, Humayun, carried it forward, introducing a variety of *pilafs* and *biryanis*. Marriage to Rajput princesses gave another interesting dimension to this cookery. *Panchmel dal* was a Mughal favourite to such an extent, that by Shah Jahan's reign, the royal court had its own recipe for *Shahi Panchmel dal*. It also held a position of honour on Aurangzeb's dining table who fancied the dish way more than the roasted meat. Just like Akbar, Murad too was a lover of Rajasthani *toor dal* and ordered his cooks to create a lighter version. During this time of experimenting, the cooks created a velvety and sweet *toor dal*, served in a bowl of betel nut leaf and garnished green chillies, onion and *amchur*. And hence the *Moradabadi* dal was born. Surprisingly, even today this dish is prepared and served the exact same way as it was centuries ago!

It is interesting to note that *Awadhi* cuisine of Lucknow is the birth child of the Mughlai cooking techniques and influence.

Dr. Shirin Abbas, who grew up in the heart of Lucknow and is an avid enthusiast of *Awadhi* cuisine tells us, "Most people assume that *Lakhnavi* cuisine is all about non-vegetarian food. That is one myth! Vegetarian as well as non vegetarian dishes, sweetmeats and desserts give a wide range to the cuisine of this region.

Many people cannot distinguish between Mughlai and *Awadhi* delicacies. They also mistake the Hyderabadi or Punjabi versions for *Lakhnavi* cuisine. *Lakhnavi* or *Awadhi* cuisine is all about aromas and flavours. We don't mix up our *biryani* and *pulao*. And no, we do not use tomatoes but curd to flavour our gravies. Summer *shorbas* (light gravies) are often mutton mixed with some vegetables against winter *qormas* (denser gravies) which are richer, spicier, and often include fried and ground onions and dry fruits like almonds or cashew nuts. Must have winter delicacies include *Paaye ka shorba* (Trotters' gravy), Creamy *Nehari* with fluffy, *kulchey* unlike any non-native have ever had and the wholesome *Raan Musallam*, now a rarity except on special occasions even within Lucknow. There is also the pure mutton Stew, *Roghan Josh*, *Mutton Do Pyaza, Pasandey* and *Gosht Chaat* for those who don't care for gravies. And the kebabs…from the *shaami* to *galavati, reshmi, kakori seekhs* to *boti* and *chapli* kebabs and a host of others – these have to be savoured to be truly appreciated. As for the desserts, what's a full meal without a delicate saffron tempered *phirni* or kheer, *shahi tukda* or *zarda* downed with a hot steaming cup of pink cream topped Kashmiri tea… when in Lucknow…indulge the senses! "

> "Most people assume that Lakhnavi cuisine is all about non-vegetarian food. That is a myth!"

Biryanis, Mughlai paratha, murg kebabs, *navratan korma*, naan, *Shahi kaaju aloo, Haleem, murg mosallam* and *boti kebab,* to name a few, are some of the most popular dishes and an important part of the Indian relish. Lip-smacking sweets like *kheer, shahi tukda, firni, sheer korma* and *kulfi* are the gifts of Mughal cuisine.

Rice is the staple food of the North-east. Dumplings and soups made of meat and healthy vegetables define their food customs. Simplistic and minimalistic ways of cooking, but yet extremely tasty, they showed the world that spices are not the most necessary measure for the delectability of the food. All thanks to the Mongolian influence since the thirteenth century! Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Assam and Manipur exhibit high

influence of the Mongolians; their geographic location establishing the cause. Mongolians who settled in these regions brought in some major transformations to the Indian kitchen including the concepts of hot pot and stews. They not only initiated the production and consumption of rice, but also introduced the simplicity in cooking, without elaborate ingredients and methods. Steaming and frying became the most popular ways of cooking. Mustard oil and sugar became prime components.

> "The legendary and all the time favourite chicken manchurian was born in the Indian kitchen, namely, The Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay."

Vegetable oils along with spices like mustard seeds, chillies, pastes and the *paanch phoran* (a mixture of five spices: onion seeds, fenugreek seeds, white cumin seeds, mustard seeds and fennel seeds) started being used after the Mongolian invasion. Yoghurt, coconut, gram flour and maze became common to the kitchens. Milk and cream became a necessity to make dishes and beverages.

The people of the North-East developed a sweet tooth, owing to the Mongol dominance. Some imprints of this influence are also seen in Bengal.

Chinese food has taken its own way of life in India. Recently, there are places that are coming up with authentic Chinese, but what we generally consume is the "Indian-Chinese". It is so fixed in our palates, that it comforts us, irrespective of the fact that it is not even Chinese. Saucy noodles, vegetarian or chicken Manchurian – always fried with corn-starch batter and dipped in garlic sauce, spicy curries; none of this even resembles what China actually consumes. But its so embedded in our culture, that even a normal restaurant will have a Chinese section serving at least varieties of fried rice and soups like sweet corn and Manchow.

It all started back in Calcutta, East India Company's capital, in the 18th century. A prospering trading centre, it led to the migration of Chinese labourers into the country. The first person to come was Yang Atchew, who set up a sugar mill and called his fellow workers to join him. They grew in numbers as days passed by and laid the foundation for India's love for Chinese food. Wherever you go, the feeling of familiarity and belonging makes a great difference. And nothing more than home food makes you feel comfortable, especially in a foreign land. Hence the Chinese natives opened the first Chinese restaurant in Chinatown for their fellow workers, serving everything they used to have back home. Many restaurants came up later, even in the immigrant hubs like Bombay. But sourcing these traditional Chinese ingredients began difficult and expensive. People started looking for local constituents, giving rise to Indian-Chinese. The legendary and all the time favourite chicken Manchurian was born in an Indian kitchen, namely, The Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay. The credit goes to the son of a Chinese immigrant, Nelson Wang, who experimented with Indian ingredients like garlic, red chillies and ginger with a splash of soya sauce and cornstarch for a thick gravy. And hence Manchurian was born.

In year 1498, Vasco Da Gama came to India, creating a wave of changes in the Indian food. He brought with him the ingredient of extreme importance, the element which makes Indian food synonymous to spicy food: the chillies. The utmost influence of the Portuguese can be seen in the Goan cuisine, especially the Catholic food preparation, which has still kept the Portuguese names for the dishes. For instance, the *xacuti, feijoada,* prawn *balchao, cafreal, sorpotel* and *caldeirada,* are all of the Portuguese origin. The colonization created a hybrid culture- tangy, spicy and sweet. Their most significant contribution was the variety of fruits and vegetables they introduced in this land, like potatoes, tomatoes, kidney beans, tapioca, capsicum, corn, groundnuts, cashew nuts, pineapples, pumpkins, passion fruit, *chikoo,* avocado, papaya and guavas from the tropical Caribbean islands. We mistake most of these to be indigenous. Imbibing the use of seafood such as shrimps and prawns, meat like pork and beef in meals is the impact of the Portuguese rule, which generally the Indian taste buds were hesitant to experience. They replaced vinegar with wine to enrich the tangy flavour. Not surprisingly, the most cherished delicacies of Portugal, namely, spicy pork sausage chorizo, porcine recipes, fish *uddamethi*

Photo- pexels.com

(mackerel in a tangy sour curry with fenugreek seeds) and *pao* are the Goan favourites too! The dessert lovers also got their share of assortments to calm their cravings; the traditional bebinca cake, *petas de freiras, dedos de dama, pasteis de Santa Clara and pasteis de natas.*

Goa's *vindaloo*, which came in 1510 is another contribution by Portugal. It came with the Portuguese sailors who preserved their meat in vine and garlic to increase its longevity. Fiery hot pork curry, it is made from red chillies, spices and vinegar. But wine being contradictory to the local faith, it was replaced with black pepper and tamarind combination to preserve the sourness and native taste. But the *vindaloo* we get today is made from the distilled vinegar of coconut toddy, a local alcohol drink extracted from fermented sap of a palm tree.

The practice of splitting milk to prepare sweets or *chenna* inspired a whole new recipe book across the country. The *Roshogulla* and *Sandesh* of Bengal are the result of this practice. Even cottage cheese or *paneer* is obtained using the same method. When Portuguese moved to the regions of Bandel near Hooghly, they encouraged the locals to learn the artistry of curdling of milk and use it in their daily cooking.

> "The gourmet Indian food that we call today was actually the food cooked in the royal palaces during the British reign."

One of the most marvellous creations and very rare to find now, the Bandel Cheese, is said to have been cooked by Burmese cooks who experimented with this recently gained skill.

All these aspects make Goan food so richly flavoured, after all it is about the juncture of flavours and influences. This legacy has given Goan food a cosmopolitan appeal, with a very European flavour, but the Indianness still lingering.

No Indian breakfast is complete without a hot, steaming cup of tea or coffee. Late afternoons, sitting beside a window, reading a book or newspaper and sipping hot cup of tea, what a perfect way to end the day! Rainy days make *garma garma chai* along with *bhajji* a much-awaited feast. Basically, Indians and tea or coffee are like photography and light. Inseparable. But guess what, these local beverages which reside in the hearts of every Indian are actually the influences of the British!

The Anglo-Indian cuisine is the manifestation of the British Raj in India. The interactions between the British wives and the cooks lead to the consolidation of Britain savours in Indian cookery. Flexibility and diversity was introduced to the kitchens, European cooking styles making their way in, and expanding the variety multifold. Indians assimilated the practice of grilling on cast iron pans and roasting. With assortment of spices like nutmeg, ginger, cinnamon, licorice and clove came English snacks like cucumber sandwiches, lemon-curd tartlets, dinner rolls, cookies and sponge cake. Whiskey came with these colonizers. The gourmet Indian food that we call today was actually the food cooked in the royal palaces during the British reign. A wide range of soups, salads, food items like spicy English pork chops marinated with chillies and spices seeped in the Indian food. Moreover, the tradition of consuming curries, a little thinner than the Mughals, with rice began. One great example is the Mulligatawny soup. Coming from the two Tamil words *milagay* (chilli or pepper) and *tanni* (water), it is very similar to *rasam*. Made using vegetables, seven to eight spices and water thickened to give a soup like consistency, chicken and mutton are also added occasionally.

Photo- pexels.com

And how can one forget the luscious and zesty Railway Mutton Curry? Still famous in Calcutta, it is the speciality of the British Raj. When the British used to travel by train, some cooks accompanied them who would make scrumptious meals during the journey. This is when the British developed a fondness for the home-made *Mangshor Jhol* (mutton curry). Made with very many spices, coconut milk was used to tone it down, and it was served with rice or flatbread.

Our kitchen manners were also altered drastically. Forks, spoons, butter knives replaced the fingers. Dining tables came in place of kitchen floors as a space to eat in. Porcelain plates started getting used instead of banana leaves.

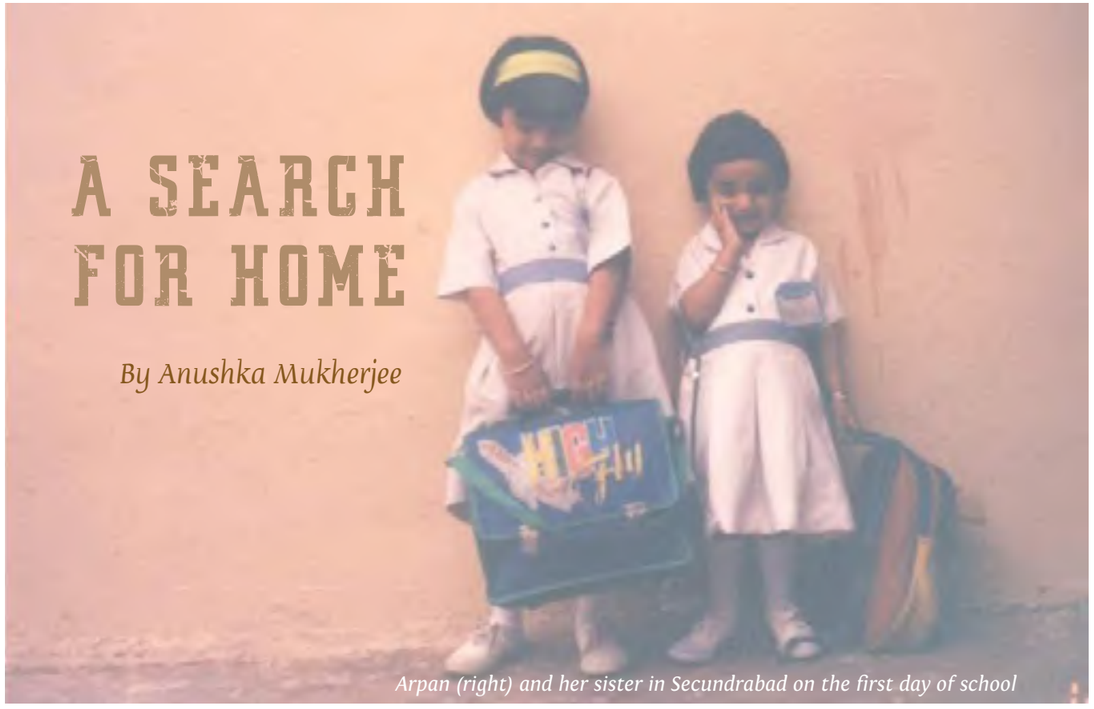
The British too were so fascinated with our delicacies, that they took some back home, and, of course, customized it according to their preferences. *Kedgeree* is one such dish. Evolved from the *khichdi*, the English who enjoyed it took it back and presented it as a breakfast item. Made from rice, hard-boiled eggs, fish pieces and sometimes chicken, it is topped with butter or cream. Sometimes lemon juice and parsley are also used as toppings.

When the British came to India, they relied on jams, marmalades, pickles and chutneys as they could be preserved for a long time. They loved the chutneys so much that they took it to the West. Today, tomato chutney, mint chutney and coriander chutney are famous worldwide.

In such a diverse country like India, food practices and tastes change from household to household. Each one has their own recipe, a unique angle to the same dish. The migrations of cultures in, out and across India have affected the culinary practices to a large extent, but India has managed to inculcate it and grow with it. With so many invaders coming in to dominate this land, their imprints are still seen in the food that we consume every day. India as a land always welcomed change and adapted to it. Somewhere, we define our roots in them. We see our history, our struggle and our victory in it. We instilled in us their practices, not forgetting where we actually came from. Holding the traditional and authentic with one hand, we have embraced the contemporary food fusions with the other hand. We as a country have understood the importance and value of the culture, with many trying to preserve it through means unknown. India has been a host to many migrant foods – and now, the food of India travels far and wide, carving itself a niche around the words. We truly define what diversity means!

A SEARCH FOR HOME

By Anushka Mukherjee



Arpan (right) and her sister in Secundrabad on the first day of school

You'd think Arpan is ticking Indian cities off of a fourth-standard geography textbook in rapid fire speed – Chandigarh, Delhi, Hyderabad, Nagaland, Ooty, Ahmedabad, Shimla, Pune – but she's only answering a simple question I asked: where are you from?

Arpan Cheema paints a picture of growing up in transit. She's been in Pune for nearly three years now, studying journalism, but this might be the longest she's been in one place. It's easy to listen to her and play a sepia-toned reel of growing up as a military kid, changing homes, friends, lives. But it's not as easy to understand how the constant migration shapes a child. Jayashri Nambiar, on the other hand, has never moved cities. A mother of two, she tells me with heartful conviction that she grew up in Thane – she knows it inside out – but when I ask Aunty if that's her home, she hesitates. Sure, it's her parents who migrated from Kerala to Thane, but her childhood home in Kerala – is just as much her home as the one in Thane. My own grandfather has always been stoically nostalgic about his childhood in Haveri, a small village in North Karnataka. Though we were frequent visitors, it was all we were – visitors. Ajja always went back home, and came back with a piece of it to cherish. Though he migrated to Vadodara to work, we always knew that what made Ajja Ajja was all the Haveri-coloured stories we grew up listening to.

MIGRATION & IDENTITY

Job interviews, class introductions, first dates: there's one too many instances of the good old days in our lives to not think about self-identity. More often than not, the ready and rehearsed answer is where you're from. In India, where you're from speaks for a good part of your identity: the language you speak, the food you eat, the culture you grew up in. When you grapple with your own identity, it is easy to hold onto to the steady pillar of your roots – which is exactly what pushed me to think about migration. When you move away from home, how far do you move away from your identity? Does home mean different things for your parents than for you? Thankfully, my unending questions are answered in conversations about growing up.

> "The feeling of displacement is real... you start looking for a feeling of belonging to one place."

WHERE IS HOME?

With a different maths syllabus every year, summer vacations in a breezy Kerala home and moving to a strange city with a suitcase and no place to sleep.

"My family has been in the army for four generations," Arpan tells me. "We're originally from Chandigarh, but when people ask, I feel weird saying it. I haven't even lived in Chandigarh for too long!" Arpan was born in Hyderabad and spent her formative years down South, which lay down the foundation for what influenced her food habits, the arts she learned, the languages she understands. What stood out to me were Arpan's two years in Nagaland, spent amidst border tensions, and a culture completely unknown to her. Eventually, she flit from state to state until Delhi won the race for what can be called home for Arpan.

For three years, I've heard about my friend Gayatri's family home in Kerala. Green, sultry summers spent in the constant cacophony of relatives: running around as kids, whispering secrets to cousins as teenagers, and spending lazy afternoon hours on the dining table as adults. Gayatri's mother, Jayashri aunty, tells me a different story of migration. "I grew up in Thane, but with a strong attachment to my roots in Kannur. In a year, I would spend three months there," Aunty says. She never physically migrated – but the folds of migration have always enveloped her. "The feeling of displacement is real," she admits. "Especially at a later age, when you start looking for a feeling of belonging to one place. For me, there is definitely a sense of nostalgia attached to Kerala, but I feel that Thane is my home."

My grandfather, Narayan Rao Moktali, starts speaking to me in English (he knows this is a professional interview), telling me about his childhood spent helping his father in the field near Haveri, wreaking havoc with his friends, scraping together enough money to study in Dharwad. But without realizing it, Ajja slips into Kannada, his stories easing into a familiar rhythm that skips the one beat that it takes to translate thoughts from your mother tongue to a borrowed one. Ajja moved to Vadodara 60 years ago, with a job in hand, but no bed to sleep. Much like the beloved Blanche DuBois, he depended on the kindness of strangers. While a man he met

in the canteen welcomed him into his home on his first day in Vadodara, a landlord later on made sure that he found a place to stay even after he was asked to vacate his current room. "Vadodara was very kind to me," he admits. "Every step of the way, people accepted me, and helped me move forward." Ajja is quite adamant in his stance: 60 years on, he is a proud Kannadiga, who owes his 'home' to the comfort of Vadodara.

LANGUAGE & ART

"I'm embarrassed to admit that I don't know Punjabi," Arpan says. It's not for the lack of trying, though. "I've tried to learn, but my parents don't speak in Punjabi, and I grew everywhere except Punjab. I had a new third language in school every year, but not my mother tongue."

The association of language to identity is strong for me. It has helped me connect to my grandparents, to relatives from my hometowns, and to the culture to the I belong to. This is why the loss of language intrigues me: how important is it, after all? Jayashri aunty thinks in Malayalam and English. The latency is low, as far as she is concerned. "I'm comfortable in both languages, Marathi and Malayalam, which is why I never feel lost." Language does bind you to your identity, as Aunty explains. For my grandfather, as well as my grandmother, of course, it wasn't only important to speak in Kannada, but also make sure their children and grandchildren learn it. "Away from home, language is how you can keep you culture alive. It's not just about our identity, it's also about our children's."

My grandparents, Shreedevi Moktali and Narayan Rao Moktali, posing for a wedding photograph

CULINARY STORIES

In India, the food changes every few kilometres. It has always been so directly influenced by the climate, the religious preferences, the local tastebuds, that one of the biggest changes that of migrating within the country is a change in food habits. At the same time, food helps pass the baton of identity from generation to generation, in family recipes and cooking traditions. "My food habits have suffered immensely," Arpan tells me. I'm hardly surprised. She switched from a diet of only rice to paratha as she moved from south to north – and then jumping directly to her years in Nagaland, which changed the way she saw food completely. "I learnt that nothing is inedible," she explains. "In Nagaland, people ate everything: from dogs to frog legs to bees. It was a delicacy, in fact. You don't have the privilege to be picky about food."

Jayashri Aunty amuses me with a rather controversial take. "We make our traditional food at home often of course…but when I see *panipuri, chaat and vadapav* on the street, I realise there is nothing I like more!" She makes me wonder if the idea of taste travels down generations. Maybe not – but the feeling of Bombay, of its affinity with street food, certainly travels across cultures to win the race.

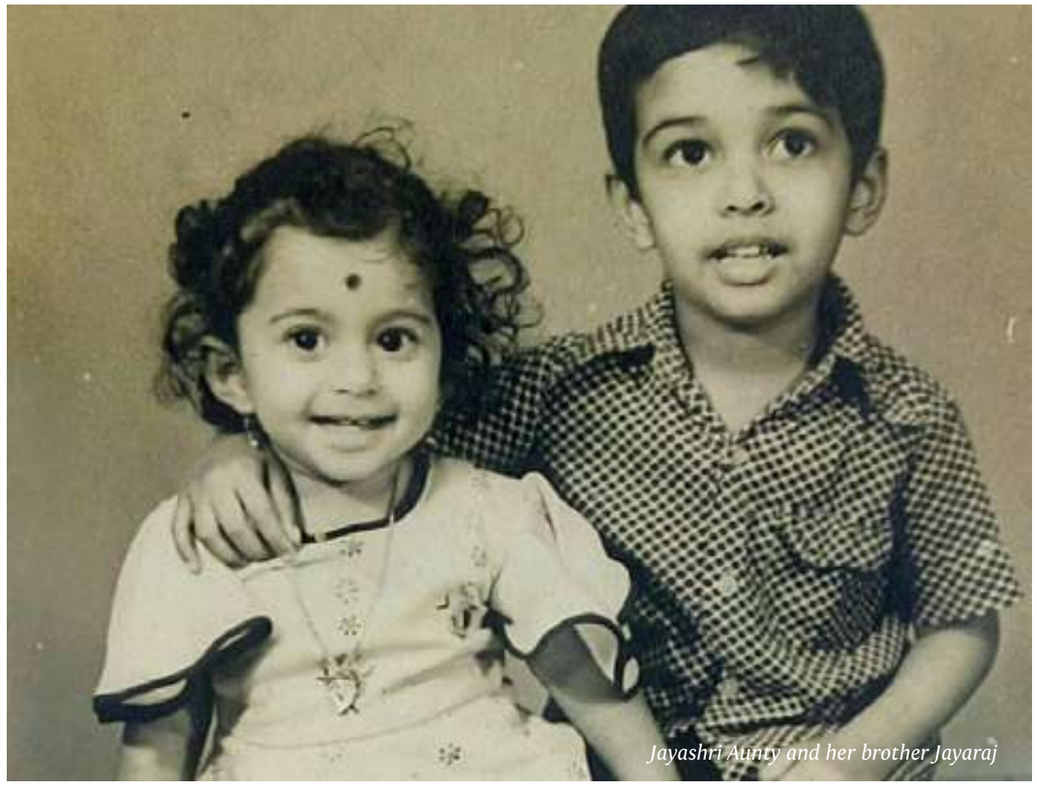
"I had to make do with whatever I could afford, for the longest time," Ajja informs me. The idea of food, of identity, of culture often takes backseat when one is struggling to put two square meals together. "When I was in college, I had to move from Dharwad to Hubli, so that my mother could send me a *dabba* in the bus from Haveri everyday. I'd manage two meals from that one *dabba*, and send it back with the bus conductor." It feels almost surreal to hear about eating this way: but away from his home, a mere *dabba* acted as his thread to his identity. Some of my most favourite food comes from my grandparents kitchen – soft, hand-pounded *thalipeeth* dripping with homemade butter, steaming hot bhakris with a brinjal curry, sweet *puranpolis* that will crumble to golden-yellow goodness at touch. I am a few generations away from the food of Ajja's *dabba*, but maybe in my memories of growing up with him, I saw how a simple, tasty fare at the dining table, reminiscent of home, could trigger some of his strongest memories, 60 years later.

WHAT SETS YOU APART

"I have collected something from every place that I've lived in," Arpan tells me, "Earrings, clothes, souvenirs, small knick-knacks"; a thing of intrigue, but not surprise. In the brief time I've known her as a classmate, Arpan has always stood out: fun, chunky jewellery to complement her outfits, the mundane centre T-shirt styled with a skirt you'd never find on the racks of outlet stores, her hair rolled up in colourful ribbons and satins and rolls of bright wire. Arpan finds it easy to find her identity in how she dresses up, and I ask her: how much of that is shaped by her migration? Maybe she hadn't though about it before – but in recounting small stories of picking up trinkets from places she called home, she realizes how much her migration built to her identity.

> "Growing up with my grandfather, I saw how a simple, tasty fare at the dining table, reminiscent of home, could trigger some of his strongest memories, 60 years later."

What makes Jayashri Aunty stand apart? I ask about how differently migration affected her and her mother, who had to move base early in her life. She points out something so ingrained into our families: "People from my mother's generation, who migrate themselves, are always willing to talk to new people, learn a new culture, make new friends in their society," she explains. "I never felt the need



Jayashri Aunty and her brother Jayaraj

to do so. I felt at home here, just as I felt at home in Kerala." I think about it: while it may seem routine for grandparents to meet in gardens and talk about every little thing, Jayashri Aunty points out that a lot of them are migrants, who take the effort to find new friends, to not feel like outsiders, so far away from home. She doesn't feel this way, though. Migration plays into her life in a way that is makes her feel closer to both places, instead of torn between them. Unlike her mother, Jayashri Aunty doesn't yearn for home, she knows she has two.

In the past few decades, my grandparents have found a home in 'Karnataka Sangha', a group of many families from Karnataka, who reside in Vadodara. "It was easy for us and our children to remember and celebrate who we are, around people with whom we share this culture," my grandfather says. The things that set apart someone who is, now, 60 years away from home, lie in something as important as starting a company with 2 Kannadiga partners or something as little as telling his grandchildren stories from his childhood.

"I belong to India," Arpan tells me, firmly. "Every place I've stayed has lent something to my identity." She sums up the question of identity to me. There is always much to add to it and take away from it, as far as migration is concerned. It is through keeping you food, your language, and your art alive that you find your way back to your identity.

KOLKATA ⟷ HYDERABAD

THE JOURNEY FROM MISHTI DOI TO CURD RICE

By Aayushmita Bhattacharjee

The year was 1999, as Sharmi Bhattacharjee sat in the Faluknuma Express, flanked on either side by her husband and her mother-in law. Over the span of 26 hours, the landscape outside the windows morphed from her beloved Kolkata to the foreign Hyderabad. She tried to damp down the fear that arose at the thought of facing a new city, and an altogether new language.

She would always be eternally grateful that her first few years of marriage, though away from home, were spent surrounded by a predominantly Bengali community – with a handful of North-Indians. But this comfortable bubble was burst whenever she had to attend any social events with her husband in the new city. She couldn't, for the life of her, understand why she had to sit with the ladies while he sat with the gents, when she didn't know the people, the language or the culture. She didn't have the slightest idea of what was going on.

To the untrained eye, she seemed to fit in visually, clad in a saree like every other woman. But she knew better. Her beige cotton saree was a far cry from the vibrant green and purple silks she saw on a woman wearing *hawai chappal*, revealing a toe ring and a thick anklet above. She couldn't escape the long, thick, oiled plaits of hair adorned with flowers no matter where she glanced. She was so

"To the untrained eye, she seemed to fit in visually, clad in a saree like every other woman. But she knew better."

overwhelmed by how out of place she felt that some days, she found herself actually wanting to run away from there.

Within a few weeks, she noticed that all the women and even the young girls would never be spotted without a *bindi* or *bottu*, as they called it. Bengalis never wore a bindi unless with a saree. But here, *bottu* was almost like a sacred symbol of being Hindu. It was an integral constant with every attire of theirs, even a western one, as baffling as that seemed to her. If someone wasn't wearing a *bottu*, they were considered to be a Muslim or a Christian. One day, she was out shopping for vegetables, when even the vendor questioned her, "Why haven't you put a *bottu*? You're newly married." She grew to learn that in the patron city of *bottus*, anyone could question you on your style of dressing.

It was undeniable that there were times when she missed Kolkata. She missed everything that came with her hometown being such a culture-rich city – theatre, dances, dance-dramas, films and of course, the phenomenal actors. In Hyderabad's beautiful, yet vastly different dance performances, she missed the charm of the Bengali stage. Hyderabad might be a patron to several gifted artists, but her memories flocked to the art and the artists of her hometown.

It was no secret that South-Indians did not, usually, tread outside the boundaries of their own cuisine. So, she wasn't surprised when every house she was invited to served up the usual idli, dosa, sambar and curd rice. Take a New Year's Party: she wasn't expecting sambar and rice to be an integral part of the menu, but it wouldn't be "complete" without those. There was also the phenomenon of Hyderabadi Hindi which was completely beyond her understanding. It took her maybe two to three years to get acclimatized to these idiosyncrasies of the city.

Sharmi Bhattacharjee

Fifteen years and four houses later, she moved into a colony that was Telugu through and through. Nobody spoke Hindi, and only a choice few could carry out an entire conversation in English. To say language was a huge barrier would be an understatement. She was forced to learn more of Telugu, especially to communicate with maids and other staff and to connect with her neighbors. People here were not very open to wearing jeans, skirts or anything Western – even keeping your hair short was an abomination. Using more English while speaking set her aside as a "snob". While they exercised caution over their words and spoke conservatively, she blurted whatever was on her mind. Her direct and forthright manner wasn't what they were expecting of her. She didn't feel comfortable attending social events here either – her discomfort brought on by the food, the language gap and the rituals she was expected to know and partake in. What niggled at her most was this distinct sense of judgement they exuded – "Why is this person, who's stayed here in Hyderabad for so long, still not well versed with our culture?"

The differences reflected even in the mindset of the people. Something her friend in this new colony once said stuck with her- "Bengalis are very fast" – because of her attire. People from Kolkata were labelled "forward" owing to them speaking more and freely, and dressing more liberally. She thought back to the times she wore sleeveless blouses with her sarees which invited thinly veiled shock. Wearing anything sleeveless, be it a salwar kameez, a top or a dress, was an absolute no-no here. The orthodox society simply couldn't imagine a middle-aged woman having the gall to wear such audacious clothing. They might let it pass on a teenager or college-goer but a middle-aged mother or married woman? It would definitely attract attention. Though they didn't try to make her feel out of place, she did nonetheless.

But she had to admit, there were extremely helpful people along the way. She found her own niche of people in each community she lived in. Comparing then, when she first shifted base, to now, she felt more at ease – in terms of her relations and understanding with them. 20 years later, she obviously knew their language better, accelerating their acceptance of her. A smile spread across her face as she looked on the brighter side. The kitchen would smell of prawns one week and the next, the aroma of lemon rice wafted out to the streets. She befriended people who were more than eager to let her know what was going on, how things were in their culture and what was supposed to be done when attending a function. They taught her the ropes of local rituals and even partook in Bengali rituals. Daily walks and chatting in the park slowly bridged the gap between the cultures, as she now thought of Hyderabad as home.

Photo: Wallpaperflare.com

TWO TALES OF MIGRATION & IDENTITY

Raghvendra Singh Chouhan looks at stories of two different migrations and how it has impacted the culture of the community.

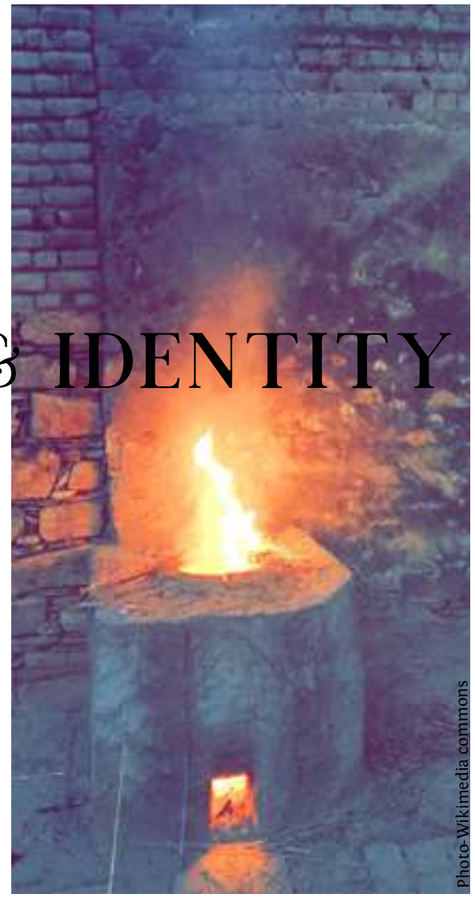


Photo-Wikimedia commons

Every winter in the ground opposite the city headquarters, there it was, the Tibeti Mela. In the small city of Indore, the citizens knew that winter had arrived by two things: one, the smell of *Garam Dhoodh* in the *Chawani* and the other, the tents and banners of Tibeti Mela. When I saw both of these while coming back home from school, I knew it was time for the *razais* to come out of their deep slumber from under the beds.

The Mela is set up for just over 10 days, enough time for a small city to replenish their stocks of woollen clothes. Although it rarely dropped below 15 degrees in Indore, people bought these woollen clothes. Most vendors in the fair are from Kashmir or Tibeti in their lineage, working part-time in this moving fair. This seasonal migration of people from the Northern regions of the country to a small city like Indore in the center of the country is not a new thing.

The famous story of Kabuliwalah by Rabindranath Tagore also talks about a similar cross- country migration. The story was about a dry fruit seller from Afghanistan, who shares a heartwarming relationship with a girl from Kolkata, built over the act of him giving her dry fruits. It talks about the human connection between a girl and a father separated from his daughter. The story is also about migration, about dry fruit traders coming to Kolkata. This cross-country migration now seems impossible, but it was a reality not so long ago.

Over centuries, India has witnessed various waves of migration, from financially-driven migration of Afghans to students from small towns leaving behind their homes for better education in metro cities. It also has many instances of forced migration, one of which made cross country migration of Kabuliwalah now just a story.

Migration that shaped modern India

Delhi, Dilli, or Shahajanabad are found in the stories that chronicle the history of New Delhi. These may seem just names for us, but they are stamps left by the migrants that traded the streets of this historic city in their pursuit of a new home. The most recent edition of Punjabi migrants after the partition has transformed the culture of Delhi once again.

The classic *tandoori* chicken comes to our mind when we think about tandoor. While *tandoori* chicken takes the limelight, sticking on the walls of that *tandoor* is the staple of many diets, the *Tandoori Roti*.

With more than half a million people, most of whom were hailing from the united Punjab, the migration changed the flavors of the Mughal cuisine of Delhi. However, the Tandoor was much more than that. It brought with it a familiar taste from a home that was no more. While we can trace the origin of *tandoor* to Persia, in Indian culture, its standing is largely a result of a migration that was forced upon the people who left their homes with just their identity and culture. Modern India has not only come to be shaped by these people, but it is also because of these migratory cultures that came with them.

The migrants not only found themselves in unfamiliar territory after the partition but also without a kitchen. While most families in Punjab had a *tandoor* at home, they lived in makeshift camps in Delhi. These community *tandoors* of Sanjha *Chulha* concept, that existed in Punjab, now found itself in the heart of Delhi.

People living in refugee camps started community *Tandoors*, where mothers used to come together and make *Tandoori roti* together. The flavor not only gave these migrants a sense of safety, but it also gave India its calling card.

This tradition of community *tandoor* or *Sanjha Chulha* went on for many decades on the streets of Delhi and could still be found in some or the other nook and cranny of old Delhi.

Today, we walk the streets of our cities with the fragrance of that slightly burnt smell of dough and see that chicken skewed over the *Tandoor*. It comes to us as a result of a forced migration that saw the blood of many spilled on the land they cherished.

> “Delhi, Dilli or Shahajanabad are found in the stories that chronicle the historey of Delhi. These may seem just names for us, but they are stamps left behind by migrants”

A Different Story

Walking up the stairs of the building, I realized that we were a bunch of students that each had their own migration story. A Bengali who lives in Jaipur, another Bengali/Kannadiga who lives in Gujarat, a Kashmiri and me from Madhya Pradesh. All of us were here because we chose to study in Pune, migrating from our homes for education and

most probably, afterwards for employment.

While the people during Partition were forced to leave their homes, here we were, choosing to leave ours, and settle somewhere else. The home we were going to belonged to our friend's *Nani* and *Nana*. They had left Kashmir for work well before the 1990s for better employment opportunities, and were now living in Pune. Asha aunty was going to cook us traditional Kashmiri recipes of Dum Aloo and Mutton Rogan Josh. Both these dishes are synonymous wihKashmiri cuisine.

As she started cooking the potato on the simmering oil for that crunchy crust, she began to tell us a story that is all too familiar, yet all too forgotten, in India. Aunty had migrated with her husband Shuban Kishen Rawal to Pune in 1981. In the four decades since, a lot has changed in her life and in the country, but she still insisted on showing us her spices collection. "I still grind my spices, not all though." she said, while showing us the main spices of Kashmiri cooking. "In the olden days, ladies of the house used to grind them together in big *silbattas*". The mention of older days brought a shine into her that glowed throughout, as she cooked both the potatoes and the mutton side by side.

She put the cooker on the burner and started pouring the oil in it. "Rogan Josh requires different kinds of pieces, which are much bigger," she tells us. The statement was later explained to us by Uncle when we sat down to talk. "Rogan josh needs bigger pieces than what you normally get here in Pune. When we first came here, it was difficult to get them – but since then, I have trained a butcher in the city."

Here was a couple who had left their home and their motherland almost 40 years ago, but were still keeping their identity and culture alive – by making do with whatever resources they have. "Not even my friends grind their spices anymore. They also buy from outside and the next generation, too, is not going to do it," said Aunty, with a twinkle in her eye. Uncle, while summing up said to us, "There are two things which establish your identities, one is your language and the second is your food. The day you lose these two, you lose your identity".

Mutton Rogan Josh and Dum Aloo served on a bed of rice: a traditional plate of Kashmiri cuisine

WESTERN INFLUENCES AND INDIAN MUSIC

Tanushi Bhatnagar highlights new and old musical trends in India that have been shaped by western influences

The music of a generation unfurls their culture through and through. Our generation grew up listening to sensational and chart-topping tracks from iconic Yash Raj Films that made even the relentless neighbor sway their hips and the action-packed intense ones which painted a war in front of our eyes.

Then came the Arijit Singh phenomena; rising to fame after releasing *Tum Hi Ho* from Aashiqui 2, there was not a single household that Singh was unheard in. The 2000s were overridden by dance music and sappy love songs, and Bollywood was the only Indian culture that our generation experienced.

Amidst this rat race of endless repetitive love songs during the Arijit Singh Era, Punjabi rappers like Yo Yo Honey Singh and Badshah created a whole new Bandwagon Effect, singing about fast cars, attractive girls, drugs, alcohol and money. The Indian audience was getting exposed to a culture that was never the norm, and somehow, the Yo Yo Honey Singh bandwagon was successful in sparking conversations about hypnotizing blue eyes and *chaar botal* vodka.

However, the challenge that Bollywood had to, and still does face was the redundancy in the kind of music it puts out for its audience. Nepotism, contracts, and biases halted the entry of independent artists. Despite the obstacles, the rise of Youtube and music-streaming services like Gaana and Spotify in the last decade also marked the emergence of Hip Hop, Rap and Indie music in India. Independent artists broke the norm of signing onto a record label, and took their success in their own hands; and thus began the musical revolution in India.

While India sang Shreya Ghoshals, Sonu Nigams, and Sunidhi Chauhans, the underground scene of cities like Mumbai, Delhi, and Shillong spoke the language of Snoop Dogg, Nas, and Tupac. Inspired by 'Ice Ice Baby' by Vanilla Ice, Baba Sehgal became the first-ever rapper of

the country with 'Thanda Thanda Pani' in 1990. However, that was only the start. Artists like Hard Kaur and Bohemia were next to show off what they had to bring to the Indian hip hop culture. Bollywood played their hand in adding rap to dance music, but it was neither hip hop nor taken well by its audience.

With their own take on the hip hop culture of New York and the works of Snoop Dogg, Tupac, and other iconic rappers who defined hip hop to be what it is today, independent artists like Divine, Kalhone, and Naezy created what is known at Desi Hip Hop today. With the help of platforms like Youtube, Spotify, SoundCloud, and Gaana, they have managed to write their own destiny and present their art to their audience. The ideology behind their passion is quite plain sailing; they do not want to jump the Yo Yo Honey Singh bandwagon, talking about cars, demeaning women, and romanticizing substance abuse. They want to live their passion and talk about their struggles, simple things that matter to people, and mundane topics that are seldom touched upon in our daily lives. Divine's 'Jungli Sher' talks about his story, all the way from struggling in the slums to getting the appreciation and love his art deserves. Similarly, Kalhone raps about how Indian rappers should rap more in their native languages and brotherhood across nations and simpler things like a glass of *chai*.

> "Prateek Kuhad, Chai Met Toast, The Local Train... their soulful melodies and relatable lyrics about life and beyond resonate with the Millennials and the Gen Z alike."

In our country, the Desi Hip Hop culture hides in the most unexpected of places. It can be found simmering in a cauldron full of talent in a shady by-lane or the back of a school notebook among diagrams of test tubes, it can be found under the bed, hidden away from a strict parent or amongst hundreds of people in a movie theatre.

THE MELLOW TRIP

Indie music, as many people mistake it to be, is not a genre. It is a lifestyle. It originated from the The Mellow Trip to hard-edged alternative rock, punk, and grunge music. It originated in the United States and the United Kingdom when a group of independent artists did not conform to genres and made music as they wished. The absence of a record label is what marked the distinction between them and mainstream artists.

In the '90s, it was Indian Ocean who sent ripples along the Indian indie wave. They came all the way from crafting a whole genre from scratch to creating the award-winning score of Masaan in 2015. Then followed Parikrama, the Raghu Dixit Project, the band Agnee – a folk-pop band, Indigo Children, who opened for Bryan Adams and Backstreet Boys in 2008, and Thermal and a Quarter, who toured the entire country and abroad revamping and redefining Indian indie culture.


Prateek Kuhad at a performance

Inspired by Indie bands around the world, Indian artists like Prateek Kuhad, When Chai Met Toast, and The Local Train are a massive hit among the youth. Their soulful melodies and relatable lyrics about life and beyond resonate with the Millennials and the Gen Z alike.

Indian indie artists are seldom in search of record labels. Their saving grace is the various music festivals held all around the year. Artists like Papon and the East India Company, Soulmate, When Chai Met Toast, and Prateek Kuhad can be seen performing at NH7 Weekender, Sunburn Goa, Oktoberfest Bangalore, SAARC Music Festival in Delhi and many more including festivals abroad.

Music streaming services also never let them down, since their bread-and-butter is counted by every single stream of their songs. Many of the indie artists believe that they do not need the support of Bollywood. They have entered the music scene to make an identity of themselves by themselves.

To India, music shapes its identity. The very crux of the country lies in its art. While appreciating the vast and diverse culture that is everywhere around us, we should also encourage the new and evolving art forms in the country. The future will be made now, and we are the ones who choose what it shapes into.

WAR \ MUSIC DIVIDES \ UNITES

Ashlin Bangera explores the world of Music as the recent migrations re-shapes the way we think about Fusion Music

Everyone listens to music. Rather, everyone has grown up listening to at least some sort of music. From fans of The Beatles to Pink Floyd to our modern day pop artists, music is a banner, under which we all share similar yet vastly different experiences. Even Indian artists such as A.R. Rahman and R.D. Burman are revered across the world for their stunning versatility in music composition. Music has always been shared among different cultures and has played a crucial role in bringing people together.

Migration is an age-old phenomenon but given the current world scenario, host societies find it perilous to see people migrate in large numbers bringing their cultural traditions along with them. Music can serve as a valuable tool for integration, particularly for group music-making, since it provides a fun and engaging way to link people from different backgrounds with diverse skill sets and expertise levels.

Music is more than just the combination of vocals and musical instruments. It is highly mobile and has the ability to take us to different times and places through our hearts and minds. Musicians, both professional and amateur, bring songs and instrumental music in their memories as they migrate from country to country. In the past few decades, technological developments and modern advancements have allowed music to be captured, replicated and distributed electronically at high speed so that diasporic audiences can access their favorite music anywhere they live. Migrants may be in exile or threatened by closed borders or by the red tape of immigration laws, but music has the ability to cross political boundaries.

Innovative fusions and musical combinations are brought about by the shared influence of different kinds of music from distinct places. Many people want to keep traditional music original; however, the last century has given rise to broad-minded people who want to create something new by combining sounds, instruments and styles from the diverse pool of genres. Music has also been used as a tool for peace and reconciliation, and has been used as an instrument to organize people around common issues. From using Italian 'Bella Ciao' as an anthem for the anti-fascist resistance to singing 'Vande Mataram' with pride, music invokes a powerful emotion in people that can be seen from the works of Musicians Without Borders.

Music can be an important first step in intercultural dialogue. Music can help build bridges between genders, distinct cultures, and different generations. We can instinctively understand music despite being from different walks of life. Even though the language, religion, and history may act as barriers to prevent us from understanding the true essence of the music, we can still interact with different cultures and create new hybrid types. Music helps people understand that multiculturalism is not a threat, while celebrating diversity's elegance and complexity.

Bhangra music in the UK emerged from Punjabi folk songs of *dhol* drumming. They grew in circulation with the help of Bollywood videos and recordings, and were played as wedding dance music. Synthesizers, drum machines, hip-hop and other music styles have migrated from private family gatherings to clubs.

Attempts at fusions with Indian music, especially with jazz, dates back to the late fifties. However, it took the Beatles and the media's insatiable hunger for all the practices of the band to propel Indian music to the center of public awareness. It also made the *sitar* sound a familiar feature of popular culture in the west. The Beatles' association with Indian music and culture launched an explosion of such projects in the field of rock and pop. This caused what was called by Ravi Shankar at the time as 'the sitar eruption'. For a while, many popular bands of the day such as The Rolling Stones, The Yardbirds and so on were gradually using sitar or some other item from Indian music in the background.

Speaking about Jazz Music, Praveen Francis, a professional music teacher said, "Jazz is a storytelling process that takes audiences through a roller coaster of emotions. It begins with a set blueprint in mind, however, as the melody keeps going, improvisation lies at the heart of jazz. For those listening to jazz for the first time, it is recommended that people try out jazz fusions such as Indo-Jazz or rock jazz. The main reason being, jazz in its truest form is difficult to understand."

The late sixties was the time in music culture when the lines between different styles

Photo: pexels.com

> "Indian music became so inextricably linked to pop that Ravi Shankar and Alla Rakha could perform in front of large crowds at events such as the Monterey Festival"

of music became blurred. The Beatles, particularly in their later albums, were at the forefront of this experimentation. Also around this time, Indian music became so inextricably linked to pop that Ravi Shankar and Alla Rakha could perform in front of large crowds at events such as the Monterey Festival in 1968 and be welcomed with the same adulation normally only given to the rock giants. This time was the zenith of the interaction between pop and Indian music.

Speaking about mixing influences in the music spectrum, Bryan Robinson, a singer, and lover of Jazz music said, "Migration of music is a fascinating phenomenon as it leads to the creation of something that is a blend of two distinct melodies. Traditional Carnatic music and Hindustani classical music among others have made their way across the world and are well revered. In the same manner, the concept of disco and the new emerging EDMs are the influences of western music. The migration of music allows musicians and people to learn more about different cultures and brings people from different countries and communities under the same banner – Music."

Jazz musicians were especially concerned with the creation of new forms throughout the forties and fifties. The type of Indian music and how it served as a model of improvisation, the talent that lies at the heart of their own craft, intrigued jazz musicians. One of this genre's biggest legends was Miles Davis's Kind of Blue (1959), with a line-up that included John Coltrane and Miles Davis. The standout element of this album is the modern song form style and the improvisation shape. The soloist was no longer responsible for reaching the chord changes deadline, which allowed for a lighter music piece with more room.

Coltrane was a key influence on other jazz players of the day. He took elements of Indian music as a cultural reference point in a creative ethos that also dealt loosely with influences from Africa and the Middle East, as well as jazz, folk, blues, and Western classical music. What is notable with Indo-Jazz Fusions is that the instrumental forms are noticeably divided when it comes to soloing. The sitar played lines that would be seen in classical Indian music, while the jazz musicians play jazz notes.

The possibilities of music and its combinations are endless. Music is a learning process and every community and genre has learnt something new from each other. The results of this beautiful amalgamation is extraordinary and creates a sensuous entity that is most pleasing to people. The fluid nature of music, its ability to accommodate different genres under the same umbrella, and the constant craving for evolved forms of music keeps migration at the heart of the music industry.

HOW THE DESI TRAVELLED OVERSEAS

Aayushmita Bhattacharjee chronicles the tale of Indian students adjusting to the culture of USA.

In this generation's rat race to succeed, students often find themselves filling out applications after applications to colleges abroad. With the most tedious part – getting accepted – out of the way, they could finally live out the American life they saw oh-so-often in pop-culture.

As is true with almost everything in life, the glossy sheen of hope blurs out the drab details. Amulya Elamanchili and Smriti Haria, two Indian students studying in the US, debunk the notion of understanding Western culture through movies and books. You might think that you're prepared, but nothing really prepares you. Amulya, who is pursuing a degree at Georgia Tech in Atlanta, compares her expectations of what she imagined life in the US would be to the reality that awaited her. A few weeks down, she observes how people throw their arms wide open to the plethora of different cultures that populate her campus. Surrounded by a cultural diversity she had never experienced back home, she attributed the Indian values of respecting all cultures embedded in each child as the catalyst in her transition.

Smriti, studying at Sarah Lawrence College, New York, echoes the same sentiment – labelling India as "a diverse but, for the most part, a homogenous society". She explains how she met people from all over the world; seeing people of mixed races, with different hair and eye colors; experiencing diversity in a whole new sense of the word.

Amulya quickly picked up on the American principle of individualism instilled in everyone that makes them march to the beat of their own drum. She contrasts their need to be independent with India's notion of always having someone to depend on. Being good acquaintances with everyone – from the milkman to the newspaper guy – is a testament to India's community -built environment. Interestingly, they both expressed the lack of stronger bonds between friends here and how you "can't go to the same deep level that you had with people back home." It can be ascribed to the highly competitive college environment. How do you create a circle of friends when only making connections and taking advantage are on the menu?

Rolling your Rs and Ts to make your accent understandable to the cafeteria lady is quintessential to college life. They don't understand you otherwise. As Smriti puts it, "It's a culture shock for them. Indians have a better understanding of America than they do of India because of the sheer amount of American content in India." Their curiosity to learn more about the culture battles with their fear of offending the person; failing to understand that what's offensive to them wouldn't be to her and vice versa. She narrates an incident in her dorm one afternoon where she was eating a boiled egg with her hand. A white classmate of hers looked on with shock and asked, "Can I get you a spoon?"– which, take a guess, was highly offensive to Smriti. Amulya's innumerable experiences with the question "Do you speak Indian?" also challenged her perception that today's America is super advanced culturally. In a hyper-liberal world, micro-aggressions like these should be trodden upon lightly.

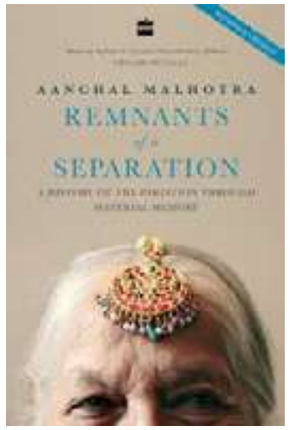
It takes time getting used to adopting the ever-polite mannerisms of America. Tipping waiters, constantly apologizing and saying thank you were never an intrinsic part of Indian culture. Apparently NRI nostalgia didn't get the memo of "time heals everything". The teenagers admit to consuming more Bollywood music and movies here, even watching random Sangeet dance choreography, than they ever did in India. The bland, unseasoned campus food has sparked a newfound appreciation for plain old 'dal'. Infamous for its obesity problem, it's no surprise that finding healthy options in America is a daily struggle.

> "NRI nostalgia didn't get the memo of "time heals everything". The teenagers admit to consuming more Bollywood in USA."

Smriti remarks how "I've never been more conscious of my race and culture", elaborating how their entire childhood, they shunned everything Indian just to be American. Now, after finally coming to America, she looks for any excuse to wear a salwar-kameez. Amulya also initially struggled with blending together her ethnic background with her predominantly western fashion sense. She recalls, "One day, I saw a white girl wearing Indo-western which prompted me to start wearing more pallazos. I've now come to a point in life where I can embrace both sides and not stick out like a sore thumb."

Something Smriti grappled with was having to constantly adjust and re-adjust to both cultures as she flew back and forth. But she came to terms with the fact that that was how life would be like for her. While they both had to cross certain hurdles to acculturate to the US, neither denied that the best way to learn about a country and culture was by living there for an extended period of time. That their migration experiences were different due to coming from economic privilege is a fact they acknowledge and remain grateful for.

BOOK REVIEW



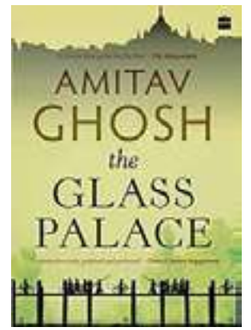
Remnants of a Separation: A History of the Partition Through Material Memory: *Aanchal Malhotra*

Aanchal Malhotra's book, which started as her college's final assignment, looks at the memories of a generation that went through deadliest migration of the subcontinent, Partition. Most Partition books that you find are either memoirs, fictional or interviews of survivors. Remanents of Separation tries to highlight the cultural aspect that sometimes gets overlooked.

In her book, Aanchal interviews 15 people from both sides of the border. Her goal is not to find out about the days of Partition, but stories about precious items that people took with them when they migrated. From pearls given by a Maharaja to a *lassi* glass, Aanchal takes you through colorful memories from a time of Raj. You travel from the mountains of Hindu Kush to plains of Ganges, but with each story, you also understand the hardship of leaving you home, village, and soil with sometimes just what you have on you.

The book is about the objects that did survive this migration. It tells the story of memories that people have now associated with these objects as they are the only port-key for a generation that left behind their soil and culture.

The Glass Palace: *Amitav Ghosh*



Amitav Ghosh weaves an intricate web of storylines in this book to take you through the turmoil of Burma, India, and Malaya as Britishers first capture Burma. Told through Rajkumar, a migrant Indian living in Burma, who falls for one of the caretakers of ousted Burma royalty, the book takes the reader to the Kingdom of Burma as it starts to fall into the hands of East India Company, and transports you to India and Malaya as both the countries brace for World War 2. The book, at its heart, is a love story that transcends generation. It starts as a love story between Rajkumar and Dolly but then not only shows this relationship go through various hurdles of marriage and love, but it also shows us, love, as it develops in a country on the brink of war. Love that dies too quickly and leaves the living dead in its wake.

The book also explores issues related to Migrants, from facing discrimination to rising through the ranks via money. As World War 2 starts, Rajkumar finds himself in a fix as to which land to call home; his adopted land, where he earned his living, or the land where he was born.

Recipes

AVOCADO KALAKAND

Every special meal is incomplete without a sweet! But what if you're sweets are as healthy as your meal? So we have for you a recipe which is a perfect weave of nutrition and dessert!

- Add the avocado pulp and sugar in a heavy bottomed non-stick pan. Cook the mixture until the sugar has dissolved completely.
- If you are using cardamom, powder the seeds fine and keep aside.
- Add crumbled paneer (cottage cheese) to the pan and keep stirring until it is thick.
- Once the mixture begins to leave the sides of the pan, switch off the pan. Add the cardamom powder and mix well.
- Take a rectangular metal mould or a plate. Grease it well with oil or *ghee*. Transfer the mixture to the mould and spread it evenly using the back of a spoon or a spatula. Make sure to keep a thickness of about one inch.
- Garnish with sliced almonds and chopped pistachios. Press them gently into the mixture with the back of a spoon.
- Refrigerate for 2-3 hours until firm. Dice and serve!

Ingredients

- Crumbled Paneer (Cottage Cheese) – 1 cup
- Avocado pulp – half a cup
- Sugar – half a cup
- Cardamom – 5 pods
- Sliced almond – 2 tbsp
- Chopped pistachio – 2 tbsp

Serving: 12 -16 pieces

Key to WORD SEARCH on Page 3

I	T	M	B	W	I	S	O	U	V	E	N	I	R	D
C	N	R	O	I	H	D	T	E	T	Y	H	H	O	I
O	O	F	A	D	R	E	E	O	R	I	G	I	N	S
M	A	R	L	D	E	T	R	N	P	U	Q	S	U	P
M	S	N	E	U	I	R	H	I	T	D	O	T	X	L
U	S	I	Q	S	X	T	N	P	T	I	Q	O	M	A
N	I	D	E	S	E	F	I	I	L	A	T	R	I	C
I	M	M	I	L	G	T	T	A	Q	S	A	G	Y	G	E
T	I	A	I	A	I	A	T	M	N	A	C	E	R	M
Y	L	S	O	O	N	T	L	L	I	K	T	E	A	E
Q	A	P	B	S	U	G	I	G	E	L	L	I	T	N
H	T	O	I	F	Z	R	U	M	I	M	Y	P	O	T
O	I	R	K	M	N	C	N	A	A	A	E	D	R	N
M	O	A	P	E	O	P	L	E	G	C	Y	N	Y	K
F	N	B	O	R	D	E	R	S	Y	E	Y	Q	T	C

Recipes

MOTICHOOR GOLGAPPE WITH BASUNDI SHOTS

LET'S MAKE YOUTH PARTIES ENJOYABLY SOBER! HOG DOWN YOUR FAVOURITE GOLGAPPAS, FILLED UP TO THE BRIM WITH MOTICHOOR AND GET DRUNK ON THE KESAR BASUNDI SHOTS AND YOU TWIST AND TWIRL TO THE DANCE BEATS!

For Basundi:

- Soak saffron in 2 tsp hot milk, keep aside. Chop finely or crush coarsely, the almonds and pistachios.
- Peel and powder cardamom seeds with a mallet.
- Add to chopped dry fruit.
- Crush the saffron with the base of a mallet and dissolve it in milk.
- Put the milk to boil in a large deep pan, stirring occasionally.
- When it starts boiling, reduce the heat. Stir frequently until the milk is down to 2/3 in volume.
- Add all the other ingredients to the boiling milk.
- Boil further for 3-4 minutes. Take off fire. Cool a little.
- Pour into a large decorative serving bowl.
- Allow to cool completely, chill in the refrigerator for 4-5 hours.
- To avoid a layer forming on the surface, stir frequently while cooling.

For *Golgappe* and Shots:

- Crumble the *motichoor laddoos* and put into a bowl.
- Arrange shot glasses on a serving platter and pour chilled *kesar basundi* in each glass.
- Make a hole on the top side of the golgappe puris, fill them with the crumbled *motichoor laddoos,* and keep them over the shot glasses.
- Drizzle strawberry crush and chocolate sauce over the *puris,* garnish with almonds, pistachios and mint leaves and serve immediately.

INGREDIENTS

FOR BASUNDI:

- 1 LITRE FULL FAT MILK
- 1/2 CUP SUGAR
- 3 PODS CARDAMOM
- 5 ALMONDS BLANCHED
- 3 PISTACHIOS SKINNED
- 10-15 THREADS SAFFRON

FOR GOLGAPPE AND SHOTS:

- MOTICHOOR LADDOOS - 6 TO 8
- KESAR BASUNDI, CHILLED - 1 AND HALF CUPS
- GOLGAPPE PURIS – 8
- STRAWBERRY CRUSH - 2 TBSPS
- CHOCOLATE SAUCE - 2 TBSPS
- ALMONDS,
- PISTACHIOS,
- FRESH MINT

SERVING: 6-8 PIECES

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