# Anti-Patterns of Performance and Bhartiya Practices

"The medium is the message," said communication theorist Marshall McLuhan (Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, 1964).

What McLuhan referred to in this phrase is "the psychic and social consequences of the designs or patterns as they amplify or accelerate existing processes," as in his views, the 'message' of any medium or technology is "the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs."

Pattern recognition forms a significant part of human observations, but in computer technology, the idea of 'Anti Patterns' exists too.

So, what are the Anti-Patterns, and how do they work?

To see that we can recall the Boeing 737 Max crash catastrophe, that happened between October 2018 to March 2019 (Yglesias 2019). In October 2018, a Boeing 737 Max passenger jet crashed shortly after take-off, off the coast of Indonesia, and five months later, following a similar pattern, another 737 Max crashed in Ethiopia. After investigations, it was widely reported that a flight control software fix known as MCAS (Manoeuvring Characteristics Augmentation System) was one of the key factors that led to the two crashes that killed 346 people. The company tried hard to push the blame on the software malfunction (and even tried to push the blame further on an Indian IT company too) but from the accounts of those involved and their own country's detailed investigation reports, it came to the surface, that the technology involved was not an isolated factor that contributed to that disaster, it was a part of a series of slip-ups! From economic incentives/drive for profits to culture to system engineering to sales process to training to user interface and documentation, every aspect that expected to yield some advantage instead proved deadly anti-patterns for the stability and performance of the aircraft. And the way those small leakages in their overall working culture/approach, got unnoticed and undocumented in the first crash and surpassed the system again to make their way to the second, reflects the very nature of the 'Anti-Patterns.'

In 1995, programmer Andrew Koenig first coined the term "Anti Pattern" in his article published in the Journal of Object-Oriented Programming. His core idea was that: an Anti-Pattern often seems like a good approach when you begin,

but slowly it leads you into trouble. In simple words, these are not some types of flaws, bugs, or errors that could surface in routine observations, as these practices initially appear to be beneficial and rewarding, but ultimately, they result in seriously damaging consequences.

This is one of the key problems with anti-patterns that they look trivial, useful, attractive, and relevant, at the beginning, and due to that illusion, those who follow them often lack the interest/desire to anticipate that in the long run, they can pave the way for unprecedented disaster too.

### Performance Culture of Bharat – Some Background

The performance ethos of our people is rich and most praised in the world, and that reflects in the numbers and volume of our active participation in the skills/performance-based industries and domains across different geographies.

The philosophy behind 'Performance culture' of Bharat is a bit unique. It is based largely on mutual respect, cooperation, coexistence, and mutual harmony. One can say that by culture, temperament, and by tradition, we are qualitatively different from Western societies. And what differentiates us from the rest is that our people are not vocal about their acts, they are the silent doers, and do not believe in claiming or proclaiming something. There are millions of such silent/unsung/unpraised performers, who far from any limelight doing the heavy lifting for the current trajectory of the country. It is the Performance culture of Bharat, which is one of our core assets, and a crucial differentiator as well!

### What is changing?

Today, there are over 750 million smartphone users in India, and we are going to touch the billion mark soon! According to some rough estimates, an average internet user spends over 6 to 6.5 hours a day online, which is close to a full day work shift.

We are aware of the fact that the imported 'Medium' and 'Technology' on which our people are engaged so intensely has a character and a psychology of its own, and it is visibly bringing a radical psychological/behavioural shift/transformation in the lives of our common people.

While we are always open to change, we must also observe/review and monitor what kind of transformation it would be. And at what level is it going to impact our behavioural patterns?

**Technology Led Anti-Patterns of Performance**

*"The most important thing about a technology is how it changes people"* — Jaron Lanier, You Are Not a Gadget.

**Roast Culture Anti-Pattern**

Trolling is a thing of the past. These days our youths are enjoying a new kind of dope on social media platforms called 'Roast.'

The idea of Roast or Roasting (insult comedy/mockery in the form of humour) is not new but what has changed now is that it is now becoming one of the leading flavours in different domains, be it politics, religion, economy, or even education.

Why such a flavour is leading? Because it's easy, interesting, and entertaining, and gives a different kind of psychological pleasure of having an upper hand on something, be it an issue, event, or a topic of discussion.

In India, the trend of Roasting, in its current form, started back in 2015, with AIB Knockout, which sparked big controversies and public backlash (FIRs) due to their lewd comments/acts and obscene shows, which finally led to the shutting down of their production (FirstPost Staff 2015). But the irony is that, within a matter of a few years, today all that seems a part of the mainstream, and today hundreds of more crude and pornographic daily shows/shorts called 'Roast' are going live on almost all popular social media platforms. Their hosts and audiences both often fall in the age group of 12 to 30 years of range, and the daily viewership/engagements of these roasters cum influencers are in the millions.

From an outer level, these small trends seem harmless and unnoticeable. India has a rich background of experimenting with all sorts of ideas and all forms of creative improvisations. One can always find a reference in history and can prove that there is nothing new about it, and in some form or other, it was always there!

Some even consider participating in daily 'Roast,' with a sense of duty toward the nation (mainly social/political roasts) and there is nothing wrong in having that sense too. But we cannot ignore the fact that the very nature of the

current platforms of 'Roasting' is such that performance and roasting cannot go hand in hand, the higher one start enjoying the dope of Roasting, the lower he/she will turn in terms of performance.

The emerging 'Roast' culture has no comparison to plain mockery, comment, or sarcasm (व्यंग्य) kind of ideas, as the character of this 24/7 connected medium/technology is a bit different from all other forms of communication in the past. Those who participate in this, undergo a different kind of psychological journey, starting from collecting interesting ideas (regularly) to formatting/styling and sharpening their content, so that it gets the most hits, but it does not even stop there, in fact, the real pain starts from there! How many people saw it, liked/shared, and commented on it, how people are responding/entertained by it, it's an endless loop of anxiety and reactions, like a pigeon pecking continuously to seek some return or rewards!

This psychological element was absent in all previous forms of media and communication tools. And as a culture 'Roasting' today is no more limited to entertainment or journalism alone, people from all walks of life have already started enjoying and participating in that.

*"Each of us has an inner troll... Don't let your inner troll take control!"*- Jaron Lanier, Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now

The problem with Roasting/trolling is that a mind that starts participating in them cannot continue to remain interested in performance. In our case, we have examples of some of our northern states, where earlier commenting/roasting each other, was promoted as a part of their local cultural norms/exchanges, but gradually, despite having all the potential talent/resources at home, they started ignoring their performance temper! And today, they lag, in almost all basic performance indices, as compared to other states. A region that was once a major contributor to the economy, today seeks pride in demanding 'special status,' (of backwardness).

In a nutshell, it's a trend, an overdose of which has the potential to disrupt not just individuals and societies but the larger performance culture of the country, in the long run!

**Claim Culture Anti Patten**

"If I'm a thief, no one on the planet is honest," claimed a sitting chief minister. In parallel to that some wrestlers claim their fight against the sitting WFI chief,

as the fight for all women of the country, and without waiting for any kind of legal proceedings to take a course, they are on the streets, organizing political forums, inviting non-state player's interference, daring government agencies for consequences, and calling foreign intervention to malign the image of the nation on the international stage, and at the same time claiming their right to do so since that they brought honour to the nation and national flag, through their sports.

Thousands of years back, great Tamil saint and poet Shri Thiruvalluvar Ji wrote: "*The great are always humble, And the small lost in self-admiration,*" (Kural 978).

Claiming, self-proclaiming, self-admiration, and self-declaration kind of traits, were never a part of Bhartiya culture. We are a people with a sense of dharma (duty), and those who believe in performing their duty, and never claim/proclaim or admire for themselves, it is their acts that speak, and the society and surroundings give them such honour in return. But unfortunately, next to Roast Culture, the Claim Culture is the second most prevailing tech-led behavioural anti-pattern, taking shape in our people.

From the last few events, we can observe a trend of protests often starting with a pitch to claim something (as happened in the case of farms laws and Shaheen Bagh protests, etc.) which then gradually takes a wrong turn, and sometimes turn violent too! And what is consistent in all these cases, is the facilitation, illusion, and undue limelight, which technology/social media platforms offer, to fuel/amplify such sentiments.

It's not that earlier such claim or protest culture was not there but what has changed now is that now these claims/protests sound more irrational and aggressive, and the reason for that lies very much in the character of that medium, on which are our people are hooked in 24/7.

Such algorithmic hallucinations of 'entitlement/claim' are only going to get more intensified in the future! And if the trajectory will continue like this, what we can expect to see next? Rise of the 'Compensation culture'? A socio-cultural malfunction of Western economies!

Now the question is: Can a country of 1.4 billion, afford to import such cognitive disorders/ideas/obsolete trends from other parts of the world?

## Paundraka (पौंड्रक) Syndrome Anti Pattern

'मैं ही वासुदेव' "I am the only Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vasudeva" proclaimed Paundraka (पौंड्रक), the king of Pundra Kingdom. He imitated Krishana Bhagwan, and called himself incarnation of Vishnu. His sycophants helped him to build up his false public image. Under the false impression of thinking himself the Supreme Lord, Paundraka sent his messenger to Dwarka to challenge the position of Kṛiṣhṇa. But despite his claims and possessions of different false symbols (false Sudarshana Chakra, Kaumodaki gada, and Panchajanya shankha etc.) no one believed in him and he finally met his fate via real Sudarshana Chakra of Vishnu Bhagwan.

If we see around, we find that the current environment encourages, such kind of 'Paundraka Syndrome.' One can observe several such digital paundrakas around! As long as it is merely a syndrome, it can be ignored or laughed out, but what if such Paundraka Syndrome, culminated into some kind of success model? And chances of that happening in a democracy, are not that thin!

Ukraine can be seen as one of the most recent and classic examples of that, where a comedian/actor (despite having no background in public life), first displayed and later declared himself as the "Servant of the People", via his popular TV series and a majority of Ukrainians not only started perceiving him in that light but virtually elected him to the highest seat of the government. Zelenskyy ran the entire presidential campaign in a virtual mode, avoiding human contact with his electorate, and addressed his voters through YouTube shorts, TikTok, and Instagram posts and garnered millions of views.

Paundraka Syndrome, combined with the power of technology, has the potential to disrupt the political culture of democracy, if one can pretend to be something without performing anything on the ground, then where there is a need to be accountable for performance?

## Golden Hammer Anti Pattern

The belief that there is a technology or tool that significantly improves productivity and reduces errors without significant drawbacks, is often called the Golden Hammer Anti-Pattern. It's a kind of cognitive bias, that involves an over-reliance on a familiar tool, and as the American psychologist Abraham Maslow, to whom the concept is attributed, said (1966): "If the only tool you have is a hammer, it is tempting to treat everything as if it were a nail."

So, the idea that information is the most potent tool to deal with all kinds of national challenges that we face today, is somewhere the beginning of getting trapped by the golden hammer anti-pattern. When our ideas, culture, and identity were attacked by information weapons, the natural response was that we must fight it with the counter information products. And that worked too! But we cannot ignore the fact that there is a limit to promotion/awareness traffic, and too much of anything is detrimental to health.

Now with the launch of new and improved AI-based tools for digital content creation, in audio/video and text, all possible forms, AI-generated graphics/animations/visual effects, on the click of a mouse, all these will further accelerate creative temptations in the future. Soon there will be more producers of information than consumers! But the question is where the trajectory will head in the future and what will be the next stage?

## What's Next? – Hammer on the idea of Information

In this information warfare, where all we have is information to counter information, somewhere, the idea of information is losing its relevance and nearing a 'point of collapse'!

Today, shortening attention spans and lack of concentration are some of the most serious issues for our youngsters, and we cannot ignore the possibility that if an overdose of information continues like this, they will gradually lose their interest or taste in any kind of information, no matter how pertinent it is for national interests.

It seems that the attempts to curb information malaise with an overproduction of information, have their own limitations, and now they are becoming more like a hammer on the idea of information itself!

## What is Seen, can't be Unseen!

A few days back in an interview to CNN, Google's former chief Eric Schmidt pointed out that (Schmidt 2023): "things that are seen cannot be unseen and that's especially true of video. So, when you produce a fake video, even if you tell people that it's fake, even if they know before they watch it, it changes their behaviour for reasons we don't fully understand," that implies that no amount of awareness and facts can erase the visuals or undo what's seen, from the human minds, it is not wired in that way. These days how to protect their kids from violent, abusive, crude pornographic content that is flooding

online is one of the key topics of discussions in the home country of these platforms itself.

## Mad Pitbull in Kindergarten

*"The danger isn't that AI destroys us. It's that it drives us insane"* Jaron Lanier.

Will you let a mad Pitbull in the kindergarten, where your kids are playing, with the hope that one day either your kids or the mad dog, will for sure learn how to survive with the other? Such is the dilemma for policymakers around the world.

A few days back US Surgeon General Dr Vivek Murthy released a warning about the risks that social media presents to the mental health of children and teenagers and he said (ASH Media 2023): "Children are exposed to harmful content on social media, ranging from violent and sexual content, to bullying and harassment...we are in the middle of a national youth mental health crisis, and I am concerned that social media is an important driver of that crisis."

The issues which his research has highlighted are nearly universal, approximately 95% of young people ages 13-17 are using the social media platforms, globally. The suggestions that he offered to policymakers, tech companies, parents, children and researchers are relevant but from experiences of the past, we know that regulations/rules/frameworks are not the solutions to any kind of addictive product!

India being the third most online country in the world, must start exploring some ways to deal with this upcoming moral pandemic before it gets worse!

## Guerrilla Information Warfare

"World War 3 is a guerrilla information war with no division between military and civilian participation" — Marshall McLuhan.

In his presentation "Patterns of Conflict," US Airforce fighter John Richard Boyd (creator of OODA Loop) shared that the essence of the modern guerrilla campaigns is to capitalize on "corruption, injustice, incompetence, etc., (real or imagined) as basis to generate an atmosphere of mistrust and discord," among the common people, and in this process, Guerrilla vanguards employ "a variety of means to play-upon regime's internal frictions, obsessions, etc., as well as stimulate discontent/mistrust of people." But then guerrilla vanguards do not stop just there, in parallel, they share the "existing burdens with people and work with them," the purpose is very clear, "Guerrillas must

be able to blend into the emotional-cultural-intellectual environment of people until they become one with the people." And gradually they mix in a sense that "while guerrilla feelings and thoughts become people feelings and thoughts; people aspirations must be guerrilla aspirations while guerrilla aspirations become people aspirations; people goals must be guerrilla goals while guerrilla goals become people goals. (Boyd 2009)"

So, what would be the result of such attempts? On that, he mentioned that the result would be that "Guerrillas become indistinguishable from people while the government is isolated from people."

There is a long history of such guerrilla campaigns resulting in success, in different parts of the world. And the use of information technology, particularly social media, in modern guerrilla campaigns is not new! What is changing now is that such capabilities are getting more and more sophisticated/targeted in nature.

The combination of Information Guerrilla warfare campaigns, AI, and machine learning-driven communication tools (MADCOM), will not only give rise to new improvisations and computational propaganda but will bring an Ease of Doing Business for "old, rich and opinionated" mindsets, who still think that their views should determine "how the entire world works," and who actually "invest resources in shaping narratives," as rightly pointed out by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar (Livemint 2023).

To sum up, these are some of the most visible social media-led behavioural patterns, taking shape within and between the people, and they have the potential to turn into deadly anti-patterns for the performance culture of Bharat! The damage will come not because of these patterns, as in one form or other they were always there, but because of an endless loop of behaviour modifications that runs on these platforms, which is designed to bring subtle yet profound changes in the overall character/personalities of their participants. And the algorithms of these platforms are highly 'adaptive,' which means they are constantly making small changes in themselves to get better results, and becoming 'better' here means becoming more addictive, the better these algorithms will turn, the worse we can expect in the future!

## Counter Anti Pattern Approach

In the Sanatana cultural heritage of Bharat, a manifestation of which is Integral Humanism (the guiding philosophy of the current government), there is an unwritten concept of 'Swatah Sangyan,' स्वतः संज्ञान, a practice which encourages individuals to take cognizance of the changing environment/situation, and its impact on the larger goals of the national life. And they do it by default, sometimes even not being much conscious about the fact that how and at what level, their small moves are going to contribute to the larger picture.

Time has come to recall some of those traditions and practices, which can shape a unique counter-anti-pattern strategy of our own!

## Bhartiya approach to Chaos Management

An interesting thing about Bharat is that we are not insecure, closed, or uncomfortable with human behavioural experiments or external ideas! Instead, we emphasized the moulding and development of human consciousness, in the absence of which no social order can yield the desired results.

In one form or the other, the chaos was always there but what we are missing in this chaotic human environment is the absence of our traditional chaos managers and trend riders, the believer, nurturers, and promoters of the social and moral conscience of the society.

What kind of approach do they follow? When we think about it, the only word that comes to mind is – the Garuda Sanjeevani (गरूड़ संजीवनी) Approach.

## The 'Garuda Sanjeevani' Way

We know that in a world full of uncertainty, only one thing is certain that the future will be more interesting than past and present. There will be a tsunami of technology of trends/improvisations, and the numbers of their active participants are going to surpass the current limits too. These trends are already reaching the remotest corner of the country and attempting to influence the core strength of the Bhartiya economy and national security- its common people- who have knowingly/unknowingly, sustained the 'Performance Culture' of Bharat.

**Denial of Service Attack (DoS) on Culture**

In the future, we will see massive flows of trends, human behavioural experiments, and AI/VR-based improvisations, that will be capable of disrupting the normal function of culture and society. Those malicious attempts by moral hackers (social media influencers) will make our ideas, identity, practices, and principles inaccessible to our people, by flooding their minds with information traffic or sending those messages which trigger a crash, like a typical DoS attack. A glimpse of that future, we can see, in the changing nature of small events/happenings/protests that take place these days.

Now the question before us is what would be our options when such DoS attacks will turn more frequent, prompt, and aggressive, and how we will be able to counter that? Probably, we will need people with 'Garuda Sanjeevani' skills/approach.

**What is Garuda Sanjeevani?**

Garuda Sanjeevani is a rare herb found in the Himalayan range, which apart from its medicinal properties known for its ability to flow upstream, is moving against the flow of the water. So how does a Garuda Sanjeevani root move upstream? The reason lies in the physics behind its shape, known as the 'vortex street', a series of small eddies currents (circular currents) are created behind the obstacle, causing energy to be created which propels the root forward. The same principle is used to create the Archimedes screw pump which is used to irrigate fields at a higher place than the water.

Due to its peculiar property of moving against the flow of water, and the way it seems to defy the gravity principle, 'Garuda Sanjeevani' is a matter of scientific curiosity and research across the world.

It is the basic nature of this root, that is to cut the flow of water, in opposite directions, with ease, that is something to take inspiration from!

To deal with such denial of Service (DoS) attacks on the culture, we will need people with Garuda Sanjeevani Skills, who will be capable of cutting the flow of the stream, and moving upstream, with ease! And they will be our true Trend Riders.

We have plenty of reasons and background to bet on the 'Garuda Sanjeevani' approach again, after all those patriotic sons of Bharat Mata, who fought

British Colonialism, by going against the trend/environment of the country at that time, those who sustained the culture/civilizational legacy of Bharat in the post-independence era, who fought economic exploitation of the country and raised the slogan of 'Swadeshi' amid most turbulent national/global environment, what is common in all of them is their 'Garuda Sanjeevani' way!

There were always some Invisible Trend Riders in our country but in the light of tech improvisations, somehow, they turned silent and went into a pause mode, while the big tech-sponsored professionals occupied the space!

But at the same time, we can remain assure that any kind of challenge to our national security and cultural heritage, will send an auto signal to those trend riders and then they will not seek or wait for any kind of motivation to do their job, they will take a call or we can say 'स्वतः संज्ञान (self-cognizance)' of the situation and will get ready to play their part.

**Conclusion**

"The Knowledge is Power. But power is invariably a double-edged weapon. In possession of cultured Arjuna, the mightiest unconventional weapon of Pashupatastra posed no problem for mankind; but with the less powerful Brahmastra, Ashwatthama conducted a genocide" Dattopant Thengadi, Third Way.

We have references of both Arjuna and Ashwatthama, but we always preferred to pursue the path of Arjuna not Ashwatthama, and that moral choice and clarity in our cultural philosophy, is itself is a testimony to our approach.

आत्मानो मोक्षार्थम जगत हिताय च (for the salvation of our individual self and for the well-being of all on earth), is the idea of Bharat.

Human Intelligence is a beautiful asset, reducing it to a mere trend, troll, roast, or meme, and then propagating the mashed-up work of data, statistics, and maths with algorithms (done by human minds) called AI, as a superior version of Human Intelligence, is a narrow vision for the future. Business models based on engineered addiction, mass manipulation, and behavioural tweaking, cannot offer any hope to humanity!

If there is one place where the pinnacles of Human Intelligence have been tested or experimented, for the good of humanity, it is Bharat. One of the biggest strengths of Bharat is that we have not defined our strengths, and our

pursuit for the development of human consciousness and human intelligence, is an ongoing journey. Sooner or later, everyone will turn to Bharat to seek positivity, hope, and fresh perspectives.

Amid the traffic/noise of Information Superhighway, Bharat is capable to emerge like Mahadev Shiva, by holding the toxicity of misinformation/disinformation in his throat to save the future of humanity!

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