



INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL

WAR, DISPLACEMENT, AND THE HEALING POWER OF ART IN SUDAN

Huwayda El Zain



Sudanese Women Turn to Art to Cope with War

Art has always played an important role in Sudanese culture. Ancient engravings of Nile boats, majestic Nubian pyramids, and traditional notions about culture make creativity integral to Sudanese history. Today, the same creativity is applied to contemporary art and ancient music played on the "daluka," a lute string instrument.

Sudanese streets were pulsating with creativity before the ongoing war. Cities, like the capital Khartoum, started their mornings with sounds of old Sudanese music played by elderly women, merged completely with vibrantly colored murals that strongly symbolized resilience during the 2019 uprising. For many Sudanese people, art was not just a form of leisure but a way of life.

Art as a Historical Outlet for Women

For centuries, women have worked toward finding ways to overcome their inner struggles through art. Painting, writing, and all sorts of creative expression serve as a refuge when other solutions are scarce. For example, the famous artist Frida Kahlo used her painting to cope with physical pain and emotional problems, translating her suffering into deep visual storytelling.

Art has assumed a new meaning in Sudan during the devastating war that broke out on April 15, 2023, with the world's largest displacement crisis amid the military conflict in Sudan. This has forced millions of Sudanese women to find ways to endure unimaginable hardships. For many in Sudan, art has become a vital tool of healing and self-expression.

Creativity Amidst Chaos

The brilliant case of Mina, an 18-year-old Sudanese artist, is a stunning example. She uses her page on Instagram as a means of expression, sharing powerful, intricate drawings that 'say it all' about the feelings of a nation in crisis. Her work includes nostalgic visions of Sudan and haunting portraits of the exploitation of Sudanese women during the war.

Mina was asked how the conflict had shaped her art.

"I found myself being more vocal when I drew my thoughts and feelings about becoming a refugee. Sometimes, I didn't even realize how much was in my head until I put it on paper. It gave me a sense of relief, like free therapy at a time when I needed an escape."

Building Communities Through Art

This is not the case for just Mina, but thousands of Sudanese women who have found a form of artistic expression as their outlet for pain and trauma. Art has helped them envision new lives, and for many of them, their new self-image.

"Sudan and its people have taken a huge part of my thoughts and, subsequently, the pages of my art book,"

Mina said, explaining why her love for Sudan was infused into every creation of hers.

This development in artistic expression has also led to the birth of creativity initiative projects. Art communities and safe spaces have mushroomed in Sudan, providing women with the resources and support they need to freely discuss their creativity. These places provide comfort and a sense of solidarity, essentially becoming sanctuaries.

Resilience and Awareness

Sudanese women have been extremely resilient as everyone succumbs to conflict. Their art doubles as a personal solace and a means of bringing out the uncertainty surrounding the crisis in Sudan. As Mina aptly said,

"My art congratulates me and reminds me that I held on strongly through everything, despite how hard it was."

These stories and creations stand as powerful reminders of the enduring spirit of Sudanese women—a spirit that finds beauty and hope in the middle of chaos.

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MARGINALIZATION OF WOMEN IN STEM, ROOT CAUSES AND POSSIBLE REMEDIES

Mazi Ifeoma

Introduction

Education is central to a country's well-being and sustainable development. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is an education pathway that creates critical thinkers, increases science literacy and empowers the next generations to be innovators.

Gender differences in STEM education participation at the expense of girls are visible even from early childhood.



This disparity becomes more obvious in higher education, where female students represent only 35% of all the students enrolled in STEM-related fields of studies at this level globally. In a globally competitive economy, employers of all shapes and sizes are increasingly looking for workers who are skilled in STEM. Unfortunately, women who are privileged to hold STEM degrees face significant wage differentials with respect to their male counterparts, and these women rarely hold executive positions. Men in STEM, on average, earn \$15,000 more than women in STEM yearly.

Shockingly, women represent only 21% of engineering majors and 19% of computer science majors. This makes one wonder what the possible causes of this underrepresentation of women in the STEM field could be. They include:

Gender Stereotype and Parental Attitudes

Girls are prepared for motherhood and are often confined to caregiving and nurturing roles. In many countries around the world, women's education is seen as a waste of resources and time. Stereotypes like men are simply born to succeed in the STEM world have damaging consequences for women's self-efficacy and career motivation.

A lack of Role Models and Support Networks

Since women in STEM represent a small percentage of the overall workforce, young girls who aspire to pursue careers in STEM find it extremely difficult to get female mentors. As there is no one to guide these girls in their career choices in STEM, they battle with feelings of self-doubt and isolation; they also struggle to navigate the career complexities of STEM without role models. As STEM is a male-dominated field, many women face issues of sexual harassment. Unconscious bias in hiring, promotion, and grant funding also disadvantage women and lead to their inappropriately low representation in STEM.

Work-Life Balance Imbalance:

STEM careers are very demanding, making many women opt to work part-time and choose less taxing courses that won't need as much work so they can handle family responsibilities, which ultimately affects their career progression.

What are the possible ways to increase a wide representation of women in STEM?

Firstly, Early Exposure and Education are very crucial and are the keys to cultivating a deep interest in STEM fields. Parents should endeavour to encourage their daughters as much as they encourage their sons in maths and science. Girls should be introduced to the concepts of STEM in their formative years through educational programs geared at increasing their curiosity and passion for STEM courses.





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Also, schools, NGOs, and companies can connect to girls at a young age by creating simple machines and structures using Lego. Simple robotics kits are also great for teaching engineering/programming majors.

Furthermore, schools and women-led organizations can make efforts to reach out to young girls in different schools. When they serve as guest speakers and speak to these girls about their career paths, even their challenges and work, hearing firsthand stories of these amazing female mentors will motivate girls to pursue similar career paths. Schools can also partner with STEM companies like Tech4Dev and WAAW FOUNDATION to set up mentorship programs that match girls with professional female mentors.



Scholarships, internships and apprenticeships targeted at girls can provide the necessary opportunities for practical experiences and skills development.

This will contribute to the development of technology that will create a supportive environment that spurs women to remain in STEM careers.

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Access to Resources and Opportunities

Equal access to resources such as computers, laboratories and internet connectivity is vital to ensuring girls have the tools needed to pursue STEM education.



Conclusion

To conclude, a plethora of factors have led to the marginalization of women in STEM, which is one of the reasons for the underdevelopment recorded in many parts of the world. Statistics have shown that the number of women is greater than that of men, which means that the wider the representation of women in STEM, the more possibilities for innovative technological advancements to be made.



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NANO DAP: THE FERTILISER OF THE FUTURE?

Aanchal Agrawal

Agriculture in the 21st century must overcome the daunting task of feeding over 8.5 billion people by 2030, as global populations soar and arable land remains finite. Yet, traditional fertilisers aggravate the crisis, with only 35% of nitrogen absorbed by crops while the rest pollutes ecosystems, choking water bodies and contaminating groundwater. Nanotechnology offers a promising alternative to traditional farming methods. Innovations like Nano DAP can enhance nutrient supply, improve productivity, help eliminate waste and ensure sustainable farming. Could Nano DAP be the solution to securing global food production while minimising environmental impact?

What is Nano DAP?

Nano DAP is a new form of fertiliser designed in India using nanotechnology. Unlike traditional fertilisers, it comes in a liquid form packed with nutrient-rich nanoparticles, ensuring more efficient nutrient delivery, improved absorption and reduced wastage.

Nano DAP offers a significant edge in nutrient delivery, with plants absorbing 80-90% of its nutrients compared to just 30-40% from traditional fertilisers. This efficiency stems from its nanoparticle design, which provides a high surface area-to-volume ratio, ensuring better root absorption. The result is higher yields with reduced application rates, cutting input costs for farmers and mitigating water contamination and soil degradation caused by excess chemical fertiliser use. Additionally, Nano DAP minimises nitrous oxide emissions, a major greenhouse gas, thus reducing agriculture's carbon footprint and promoting environmentally sound practices.

The small size and high surface area-to-volume ratio of Nano DAP significantly enhance nutrient availability when applied as a seed treatment or foliar spray during critical growth stages. This leads to better crop performance, such as increased chlorophyll content, enhanced photosynthesis, greater root biomass, and more productive tillers and branches.

Field tests by ICAR and state agricultural universities at over 3,000 locations in India reported yield improvements of 2.4% to 27% with Nano DAP at recommended doses. These experiments, conducted on crops like rice, wheat, maize, chickpea, groundnut and cotton across multiple states, demonstrated its potential to be a sustainable substitute for conventional fertilisers. Farmers participating in the trials reported positive outcomes, reinforcing its promise for modern agriculture.

One major concern is that Nano DAP does not entirely substitute traditional granular fertilisers. A study from Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) casts doubt on the efficacy of Nano DAP, particularly in wheat cultivation.



The study found the yield of wheat grain decreased by 16.1% when Nano DAP was applied alone without the recommended dose of traditional DAP. While Nano DAP reduces the use of conventional fertilisers by 50-75%, it often falls short in matching the yield potential of its granular counterpart, emphasising its current limitations as a stand-alone solution.

While Nano DAP shows promise in tackling agriculture's key challenges, such as enhancing nutrient efficiency, boosting yields and reducing environmental impacts, it cannot fully replace granular fertilisers yet. As with any breakthrough technology, its adoption will require substantial trial and error.

To realise its full potential, ongoing research and development must focus on optimising its formulation and application. Collaborative efforts among governments, research institutions and private stakeholders will be crucial in fostering a more resilient and sustainable agricultural sector equipped to face climate change and resource scarcity.

So, can Nano DAP truly eliminate traditional fertilisers in a world increasingly threatened by climate change? While it's too early to say for sure, it raises an important question: How can we innovate in agriculture to meet the growing food demand sustainably?

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WILL WE EVER REACH GENDER EQUALITY?

Teu-Khanh Phuong

"What will it really take to achieve gender equality?" It's a question people have pondered for centuries without any satisfactory answers. Time is ticking and moving fast towards 2030 —the year by which we were supposed to achieve the UN's Global Goals. Yet, we haven't done nearly enough to reach gender equality by that year. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report of 2023, achieving gender parity will take an estimated 134 years—roughly five generations from now. The UN reported that it will take 300 years to fully eliminate child marriage, "140 years for women to be represented equally in positions of power and leadership in the workplace, and 47 years to achieve equal representation in national parliaments."

If solving gender inequality were as simple as changing a few simple laws, then we could have achieved equality a long time ago. This is because changing the world involves more than just changing its laws; it requires changing the mindset of the entire global population. However, the future of gender equality can be guaranteed with the right actions and policies set out from international organizations and powerful leaders from around the globe.

It is common knowledge that gender equality is a fundamental human right. Addressing and advancing gender equality is critical to all fields of a healthy, active society, including reducing poverty, promoting health, education, and the protection of both sexes. In order to address and find solutions to this problem, one must understand the concept of inequality among different genders and the current issues both are facing in the hectic world we are living in. In this article, we will dive deep into the notion of feminism, the challenges that feminists are facing, and the possible future of these current issues.

What is feminism?

As defined by Emma Watson, feminism is "the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities. It is the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes."



What are some of the biggest challenges for gender equality today?

Women and media representation

Media can shape the way we view the world, and in today's media, it is common to see women portrayed in stereotypical roles with narrow characteristics and perspectives. A good example can be seen in the character Regina George in "Mean Girls" (2004), who is exactly what we called the popular high school mean girl stereotype - someone who is rude and obsessed with social status. Not only does this further reinforce traditional gender roles, but it also promotes certain expectations in women. For instance, many female characters are often shown as sidekicks or love interests in action movies instead of being given more impactful roles. In addition, certain beauty standards are frequently portrayed, popularizing unrealistic body image. This can potentially lead to decreased self-esteem in viewers, particularly in young girls who are still exploring their personalities and uniqueness.



Women and Health

For centuries, women did not have agency to choose whether to save themselves or the baby during pregnancy and birth complications. Historically, only women were blamed for infertility as men were not believed to be part of the problem. In the United States, responsibility for preventing pregnancy often falls on women due to harmful stereotypes and social norms that explain how this is a "woman's issue". In most cases, women have to face this problem alone, with no partners by their side to assist them during the hardest times. Therefore, society must understand that it is both partner's responsibility to ensure the safety of contraception together. However, other factors also contribute to this problem, such as high cost, insurance coverage, the availability of health care providers, etc.

The gender wage gap

For decades, the gender wage gap has significantly hindered women's career progress and financial independence. According to Forbes' "Gender Pay Gap Statistics In 2024": "Women earn an average of 16% less than men. For every dollar earned by men, women earned 84 cents. The controlled gender pay gap, which considers factors such as job title, experience, education, industry, job level and hours worked, is currently at 99 cents for every dollar men earn."



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The mental load

The mental load is often referred to as the cognitive effort in managing household chores and responsibilities. Those responsibilities aren't just about keeping the house spotless, but also include the tasks of financial planning, organizing daily tasks, and keeping the family together. The main problem related to the mental load is that those are often not regarded as "work" but instead go unnoticed and are not respected in women.



How the world is addressing gender inequality

According to the National Organization for Women, "The social media revolution is reshaping feminism". Social media is often described as a powerful tool that is able to spread information extremely quickly, especially among teenagers or Gen Z. It has the potential to spread awareness on women's rights issues by promoting meaningful content, motivating people to become advocates for gender equality and supporting the feminist movement.

Along with the rise of social media, the United Nations is implementing serious measures to ensure women have the same benefits as men. The UN Women stated in its article on, "Why so few women are in political leadership and five actions to boost women's political participation," that solutions such as applying gender quotas, ending violence against women in politics, and encouraging fair decision-making of both genders are things the world should be addressing.

Overall, it's impossible to know whether we can end gender inequality or not. The strategies being used above by some organizations are only some of the most common tactics to temporarily improve the situation. Changing the mindset of the people takes hard work and dedication from the government and the countries themselves. It's also instrumental for each of us to be equipped with knowledge when it comes to addressing gender inequality.

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THE IMPLICATIONS OF DISCRIMINATION ON DISABLED PERSONS

Esther Ankrah

Introduction

An estimated 1.3 billion people or 16% of the global population experience a significant disability today. Persons with disabilities experience ableism, stigma and discrimination in all facets of life, which affects their physical and mental health. Laws and policies may deny them the right to make their own decisions and allow a range of harmful practices to be carried out against them.



Experiencing discrimination based on a disability can lead to many issues, including quality of life and mental health struggles.

People with disabilities live in poverty at nearly three times the rate of their non-disabled peers. People with disabilities do not only experience discrimination in the health sector but employment and housing as well as social discrimination. Discrimination also has some psychological effects on disabled people which can often lead to more challenging health outcomes, including higher rates of death by suicide and institutionalization.



Understanding Discrimination Against Disabled Persons

Discrimination means treating a person or particular group of people differently, especially in a worse way than how you treat other people because of their race, gender, sexuality etc. Disability discrimination is when a person is treated less well or put at a disadvantage for a reason that relates to their disability.

Discrimination of disabled persons comes in many forms; denial of rights to be included in school and the workplace, to live independently in the community, to vote, to participate in sports and cultural activities, to access justice, to refuse medical treatment, to enter freely into legal commitments, or to buy property.



Psychological Impacts of Discrimination

Discrimination of disabled persons can affect their psychological well-being. This may result in depression or other mental health struggles. People with disability are more likely than those without disability to have poor general and mental health. According to the Mental Health Foundation, in the UK more than 15 million people live with one or more long-term conditions and over 4 million of these people also experience mental health challenges. The experience of physical disability can affect people's emotions. Also, the act of being treated differently due to one's disability can cause stress, anxiety and anger issues.

Economic Implications

Even though most countries' legal systems provide that every individual has the right to work, some companies still employ practices that discriminate against people living with disabilities through loopholes or inaccurate disclosure of their practices.



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Employers can sometimes disqualify applicants with disabilities who may otherwise have the appropriate skills and experience by including physical requirements that may not actually be necessary for the job. These acts have severe implications on the disabled person because it deprives them of their livelihood, leading to poorer living conditions.

Social Implications

Experiencing discrimination has a negative impact on the daily life satisfaction of individuals with disabilities. Due to discrimination faced by disabled persons in their daily activities they have fewer chances to take part in social activities and to form friendships and relationships, and research has shown that social isolation experienced due to disability discrimination can lead to various mental health issues, including depression and anxiety.



What Does the Law Say?

Article 5(2) of the Convention On The Rights Of Persons With Disabilities and Optional Protocol provides that state parties shall prohibit all discrimination on the basis of disability and guarantee to persons with disabilities equal and effective legal protection against discrimination on all grounds.

Title 1 of the Americans With Disabilities Act 1990 also prohibits discrimination of disabled persons in terms of employment. Article 7 of the Universal Declaration Of Human Rights also provides that all are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination. Most of these laws are laid down to protect the rights of disabled individuals as well as prevent any form of discrimination.



Even though most state parties to these treaties have ratified them and are now national law, people are still being discriminated against simply because of their disability.

Conclusion

Discrimination against disabled persons has far-reaching implications which affect their physical and mental health, social connections and also employment. This has to trigger states to enforce their national laws to ensure that disabled persons do not experience discrimination of any kind, that their fundamental rights are not trampled upon, and that they are equal in dignity and rights.

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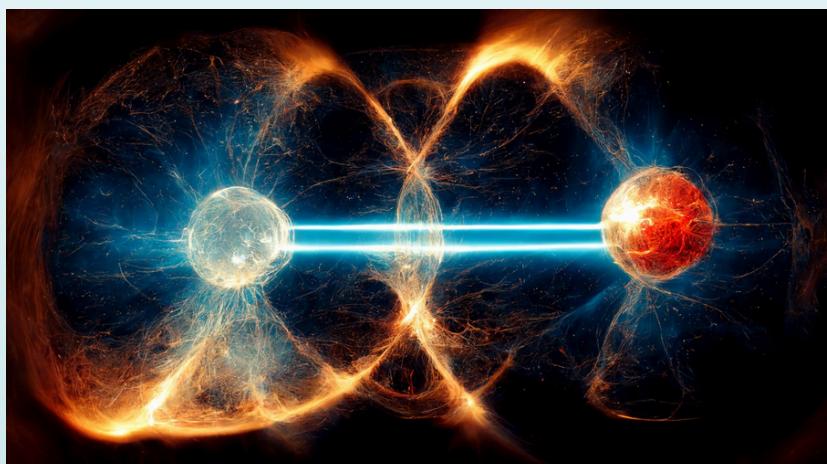
QUANTUM ENTANGLEMENT AND THE FUTURE IN INTERNET SECURITY

Poorvasri Sivakumar

As the world has grown more connected, the necessity of good internet security has never been more important. Encryption methods that use ciphers are based on complex calculations but could be solved if enough time and computer power were devoted to it, and given the rate of technological advancements - the next break is likely around the corner. However, quantum physics offers a way to perform flawless cryptography based on quantum entanglement.

What is Quantum Entanglement?

Quantum entanglement refers to a state in which quantum-partner particles (entangled particles) become correlated in a way that changes the state of one of the particles and automatically affects the state of the other particle though they may be separated over large distances. Albert Einstein pointed to these entangled states by calling them "spooky action at a distance." Whereas in classical systems information is conveyed through a physical channel, the entangled particles act in proactive ways that synchronize them in an instant.



How Does the Quantum Key Distribution Process Operate?

In traditional encryption, the data is encrypted and decrypted with the same key by two different entities. The stream of information delivery is personal and broken, and if a third party intercepts this key, the communication is compromised. QKD, on the other hand, permits two characters to entertain an encryption key via entangled particles. Here's how it works:

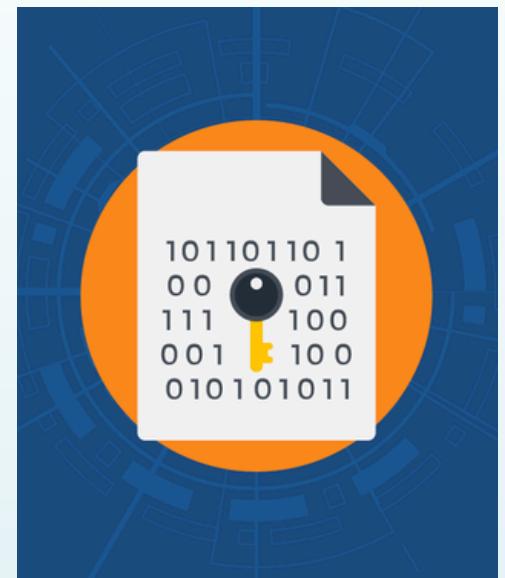
1. Entangled Particles Generation: Two particles get created initially and sent towards two distinct parties, normally known as Alice and Bob.

2. Measurement and Key Formation: Measuring properties of the corresponding photons are performed by Alice and Bob. Because the measurements are entangled, they are arranged in a predictable pattern that enables them to produce a required key.

3. Interception Detection: If an eavesdropper tries to intercept the key it will affect the entangled state and Alice and Bob will know that their privacy has been invaded.

For the last several years, researchers worked on possible uses of quantum entanglement for changing a number of sectors, including cryptography.

Entanglement is used in Quantum Key Distribution (QKD), where keys that cannot be hacked are produced, and this is a win in the fight for internet security.



In this way, QKD is generally equipped with an intrinsic detection method, which means that any leaked keys will be rejected. This process theoretically protects the key from third parties such and provides a new form of security that cannot be obtained using other forms of encryption.

The Advantages of Quantum Internet Security

The idea behind QKD is to provide communication that could never be intercepted by any current or future technology - quantum computers included. Present encryption, may be easily decoded in the coming decades by the newly developed quantum computers, whose computational power will be thousands of times more than the super computers of today. QKD is immune to such a threat since it is founded on the principle of quantum mechanics, not computational complexity.



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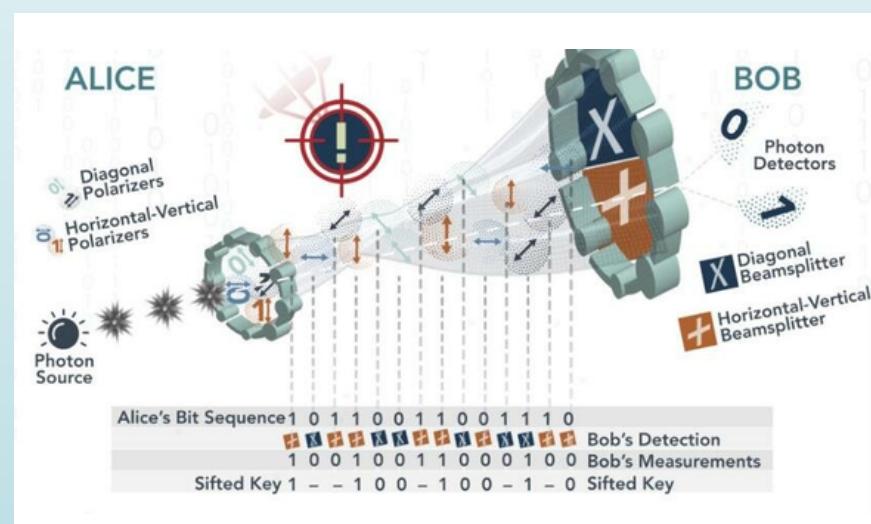
Poorvasri Sivakumar

The most significant feature of QKD is that it can identify the interception.

In today's methods of encryption, the loss of one's data can go unnoticed until it's already too late. Moreover, in contrast to other forms of key distribution, any attempt at interception changes the quantum nature of the keys in real time, making it easy to notice any form of compromise.

Real-World Applications and Challenges

There is potential research being carried out jointly by governments and research institutions to develop appropriate quantum communication channels. In the year 2020, China showed innovation in this field by launching the first quantum satellite called Micius and made secure communication between two ground stations which were several kilometres away from each other. Furthermore, the EU and the United States are already focusing significantly on quantum networks as one of their components of digital protection.

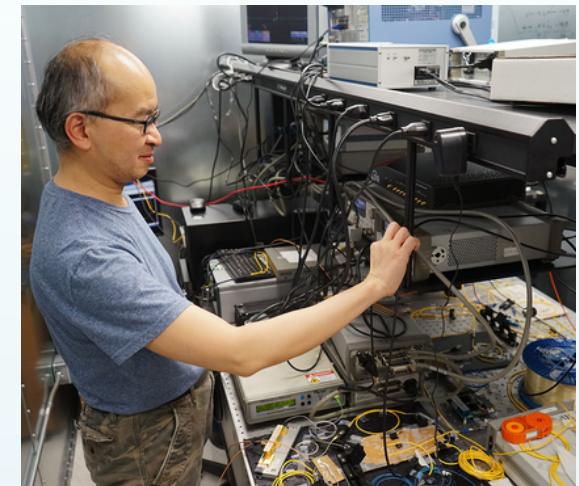
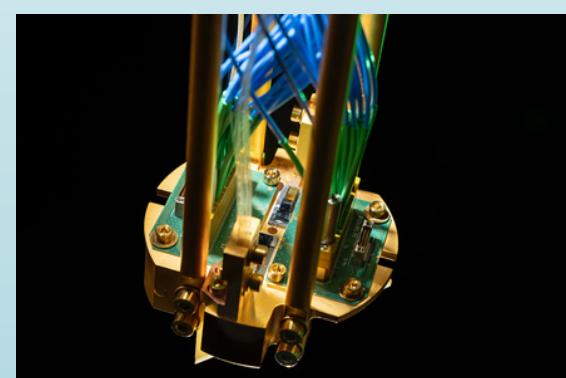


Although, when it comes to implementing QKD on a large scale certain issues arise. Quantum entanglement is fragile and difficult to achieve in a long distance.

While extending QKDs transmission distance, researchers are working on building quantum repeaters, a field which is still emergent. Moreover, QKD profiles a method for transferring encrypted keys securely, but it does not eradicate all cyber threats — such as the protection of information at the device level as well as in the networks. This is still a question for traditional cyber security technologies.

The Future of Quantum Encryption

In the coming several decades, the internet could be made fully secure using quantum technology with different industries and governments using new quantum-secured internet networks to protect their necessary data from hacking. Internet security is an example of how advanced physics translates to important changes in the life of the modern person. Though the QKD is not commonplace at the moment, further research and funds into quantum technologies can make fibre-optic communication completely bullet proof for our connection security in the future.



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DIAMONDS COLLAPSE UNDER PRESSURE: CHINESE EDUCATIONAL ISSUE

Ken-Nhat Hoang

The Chinese educational system (ranked 35th in the world), produces an unbelievable number of prodigies, outperforming other countries on international tests and achieving universal coverage in nine-year compulsory education, but still struggles with multifarious problems.

Cramming information until you're forgetting how to solve the 1623th equation, Chinese education is known for its prodigious standards and intensive pressure. Students often wake up at 5:30 and go to bed after 23:00. Some student groups would take turns waking up each other and doing homework late at night. School strictly compels students to pay full attention, because every time they don't do so, every yawn or distracted behavior they exhibit, is taken into consideration for quantitative scoring. Even interactions with a pupil of the opposite gender can affect your score. Being sick or busy is no reason for not completing your assignments. Deeply rooted in the tradition of searching for talents based on testing, longstanding studious culture like the tale of Sun Jing and Su Qin is why China has adopted such academic rigor. In China's social system, the improvement of education level is one of the most effective means to achieve upward social mobility.

Students are overwhelmed with complicated curriculums, significant homework, and exam preparations which they often stay up late to finish.



Students spend an average of 3 hours daily to complete their homework, teens on average spend a total 10,080 hours completing homework before reaching adulthood. Students' fates are decided by two major exams: the Zhongkao and Gaokao.

Consequently, parents often equip their children with supplemental classes on multitudinous subjects such as math, science, literature,... while nurturing other talents such as sports, piano,... Tencent's 2019 survey showed 88.7% of students in fourth through first tier cities took extra classes, averaging 2.1 supplemental classes per student. Therefore, free time is scarce, and children receive "gifts" such as exercise books on special occasions. School continues everyday and the concept of national holidays becomes nonexistent for Chinese students.



Chinese students smile at their accomplishments and cry at their depression after completing their homework. Academics by far and away depresses students, proving detrimental to their mental health. 45% of participants reported in a survey that they felt their homework was impossible to be finished. Up to 87.6% of high school students stated they often finish homework at midnight. Nearly half of interviewed students were frustrated and have a low self-esteem affected by homework; 20% reported "feeling suffocated and wanting to tear their books". The leading cause of youth suicide in China derives from academic pressure. November 5th, 2023 saw a college student pass away after a grueling series of livestreams, which was part of his internship requirements. 5 days later, another student died suddenly in class due to stress and sleep deprivation. Studies showed that 19.3% of Chinese adolescents have experienced suicidal ideation. Therese Hesketh and her colleagues conducted a study with 2,191 Chinese pupils aged 9-12 years from urban and rural areas, uncannily discovering that over one-third of the children reported having psychosomatic symptoms at least once a week.



INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL

DIAMONDS COLLAPSE UNDER PRESSURE: CHINESE EDUCATIONAL ISSUE

Ken-Nhat Hoang

In other research, 76.2% of students described bad moods due to academic pressure, high parental expectations, and 9.1% reported "feelings of despair". Additionally, several studies illustrated how parents who adopted strict parenting styles, ordinary in China, contribute to teens' family stress. Occupied by studying, students lack time to cope with interpersonal issues, and experience limited social lives, their communication skills gradually blunting.

Heated debate only goes with questionable policies. Almost as if from an Orwellian dystopia, a nascent headband is being attached to every student's head to monitor their attention by analyzing the electric signals of neurons in their brains, in tandem sending real-time data to teachers and parents. The headband also includes a light signal with different colors corresponding to different levels of concentration. A professor criticizes the device for being inaccurate and uncomfortable, stating that fidgeting or even adjusting it incorrectly steers results.

Today, Shenzhen schools are modern with state-of-the-art infrastructures. Classrooms have been digitized equipping students with life-necessary, technological skills like coding, arts... and implementing innovative teaching techniques. China has also clasp its recent goals of spending 4% of its GDP on education and is expanding digital education to rural communities. The Chinese educational ministry has aimed to revolutionize its educational system and nourish high-caliber prodigies, shifting towards practical life skills, project-based learning and reducing the weight of standardized tests.

At the end of the day, while Chinese education produces great results, it often is achieved from stress and pressure. Despite facing several challenges and dealing with many issues, China has taken shrewd actions towards improving its education system and addressing issues, with some notable, promising changes already present.

Other classes install cameras to identify student yawning, checking phones, analyzing their mood and attention.

Students wear uniforms embedded with chips tracking their location to detect suspicious actions from not participating in activities to leaving campus. A robot is used to analyze the health data of first graders. Some classrooms established obstructing metal bars to correct students' posture.

China's education approach is highly critical, extinguishing creativity and promoting propaganda. Elementary schoolers are expected to memorize 2,500 Chinese characters. The emphasis on memorization over creative thinking or flexibility forms no "root" understanding. Students aren't encouraged to ask a lot of questions and lessons have few interactions. Aimed at strengthening the party's grip, Xi built "Red Army Schools" where students wear soldiers' uniforms and delve into Chinese history and culture, even in subjects such as math.

The curriculum included more patriotism and historical glorification, spreading anti-Japanese sentiments and censoring any Western values, facing enormous backlash as parents complained that other practical things should be taught. The plan proved counter-productive and trust for the government fell among those who received higher levels of education. Lastly, rural areas have less access to education, struggling to break poverty cycles or compete with their urban counterparts. Many families bear significant burden enrolling children in supplemental classes.

China has made some significant changes to reform its education system. Unfortunately, one of its policies named "Double-reduction" failed as it not only hit public tutoring hard but also missed its main objective. Private, underground tutoring grew, which is less affordable for lower-income families, forcing the policy to be abolished.

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INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL

A NATION IN PROTEST: UNRAVELING SEXUAL ASSAULTS IN INDIA

Tanishqa Dhiman

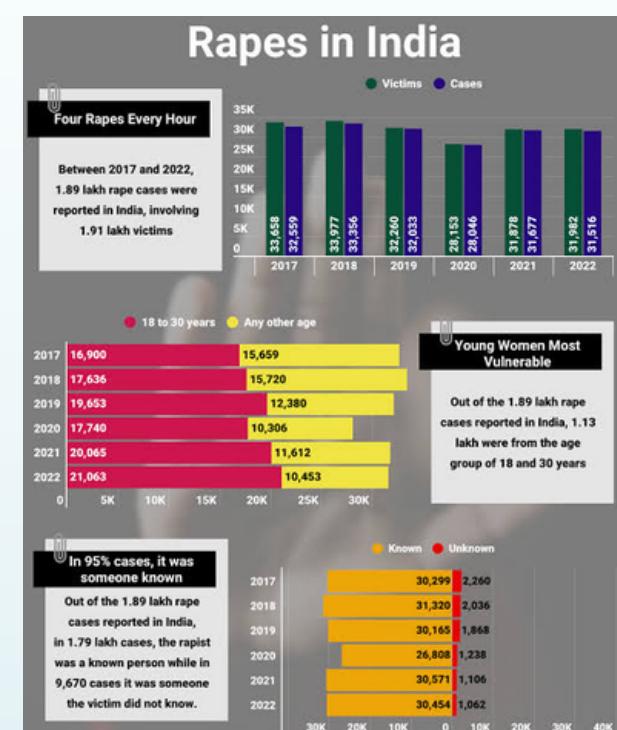
***"Rape is not just a crime against the body. It is an attack on the very dignity and humanity of the woman. We need justice and accountability, not just punishments"* - by Kavita Krishan, Secretary of All India Progressive Women's Association.**

According to the National Crime Records Bureau, (NCRB) 31,516 sexual assault cases were registered across India in 2022. Of these, 89% of them were criminals known to the victim. Additionally, 10% were registered for minors.

It is equally important to focus on the fact though, that many cases remain unreported. Current statistics show on average, 86 cases on sexual assault towards women and nearly 49 cases of crime against women are reported every day in India. In terms of geographical areas, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh maintained a consistent high record in sexual assault. Delhi, in particular, is leading in all the metropolitan cities.

Workplace sexual assaults are the highest in urban cities. However, cases in less urban areas still remain underreported marking an inaccuracy in the total count of cases and victims.

While international reports suggests fewer cases in India registered under sexual assault compared to nations such as Iceland, Grenada and Lesotho. The real question is: Does a lower count equate to greater safety?



Background

The recent RG Kar case which occurred in August 2024, at RG Kar Medical College in Kolkata, promoted a nationwide protest. In the tragic incident, a female medical student named Moumita Debnath was sexually assaulted and brutally murdered by over 15 men. The horrifying act of violence ignited outrage across the country, leading to national protests.



The protest intensified after reports of several other previously unreported cases surfaced. Kolkata, a city deeply tied to the worship of Goddess Durga and Kali (Durga and Kali are widely known goddesses in Hinduism, who often represent women empowerment, power and empathy) was devastated by this tragedy. Doctors and women started protesting in different parts of the city with consistent candle marches to make the Government take charges and press the matter.

However, several women were sexually assaulted for attending the candle marches and protests, further fueling public rage against the government's inaction. Government schemes such as beti bachao beti padhao (translated : save the daughters, educate the daughters) were openly questioned.

Result

In response, hospitals all across India temporarily shut down, only offering emergency services.

The government of India eventually enlisted the involvement of the CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) to investigate and catch the culprits charged for sexual assault as soon as possible. The High Court of Kolkata, ordered a thorough investigation and as of September 2024, it was found that the crime scene was tampered but this did not deter the investigation. Several suspects were caught for questioning.



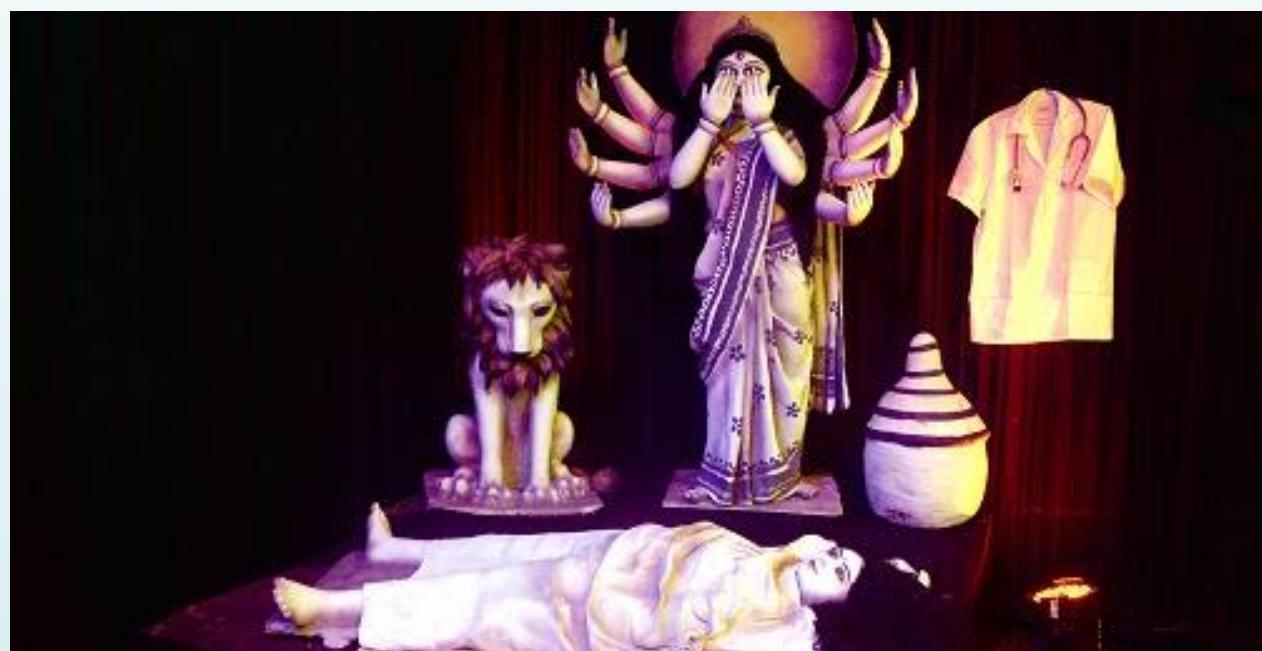
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The Indian Medical Association called on the Indian Government to introduce laws, and assure the safety of doctors. Women empowerment institutions demanded introduction of stronger laws to safeguard women and minors.

To continue the protest, several pandals represented their decorations based on sexual assault on women through intricate designs and artwork all across the streets of Kolkata during one of the biggest festivals in India called *Durga Puja or Navratri* to represent the ongoing protests.



By November, most of the protests across the country dissipated but the question of women's safety remained unanswered.

Conclusion:

This tragic event questioned the education among children and boys in the country. Many institutes debated the inclusion of sexual education in the schools. The promise for quick justice from the government was also thoroughly debated with quotes such as Justice denied, Justice delayed. Daringly, many men were caught supporting the cause and raising questions against patriarchy in India. Despite widespread protests, government responses, and legal demands, the path to real safety for women remains unclear. This case, along with the broader statistics, shows how pervasive the issue is in the nation. To make a change, we must not just push the government for stronger laws but also for a cultural shift to uphold the dignity of women in our society.

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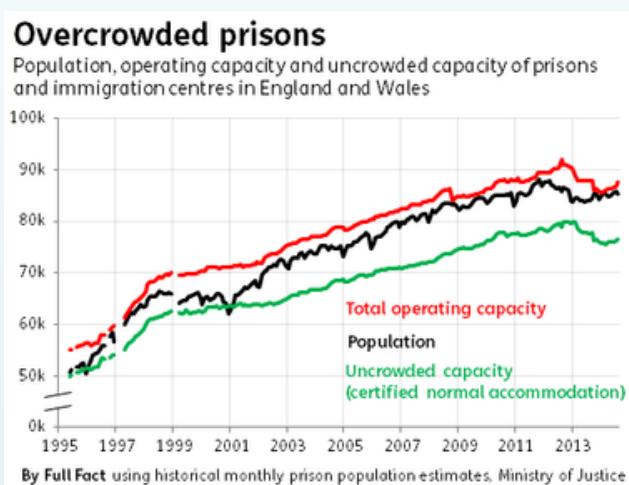


INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL

OVERCROWDED PRISONS - ENGLAND AND WALES

Lucie Kealey

Over the years, much research has examined the overcrowding of prisons and why they are frequently full to capacity. Is it the role of the criminal justice system in assigning custodial sentences, the increased level of high offenders, or the lack of prisons available for certain offenders?



Prison Capacity

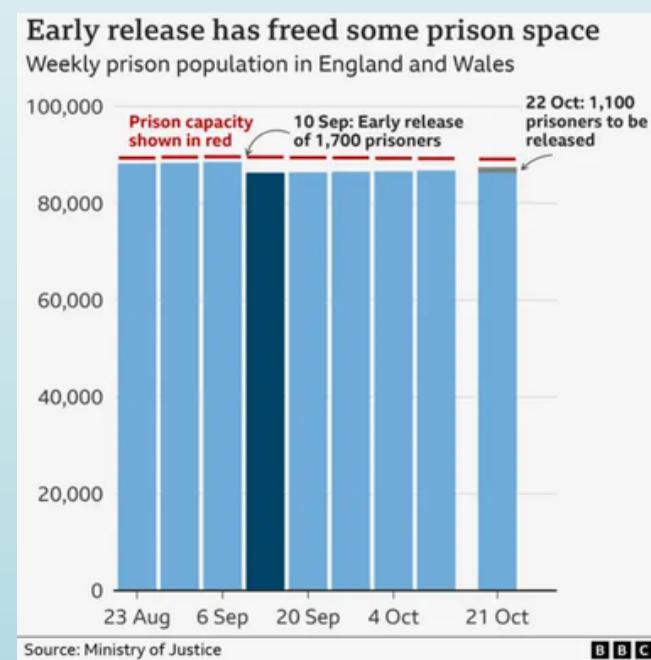
Statistically, 'prisons in England and Wales are almost full', with 'official prison population figures for 6 September 2024 showing the total prison population to be 88,521, split between 84,865 across the male estate and 3,656 across the female estate. Useable operational capacity for the system stood at 89,619.' This quantitative data highlights just how full prisons are becoming, with limited space and facilities being available to criminals who are being convicted at present. Despite prisons becoming full to capacity, this does not stop justice from being served; the criminal justice system will still punish a crime with adequate measures, ensuring that a criminal receives their 'just deserts.'

"We need to reduce the number of people in prisons." - Mike Trace

Outlined by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act of 1984 (PACE) Code C, prison cells must adhere to certain expectations in order for them to be appropriate and satisfactory. Notably,

- I) 'So far as it is practicable, not more than one detainee should be detained in each cell',
- II) 'Cells in use must be adequately heated, cleaned and ventilated'
- III) 'Blankets, mattresses, pillows and other bedding supplied shall be of a reasonable standard and in a clean and sanitary condition.'

Are these conditions able to be maintained?



The mandated standards that must be upheld in prison cells, is at conflict with the number of criminals being admitted to prisons currently. In fact, as of June, it was concluded that the capacity to 'provide a "good, decent standard of accommodation" stood at almost 79,700. The current population is close to being 8,000 over level.' Evidently, prisons are becoming too overcrowded to be maintained at an acceptable standard, with the measures of PACE being challenged.

Measures to reduce this pressure:

The government has introduced both short term and long-term measures in an attempt to ameliorate this issue.



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Short-term measures include legal changes which determine when offenders incapacitated are able to be released from prison. The reform, introduced by the Labour government, will reduce the automatic release point for prisoners; in turn, enabling them to be released into the community after serving '40% of their sentence in prison', whereas before this stood at '50%.' Despite excluding those imprisoned who have been tried with serious indicative offences, this reform will lead to the release of over 1,000 prisoners, allowing the British government to fulfill their 'emergency plan' decreasing issues of overcrowding (BBC News, 2024).

In terms of when these reforms will be initiated, this will be from early September and late October this year, contingent on the severity of the crime. Those incarcerated for indictable offences will see the changes coming into action in the latter time frame (UK Parliament, 2024).

In terms of long-term measures, a key motivation is the introduction of 'new prisons by reforming the planning system'. Furthermore, Ms Mahood stated that 'the government would designate prisons as being of national importance.' Thus, we can see the immediate and required action being taken in order to prevent prisons from becoming congested.

"Crime is so out of control. Criminals have no fear of punishment. Prisons are overcrowded so they know they will not be imprisoned long. This breeds more crime, in an escalating cyclic pattern"
- Timothy McVeigh

Overall, it is clear how pivotal it is that measures are taken to reduce the issue of overcrowding, not only so that this issue is eradicated and prisons have adequate space, but also to ensure that prisons receive the cell conditions that they are required to by law. It is therefore important to remember suspects' rights and public interest in guaranteeing that a criminal receives their just deserts, both from their perspective and the wider populations. The government should continue to take action to ensure that justice is served for all parties involved. This is pivotal in prioritising the quality of life for offenders, remembering that all humans have equal rights, regardless of their criminal background.



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INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL

SILICON CELLS: THE FUTURE OF RENEWABLES

Yaksh Dharod



Renewable energy, simply put, is energy that comes from natural sources and processes that are constantly replenished. Unlike fossil fuels, renewable energy creates a much smaller carbon footprint. Humans have used energy from the sun for thousands of years for agriculture, warmth, water treatment and much more. More advancements have made us realize that we can use the sun for so many other purposes such as electricity, home appliances, cars, cooking and powering devices to name a few.

The sun provides 430 quintillion Joules of energy per hour. This is ten thousand times more than the energy consumed by the entire planet! Solar panels convert energy from the sun to electricity from solar or photovoltaic cells made of silicon. Silicon is a semiconductor which is the second most abundant element on earth. The structure of silicon has an atom connected to four others by strong covalent bonds. No electrons can flow through the structure, therefore there is no current.

A silicon solar cell uses crystalline silicon packed between two conductive layers. There are two types of layers: n and p. The n-type silicon layer has excess electrons, whereas the p-type layer has a deficit of them. This deficit creates extra spaces (holes) for the electrons. When the two layers are connected, electrons can flow across the layers, causing a difference in charge. The sun emits about 10^{45} photons per second. When a photon strikes the silicon cell with enough energy, it knocks out an electron from the bond, leaving a hole. Due to the electric field at the p/n junction, the electron is drawn towards the n junction, while the hole is drawn towards the p junction. The mobile electrons are collected from the n-type layer (at the top of the cell) using thin metal strips.

These electrons are made to flow through an external circuit to generate electricity, before returning to the conductive aluminum sheet at the back, to the hole in the p junction. This is one complete cycle of electrons, where none of them are worn out or used up, making it a renewable source.

One silicon cell produces about half a volt, and many cells are put together to generate more power. About twelve photovoltaic cells are enough to charge a cellphone.

However, due to physical challenges such as uneven distribution of sunlight across the globe, reflection of the photons rather than absorption, or electrons falling back into the hole before they flow around a circuit reduce the efficiency of the cell. The most efficient solar cell today only converts around 46% of the energy, and most commercial systems are only 15-20% efficient. The use of silicon in photovoltaic cells has paved the way for harnessing the immense power of the sun, but challenges remain. Understanding the process by which silicon cells work is crucial for advancing solar technology and improving efficiency. While today's solar cells are not yet able to fully capitalize on the sun's vast energy output, ongoing research and development will likely bring solar energy closer to becoming a mainstream and reliable source of renewable energy. The future of clean, renewable energy lies in our ability to refine and scale up these technologies.

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WHY GOLD PRICE INCREASES IN A DEPRESSING ECONOMY

Raiyan Ahmed

Gold is considered a "Safe-haven asset". In a depressed economy (downturns, recessions, or financial crises) investors liquidate riskier assets and shift or switch towards safer investments like gold. As a fundamental rule of economics, increased demand leads to a higher price of a good. Consequently the price of gold gains momentum. A safe-haven asset refers to a long-term investment that retains its value or increases in value during market turbulence.

As a result, gold tends to perform better in times of economic distress.

For instance, when the stock market collapsed in 2007, demand for gold increased and continued to rise, and gold gained 100% in value between 2007 and 2011. Similarly, the price of this yellow metal spiked with the presence of factors that drive economic uncertainties, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent waves.



Gold also plays a part as a hedge against inflation. A rise in inflation or inflationary expectations increases investors' interest in purchasing gold and drives up its price; in contrast, a drop in inflationary expectations has the opposite effect.

A hedge is a temporary investment made to reduce the risk of adverse price movements in an asset. As a result, gold - both as a safe haven and a hedge - is a form of insurance for investors. Investors usually include a certain percentage of gold investments in their portfolios to cope with the negative impacts of their other investments. They generally have significant exposure to gold or gold-related products during market instability. Due to the current uncertainties the global economy is facing, the price of gold has spiked resulting in a 29.40% increase in the 2024 year to date.

Low supplies such as miners finding less gold than expected, can push up the price of gold further. The total weight of all the gold mined throughout human history is estimated to be nearly 198 million kilograms. This means, that if we were to gather all the gold mined, it would fit into a cube about 21 meters in length and depth (The average length of a car is around 4-5 meters, a row of 4-5 cars parked end-to-end would come close to 19-20 meters.).

Every year, we extract approximately 2.5 to 3 million kilograms of gold through mining and add to the overall stock of gold above the ground.

However, This amount is usually not enough to meet global demands as the annual global gold demand typically ranges between 4 to 5 million kilograms. This deficit in supply and demand results in higher gold prices every year. Currently, estimations suggest that there is hardly about 20 percent of gold left to be extracted, although this figure might

not be exactly accurate. With technological innovations, miners may be able to extract gold at sites that were previously ignored because they were quite difficult or almost impossible to access.



The aspects stated above play a significant role in influencing the price of gold. Other factors behind gold's enduring value include: being perceived as a symbol of wealth & power, rare and difficult to extract, malleable, and visual beauty & appeal. These factors have solidified gold's position as a valuable asset throughout history.

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INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL

BALANCING INVESTMENT AND WORKER WELFARE IN BANGLADESH'S RMG SECTOR AND LESSONS FROM GLOBAL MODELS

Riz Khan



Bangladesh is a country synonymous with the global ready-made garments (RMG) industry, second only to China. An analysis of this industry in the context of Bangladesh is crucial to understand how such a small country got to where it is and how it can join other Southeast Asian countries as part of the 'New Tiger Cubs' (a group of fast growing Southeast Asian economies, the term comes from the East Asian 'Tiger Economies'). RMG, often touted as the lifeblood of the country's economy, generates over \$45 billion annually in exports and directly employs more than four million people—predominantly women. Yet, behind these figures is a delicate balance between the retained attractiveness of Bangladesh as an investment destination and the well-being of its workers. This article examines this trade-off, using various lessons from international competitors such as Vietnam, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka and reviewing both the possibilities and constraints that Bangladesh faces in emulating their policies.

Bangladesh's Current Position in the RMG Landscape

Appeal for Investments:

Cost structure is where Bangladesh may get its competitive advantage from. Offering some of the lowest wages globally within the apparel industry, with a high production capacity and favorable trade arrangements like the European Union's Generalised Scheme of Preferences, Bangladesh is the ideal production base for mass-market clothing.

In fact, Bangladesh is responsible for about 7% of global apparel exports.

However, infrastructure bottlenecks, rising labour unrest, and looming uncertainties tied to the country's impending graduation from Least Developed Countries (LDC) status in 2026 increasingly beset it. This transition threatens Bangladesh's tariff-free market access to the EU and other key markets.

Worker Welfare Concerns:

Wage increases have been implemented since the Rana Plaza reforms, but the

average earnings per month remain low at about \$105, much lower than in other major RMG-exporting countries, including Vietnam at \$300 and Cambodia at \$200. Reports of poor working conditions, curtailing union activities, and gender disparities in the workplace add more stains to the sector's reputation.

Learning from the Competition

Vietnam:

Efficiency and automation are the hallmarks of the RMG strategy in Vietnam. The country has managed to offset its relatively higher labour costs by gaining productivity through heavy investment in technology and training. Its export market is further bolstered by several bilateral trade agreements, such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, popularly known as CPTPP.

Cambodia:

The garment industry in Cambodia focuses on the protection of labor rights and therefore has a policy that is concurrent with global labor standards.

However, its small scale and dependency on foreign finance keeps it behind Bangladesh in the competitive race.



Sri Lanka:

Sri Lanka has branded itself as an ethical and sustainable production hub, supplying high-value apparel. The country hosts the world's first carbon-neutral apparel factory and has vigorous measures on compliance with regard to worker welfare. It makes a conscious appeal to buyers who want to pay a premium for a sustainable product.



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BALANCING INVESTMENT AND WORKER WELFARE IN BANGLADESH'S RMG SECTOR AND LESSONS FROM GLOBAL MODELS

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Opportunities and Limitations for Bangladesh Green Transition:

Bangladesh already boasts over 200 green-certified factories, the most in the world. Scaling this can gain a wedge of positive reputation with environmentally conscious buyers, including those from Europe.

Diversification:

The ability to move into higher-value segments, such as functional apparel and sportswear, can reduce dependence on low-cost production and higher wage opportunities.

Technology Integration:

Mechanization and digital tools could enhance productivity. Less than 15% of factories in Bangladesh currently use advanced automation, but increasing this percentage will be important to long-term competitiveness.

Cost Pressure:

Increasing wages or compliance might discourage the cost-sensitive buyer segment, which would then look for other low-cost countries such as Ethiopia or Myanmar.

Policy and Governance Gaps:

While reforms since Rana Plaza have been extensive, weak enforcement of labour laws and limited government oversight erode gains in this area.

Global Market Shifts:

Losing LDC benefits means that Bangladesh must renegotiate trade agreements or pay more in tariffs, which will hurt its export competitiveness.

Policy Recommendations

Training:

Most of the garment workers have little education and training. To improve productivity and attract higher-value-added segments of the RMG industry, Bangladesh should establish industry-academia partnerships to develop tailored training programs, provide incentives for businesses to invest in automation/digital technologies, and create a conducive environment for research and development in textile and apparel technologies.

Enforcement of labour laws:

Bangladesh should enforce labour laws more rigorously to improve worker welfare, enhance the industry's reputation, establish effective grievance mechanisms, and expand social safety net programs, including health insurance and retirement benefits. Enforcement is critical as the country has historically fallen short when ensuring the rule of law. This means that the larger firms tend to follow the regulations (and are more able to follow the regulations) due to pressure from their large buyers, while the smaller firms that employ a majority of the garment workers tend to fly under the radar.

Diversification:

To reduce dependence on a few key markets and low-value products, Bangladesh should explore new markets, particularly in Africa and the Middle East, and

simultaneously promote the production of high-value products, such as technology and sportswear, while supporting the development of both local brands and designer labels.

In addition, Bangladesh can motivate the industry to adopt eco-friendly production methods in all processes, such as water recycling and energy efficiency. It can also encourage support certification and labeling schemes promoting sustainable and ethical production, and invest in research and development to develop innovative, sustainable materials and processes.

Bangladesh now finds itself at a crossroads where it needs to balance two competing priorities: it can either continue to be appealing for global apparel buyers due to labour cost competitiveness or improve the quality of life of its garments workforce and forgo this cost advantage in favor of having a high skill garments sector in the future. The experiences in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka show that these goals are not mutually exclusive. Bold policy measures and strategic investments can help Bangladesh reconfigure the RMG sector into a truly inclusive and sustainable model—one that is a leader not only in apparel export but also in global development.

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INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL

POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROME: A SILENT EPIDEMIC IN SOUTH ASIA



Shaira Anjuman

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), a common endocrine disorder affecting women of reproductive age, is a growing health crisis in South Asia, including Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. Despite its prevalence, the condition remains shrouded in stigma and misunderstanding, which hinders timely diagnosis and effective management.

The Scope of the Problem

It is estimated that around 10-13% of women in South Asia suffer from PCOS. Urban areas tend to show even higher rates due to lifestyle changes, environmental factors, and dietary habits. For example, a study conducted in Pakistan identified hyperinsulinemia (excess insulin), obesity, and hormonal imbalances as major contributors to the condition, with nearly 32% of infertile women being diagnosed with PCOS.

In Bangladesh, central obesity and metabolic malfunctions, such as insulin resistance, are strikingly common—nearly every second woman diagnosed with PCOS suffers from these issues.

Key Contributors to PCOS

The occurrence of PCOS can primarily be attributed to a combination of biological factors and lifestyle choices. Increasingly sedentary lifestyles in urban areas, alongside diets high in carbohydrates and processed sugars, are playing a destructive role in health.

Additionally, social taboos around discussing reproductive health in South Asia exacerbate the issue. According to Patel et al., these cultural barriers delay diagnosis and increase the risk of complications such as infertility, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases. Women with PCOS are often unfairly blamed for infertility, despite it being beyond their control, which leads to emotional trauma, depression, anxiety, and diminished self-worth.

In countries like Bangladesh, the situation is further worsened by a lack of awareness regarding fitness and nutrition, combined with limited motivation for adopting healthy lifestyles.

The Research Deficit

While PCOS is a significant health issue in South Asia, research and data specific to this region remain insufficient. There have been very few large-scale epidemiological studies focusing on the prevalence of PCOS or investigating its genetic and environmental risk factors among South Asian populations.

This research gap forces clinicians to rely on international diagnostic standards and treatment guidelines, which may not be suitable for South Asian contexts due to differences in genetics, culture, and socioeconomic factors. Furthermore, cultural stigma prevents many women from openly discussing their symptoms or seeking medical attention, making it even harder to collect accurate data.



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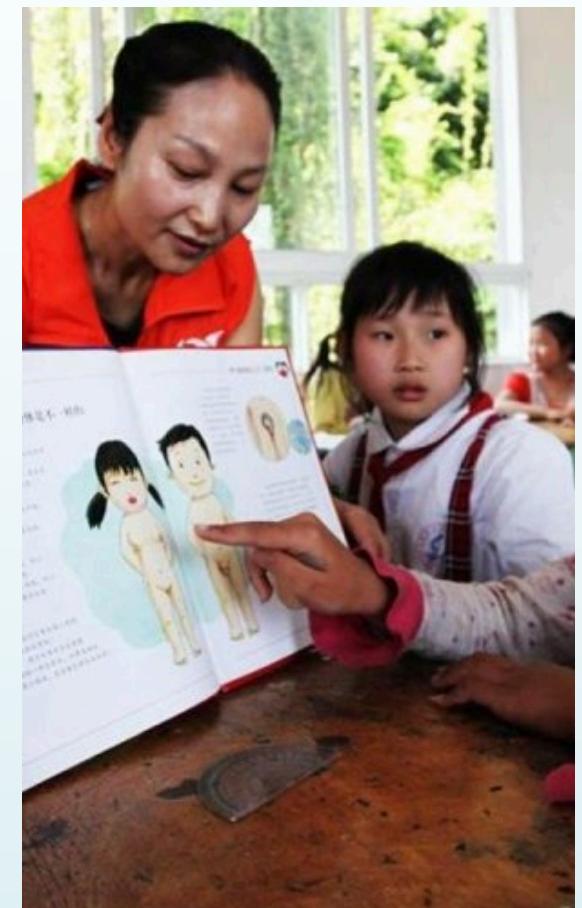
POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROME: A SILENT EPIDEMIC IN SOUTH ASIA

Shaira Anjuman

The Way Forward: Tackling PCOS in South Asia

Addressing PCOS in South Asia requires a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach that considers the region's unique challenges. Some key strategies include:

1. Public Education Initiatives:
2. Launching awareness campaigns to educate communities about PCOS symptoms, risk factors, and management strategies can empower women to seek timely help.
3. Improved Healthcare Accessibility:
4. Ensuring access to affordable diagnostic tests and treatment options, particularly in rural and underserved areas, is essential for managing the condition effectively.
5. Dietary Changes and Exercise:
6. Encouraging diets with reduced refined carbohydrates and processed sugars, alongside promoting regular physical activity, can alleviate many PCOS symptoms.
7. Mental Health Support:
8. Offering counseling services and support groups can help women cope with the emotional and psychological impact of PCOS, including anxiety, depression, and self-esteem issues.
9. Investment in Research:
10. Funding region-specific studies to better understand the prevalence, causes, and treatments of PCOS can help develop tailored diagnostic criteria and interventions for South Asian women.

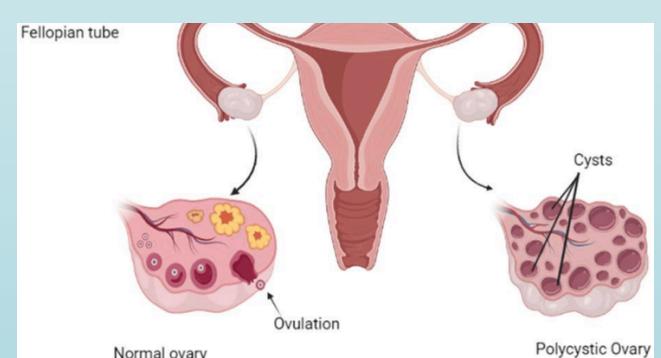


PCOS cannot remain a silent epidemic—it is a pressing reality that demands cohesive efforts from policymakers, healthcare providers, researchers, and communities.

In Bangladesh and across South Asia, PCOS is not just a medical issue; it is a social concern that requires serious attention, cultural transformation, and collective action to improve the lives of countless women.

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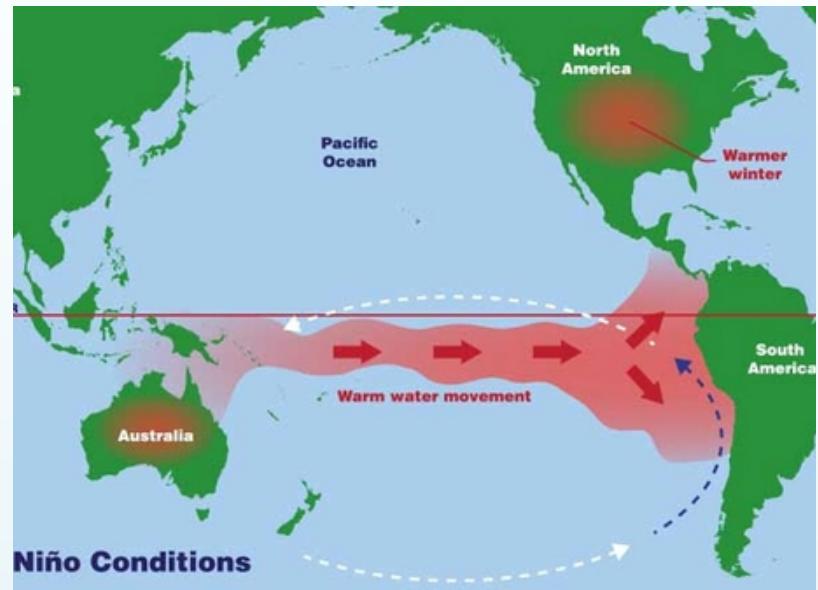
INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL

MITIGATING EL NINO'S IMPACTS: STRATEGIES FOR COMBATING DROUGHT, FOOD INSECURITY, AND WATER SCARCITY IN ASIA

Tran Ngo Minh Khang

El Nino, a climatic pattern that leads to a high occurrence of drought or heavy rain, also exerts a wide-ranging influence on countries around the globe, among which Asian nations are the most stricken. As a representative of an Asian nation where El Nino-induced droughts are the major culprits of energy crises, food shortages, and water insufficiencies in this article, I would like to propose several viable measures to mitigate this problem.

Firstly, El Nino adversely affects hydropower output; therefore, I highly recommend that energy sources be diversified to prevent energy crisis. As a hydroelectric power-dependent continent, Asian countries should adopt more alternatives such as solar, wind, and biomass to relieve their reliance on this single source, while non-commercial eco-friendly electrical products should be widely available in the market with governmental subsidies. Also, electricity-saving campaigns should be initiated to urge household and business austerity.



Secondly, as El Nino-induced droughts are a primary trigger for food insecurity, climate-resilient methods should be applied to mitigate the risk of food shortages.

Specifically, making use of drought-resistant crop varieties such as switching to cultivating less water-consuming crops like eucalyptus could help conserve water.

Planting watermelons and beans at the end of the rice harvest seasons will also reduce water usage but diversify crop options. In addition, precision irrigation and soil conservation should be established to ensure maximum water efficiency and a higher yield, which is successfully demonstrated in the Philippines.

Furthermore, water storage facilities and distribution systems are crucial for addressing water scarcity. For example, reservoirs and dams should be used to collect water during water-abundant periods, while reserves should be provided during dry spells. Water recycling facilities in major industrial sites should be installed, whereas more technological applications, such as cloud seeding or geoengineering, are applied to produce rain artificially, which promises to partly replace the shortage of natural rainfall. Besides, regional and global risk reduction, anticipatory emergency response, and recovery actions should also be focuses with the concerted effort of the countries worldwide.

In conclusion, by adopting proactive measures and climate-resilient strategies, all affected countries in Asia can partly address the dire consequences caused by El Nino, and prevent its consequences.

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INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL

THE MYSTERY OF THE VOYNICH MANUSCRIPT: A LOST LANGUAGE OF ANCIENT CODE?

Truong Bao Ngoc

In 1912, Polish bookseller Wilfrid Voynich made a fateful encounter. While working through a collection of old books in the library of a Jesuit college, he accidentally discovered a manuscript bound in brown parchment, containing strange, undeciphered text and unusual illustrations of weird plants, astronomical symbols, and oddly-posed human figures. Even more queer, this manuscript - later named the Voynich Manuscript after the man who discovered it - has never been deciphered completely.

After recently being carbon-dated back to around 1420, the Voynich Manuscript captured even more attention from researchers and historians worldwide. Even today, this manuscript remains one of history's biggest mysteries. The key to why this manuscript still lies in the dark is that no one can figure out what was written in it. Several theories arise from this manuscript: some say that an unknown author or authors may have written it as a code, others conclude that it is just gibberish, and many believe it is simply a forgotten language that couldn't be decoded.

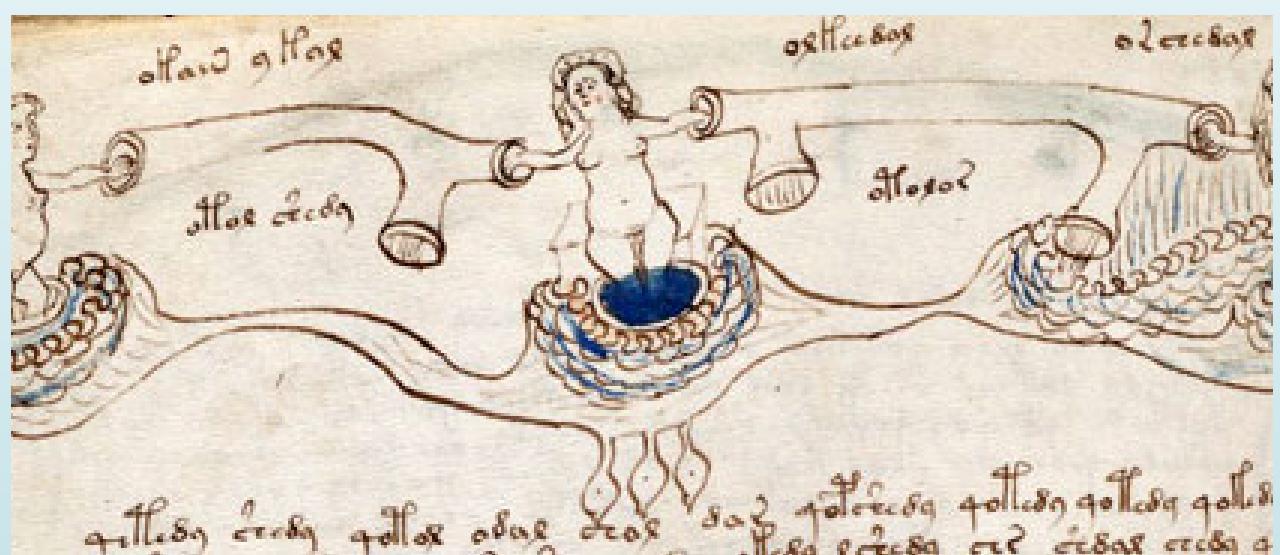
Theory 1: Written in gibberish

One of the reasons why people come to think the document was written in gibberish was because the structure of the text is rather abstract and doesn't portray a noticeable pattern. In natural languages, like English, there is phonetic consistency and grammatical rules. These factors make it easier for us to break down the structure of English and understand how a sentence is formed; therefore, we can memorize its pattern and speak it fluently. The words in the manuscript also seem to be formed out of random loops, which don't show any frequency of how often those loops are written. While, of course, there have been people who have pointed out a few recurring patterns and word-like clusters, the rate of recurrence for these clusters is far too little to jump to the conclusion that the manuscript was written in a real language. Instead, many argue that those recurring "words" and "sentences" are just there to give the false illusion of meaning.

Theory 2: Written as a code by a group of people or authors.

This theory suggests that a group of people created their own language and written this manuscript in code. There are notable patterns in the speech, and patterns are seen as a sign of language. Often, codes are built differently from normal language, so using the same grammatical rules wouldn't apply to codes. There is a theory that Voynich wrote the book itself, but it has been proven false with the carbon-dating back to 1420, far earlier than when Voynich found the book.

Other people have come up with ideas that the book itself wasn't written by a human, but rather by aliens or witches from the 15th century.



However, most of these ideas are still farfetched and have not yet been confirmed scientifically through studies or research. People who believe in these ideas are still determined to find out the true nature behind the manuscript itself.

Theory 3: It's written in a lost language

Most of the patterns found in the manuscript were very noticeable, as documented by Ted Ed. They are almost too noticeable.



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The patterns may indeed indicate some sort of code, but if it had been a code that shared such similarities to our modern language, why has it still not been decoded yet? Many believe that this supposed “similarity” is a sign that this is a real language instead of merely a code. Like the language on Easter Island, this could be a language that was popular in the early 15th century, but as time passed, the language became less popularized until it became impossible to decipher. The illustrations in the book are thought to be linked with this idea. The various pictures of suns, moons, humans, and odd plants could be interpreted as cultural uniqueness, or of the traditional beliefs of a certain people.



The true meaning

While the idea behind the Voynich Manuscript still hasn't been settled, there have been a few people who claim that they have decoded the manuscript. In 2019, David Cheshire – an academic in the UK – claimed to have finally decoded the manuscript. According to Arnet News, one panel of the manuscript depicts two women wrangling five children in a bath. The drawing is labeled with a word describing different temperaments; tozosr (buzzing: too noisy), orla la (on the edge: losing patience), tolora (silly/foolish), noror (cloudy: dull/sad), or aus (golden bird: well behaved), oleios (oiled: slippery).



His idea was that this was a document for women's rights and reproduction, written by a female author. However, most people doubted his method, due to the fact that even WW2 decipherers couldn't crack the code.

In 2020, a German Egyptologist named Rainer Hannig believed he had also cracked the manuscript. Hannig writes in an article in German explaining his methodology. “A lot of languages were proposed, such as Latin, Czech, or amongst others Nahuatl (spoken by the Aztecs), just to name a few... The word structure leaves only one possible explanation: the manuscript was not composed in an Indo-European language.” After identifying a connection between certain Voynich manuscript characters and Hebrew, he managed to translate the first words, and then full sentences. Unfortunately, he was unable to provide the full translation or explanation of the manuscript due to lack of time and money.

Some time ago, a writer named Nicolas Gibbs, claimed to have also translated the manuscript. It was supposed to be a mostly plagiarized book on women's health. According to him, it wasn't a code – it was just written in a way that would be easily readable to any medical professionals of the era. However, this “translation” was refuted by scientists themselves, and he was criticized for coming up with theories considering he was a TV producer without any actual background in linguistics.

In the past, many people have tried to get their hands on the manuscript and decode it. As people continue to claim that they have finally decrypted the language, most still fail and are doubted because of their methods. The manuscript, as it is, can be viewed differently from several perspectives. Depending on whether you believe in the translations or not, the manuscript could have different meanings for you. Alas, the mystery of the Voynich Manuscript lives on, waiting for its true translation to be brought into the light.

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INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL

THE RISE OF AI IN CONTENT CREATION: GOOD OR BAD?

Hai Lam (Apple) Ngoc

"There is no reason and no way that a human mind can keep up with an artificial intelligence machine by 2035." - Gray Scott. AI has succeeded in its efforts to integrate into our daily lives. AI powers our digital assistants, chatbots, social media platforms, and so much more. Recently, AI has been revolutionizing the field of content creation as well.

AI-generated content

When discussing this area, AI-generated content refers to blogs, marketing materials, articles, movies, songs and other types of products which are created by Artificial Intelligence, a technology that has developed rapidly over the recent years. The AI would generate the specific content after an individual inputs information such as key words, phrases and topics. It generates this content by searching on the internet and pieces together a product which follows the requested format.

Benefits of AI-generated content

There are several benefits which AI provides us with such as its efficiency and flexibility. AI can implement tasks like data collection, drafting, and editing in a way which allows content creators to focus on the more creative aspect of their work. With the support of AI, content creators can save a considerable amount of time and get more things done in a certain time limit. However, AI doesn't just streamline content creation; it can also be a cost-effective solution for content creators looking to save up money. By automating routine tasks, AI reduces the need for extensive human labor, which can be a major expense in content production. AI can help us, the human creators, in creating high quality content within a shorter time without the need for large teams or expensive equipment and resources. In the long term, AI-generated content can lead to a more sustainable and financially viable content creation model, making high-quality content creation more accessible to a broader range of creators.

Harms of AI-generated content

While AI excels in generating content at scale, this often comes at the cost of quality and uniqueness. The mass-produced nature of AI content can lead to a homogenization of content, where everything starts to look or sound similar to each other. There would no longer be any distinction in products released by content creators if this homogenization happens. Furthermore, AI tools lack emotional intelligence, which plays a pivotal role in content creation as human emotions and experiences can help the audience resonate more with the work. Although AI possesses the ability to mimic emotional expressions, it doesn't actually understand the feelings the content creator wants to convey through the product, making the results lack depth. But the harms don't just stop here. Without a proper balance in using AI and thorough verification of the results given, there is potential for misinformation in the AI-generated content. Whether it is unintentional due to training on inaccurate data sources or not, it is still a harm AI can exhibit to us so content creators must be mindful of the presented content.

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Future of AI in content creation

AI in content creation holds a bright future, but to reach it, individuals will have to cross many challenging obstacles. As AI technologies continue to evolve over time, we can expect them to become more sophisticated in their capabilities. We might see Artificial Intelligence understand more about human emotions and even replicate them, which can lead to content that resonates more with the audience due to its authenticity. AI might even have the potential to offer advanced forms of content generation that would be a crucial step in taking content creation to the next level.

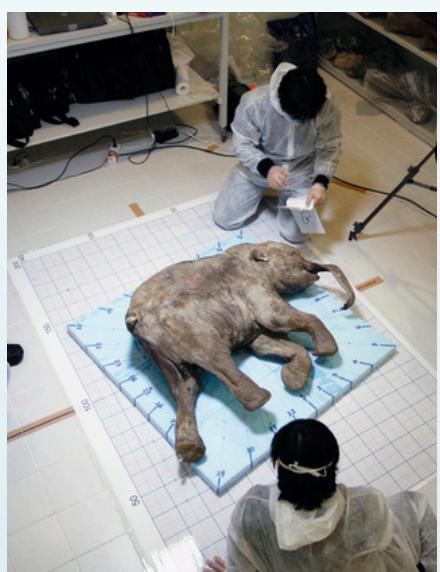


INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL

DE-EXTINCTION: DOOM OR DISCOVERY?

Estelle Sia Yu Qi

In the 1940s, the arms race began between the United States and the Soviet Union. In 1957, the space race started. Today, in the 20th Century, we have the de-extinction race. What was once unimaginable is soon to be reality: woolly mammoths, dodo birds, Tasmanian tigers. In 2003, scientists reversed extinction for the first time, albeit for only 7 minutes; since then, scientific curiosity has plagued academics and the public alike. 11 years later, Colossal Biosciences, a biotechnology startup, announced that they had sequenced a Tasmanian tiger genome that is over 99.9% complete.



What is De-extinction?

De-extinction is the process of resurrecting extinct species using modern-day technology and genetic engineering. Currently, the 3 main methods are cloning, genome editing, and selective breeding. The concept of bringing back extinct species has been explored since the early 1920s, but only caught on more broadly in more recent years.

While the term suggests that these species are brought back to life literally, the process generally produces an animal that resembles the extinct species, not one with the exact genetic identity.

Scientific Advancement

Cloning is one of the common methods proposed for restoring extinct species. The process begins with the extraction of the nucleus from a preserved cell of the extinct species. Then, it is swapped into an egg of the species' nearest living relative; this egg is then implanted into a surrogate animal. While this method is able to restore the species with identical genetic code, it can only be used if a preserved cell is available, limiting the range of species that can be revived.

Another method rising in popularity is genome editing due to the advancements of CRISPR technology. To do this, researchers have to edit the genome of a closely related living species directly, referencing a draft genome of the extinct species. Thus, the egg and sperm will produce offspring: a hybrid of the extinct species and its living relatives. This method allows for more species to be resurrected even without any well-preserved tissue, but will be increasingly difficult depending on how degraded the tissue is.

Lastly, selective breeding, such as back-breeding, is also used in de-extinction attempts by breeding animals for an ancestral quality, recreating the traits of extinct species in their closest living relative. In this case, the genome will differ from the extinct species as it merely achieves the phenotype of the extinct ancestor. The downside to this method is its contingency on this ancestral trait still existing in any capacity in those populations.



Ethical Considerations

Although de-extinction signifies progress in human technology, such incredible scientific advancement begs the question of its ethicality. Does our moral responsibility supersede current needs? Is it ethical to resurrect extinct species in a world that has moved on without them? One of the biggest concerns for de-extinction is ecological integration and the ecosystem. The driving force behind de-extinction is the belief that resurrecting extinct species will help restore our fragmented environments.



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According to the leading company of this movement – Colossal Biosciences – the de-extinction of certain species will restore original ecosystems and combat climate change, such as using mammoths to restore the steppe biome. The counter to this is a misallocation of effort. Rather than devote time and money towards de-extinction, it is more logical to direct resources towards the conservation of present habitats, such as tackling climate disruption, pollution, and erosion of biodiversity. In fact, the amount spent on bringing back 3 species is enough to save roughly 100 endangered ones. Moreover, reintroduction and integration of revived species may not be feasible since suitable habitats for the species, especially niche ones, may be destroyed and unavailable. The process of reintroduction with existing species is already one that is lengthy, expensive and difficult, even more so for revived species considering the sheer scale necessary to have an impact.



Furthermore, de-extinction advocates frequently claim the moral high ground, arguing that it is the right thing to do since human activity resulted in their demise.



However, this raises questions of equality. When should we feel morally inclined to resurrect the species? Are all species equally important? Do we only bring back those that died out from direct human causes? At the same time, it also concerns the notion of 'playing God'. Some argue that de-extinction crosses boundaries and oversteps humanity's role by reviving the dead.

Conclusion

In summary, the concept of de-extinction is a remarkable achievement in the world of science, moving our discoveries forward by leaps and bounds. Regardless, more consideration is needed to determine whether it is worth it – if the de-extinction of species should come at the expense of conservation efforts and biodiversity risks. With the first revived animal on its way, society must engage in meaningful discourse and debates and soon reach a consensus, choosing if the potential good outweighs the possible harm.



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INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY: INSIGHTS FROM THE GISELE PELICOT CASE

Emmanuella Kwatia

Introduction

Gisele Pelicot, the French woman whose husband is on trial for drugging and raping her when they were married, even inviting dozens of other men to rape her, has sparked several conversations, and protests on sexual violence against women in the world. Addressing sexual violence, especially against women and girls, is crucial in today's world. From time immemorial women and girls have suffered a great deal of sexual violence, beginning with rape as a means of war to sexual harassment by colleagues in the workplace, in schools, and even in homes. This article aims to explore sexual violence within the context of the Gisele Pelicot case and examine broader implications for women's and girls' safety and rights.

The Gisele Pelicot Case

Ms Gisele Pelicot, a 71-year-old woman, initiated an open trial in France on 9th September 2024 against her former husband Dominique Pelicot, and 51 other men for rape between 2011 and 2020. Dominique was administering Temesta (a drug for anxiety and sleep difficulty) to his former wife on the advice of a nurse he met online.

The drug put her into a deep sleep, allowing him to sexually abuse her without her ever realizing. Dominique invited strangers from online into their home to rape her and videotaped the assaults.



As the trial began, Gisele waived her right to remain anonymous, trying to push past the idea of 'hiding' from public view for fear of being shamed. Despite Dominique confessing to the crime, the other accused men have pleaded not guilty arguing that they believed Gisele had consented to being raped and that Dominique's consent was sufficient for them. One of the accused men, Patrice, claims he did not rape her but rather left after finding out that Dominique drugs his wife for other men to rape her. When asked by the court if he attempted to help Gisele, he responded that no one would have believed him especially when she was unconscious at the time. These expose the deficiencies in the legal system. The laws on consent may not be clear if these men believe that a husband's permission to assault his wife equates to his wife giving consent. Also, the fact that Patrice knew that the police would not believe him shows how victims and even sympathizers of victims of sexual violence are treated by law enforcement agencies, who have the duty to protect and defend.

Dr Ummni Khan, a researcher on gender, sexuality, and the law, is one of the public personalities who has raised concerns regarding the other accused men's argument. She opines that the fact that there were so many men willing to engage in this atrocious assault and that their ages ranged from 20s to 70s, means there is a pervasive belief that if a husband gives his consent to access his wife's body, then any man is entitled to commit rape. Under this ideology, it means a woman's body, autonomy, agency and humanity are simply an object of pleasure for men, or that husbands 'own' women and can make decisions for them.



Overview of Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls

Sexual violence remains a global epidemic, affecting millions of women every year. Sexual violence is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sex or gender using coercion without the person's consent. It includes rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse and exploitation, sexual harassment, and taking or sharing a person's sexual images without their consent.



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Emmanuella Kwatia

According to the World Health Organization, about 1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced sexual violence. These numbers, while alarming, only scratch the surface of the problem. Many cases go unreported due to fear, societal stigma, or a lack of faith in the justice system. Women who dare to report are often retraumatized by the very systems that are supposed to protect them. In many rape cases, the focus often shifts from the actions of the perpetrator to the behaviour of the victim, propagating a culture of shame and blame. This discrimination is further reflected in the justice system.

Research has shown that women are less likely to be believed when reporting sexual violence, and even when their cases go to court, convictions are difficult to secure due to biases in the judicial process.



Gender abuse takes forms such as physical, psychological, emotional, and even economic. In the case of sexual violence, it becomes a tool for asserting male dominance, dehumanizing women, and reinforcing patriarchal norms.

Broader Implications for Women's and Girls' Rights and Safety

The waiving of her right to remain anonymous shows the resilience and perseverance of Gisele Pelicot in surviving the atrocities her former husband committed and standing up for the safety and rights of women and girls all over the world.

Gisele Pelicot's case has shown that the shame is not for the victims to bear but rather for the perpetrators. This case exposes the ineffectiveness of the laws regarding the protection of women and girls against sexual violence. It shows how the system is structured to protect the perpetrators rather than the victims. Given the alarming nature of sexual violence, this case supports the call for the enforcement of laws against sexual violence and more efforts on the part of the government to ensure that the rights of women and girls are protected.

It has also shown that institutions that are supposed to protect and serve justice need reformation. Law enforcement agencies need better training on how to handle sexual violence cases and distinguish each case they handle. The judiciary must set aside biased treatment and ensure that victims receive fair treatment and justice. The media, instead of focusing on irrelevant aspects of the victim's life, should center the narrative on the crime and the need for justice.

Conclusion

The Gisele Pelicot case is a powerful reminder of the existence of sexual violence in the 21st century. Her fight for justice throws light on the systemic failings that prevent many women from finding closure or safety in the aftermath of abuse. As the world moves forward, it is only by addressing the systemic issues that we can reduce the prevalence of sexual violence against women and girls.

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INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL

MIC'D UP: THE RISING INFLUENCE OF PODCASTS ON THE YOUTH

Eman Kristian De Leon



After spending hours upon hours listening to music and watching videos online, it's likely that at least once during the day an encounter with an advertisement or article or simple mention of podcasts would occur. This leads to the question: why are people, especially those of the younger generations, interested and listening to so many podcasts, and what are some possible implications if one listens to too many of them?

Within the podcast world, there are many famous individuals who have made their mark and appeal to their listeners known. Podcasters have earned their reputation for being eccentric and engaging for audiences as well as their interesting guests while others gained notoriety for their political or at times controversial views. When all podcasters are lined up though, there is a common denominator. Many of them openly combine entertainment and factual information to their audience, which is mostly made up of the youth.

Youth Engaged, Youth Influenced

Research made during the past two years suggests that the population that listens to podcasts is diverse, but the share of the youth in the mix cannot be ignored.

It is said that in 2023, there were around 506.9 million people considered podcast listeners, with these numbers increasing to 546.7 million in 2024.

As for the platform, YouTube is the most popular, taking 31% of the share of weekly podcasts, followed by 21% for Spotify, and 12% for Apple Podcasts. Out of these data sets though, the most significant data is the age demographic of the people who listened to a podcast at least once.

According to Edison Research, 59% of consumers in the United States listen to a podcast at least once a month. Out of this data, 29% of kids aged 6-12 have listened to a podcast in the recent month. It is also said that members of Generation Z or those born in the 1990s to 2000s are listening to podcasts for an additional three hours per week. The influence of culture change that can be observed in the youth is evident in the data presented, as it is said that 84% of Gen Z listeners tune in to podcasts to dig deeper into topics they are interested in.

74% on the other hand, listen to podcasts so that they can hear a unique perspective not seen in other forms of media. 66% listen to podcasts so that they can keep up to date with the latest topics, while 61% would like to be updated with social issues.



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Podcast Overload: Good or Bad?

Given the reality that the youth are really engaged when it comes to listening and watching podcasts, the inevitable question is whether listening to too many of them would lead to a positive or negative effect. Research made during the past three years state both sides of the spectrum but the general theme is that there is a definite change when it comes to the individual listening. If one is said to be watching too many true crime podcasts, then there may be the tendency to trust people less. Meanwhile, people who tend to watch many political podcasts are likely active voters in their respective regions, which in turn would lead them to adopt certain political stances and align with caucuses. On a more positive note, members of the youth who watch varied types of podcasts would help them be more aware on issues such as social justice and the economy, albeit this depends on the podcasts they watch or hear.



What Now?

The data, along with observations attest to the fact that podcasts have indeed had a large influence on the youth. Their growth and prominence in modern media make the young generation aware of the things that are happening around them, albeit with different perspectives in mind. The youth may see the world through the lenses of their background, through the perspective of the podcasts they listen to and watch, or a mix of both.



The certain aspect for all of this though is that podcasts are here to stay, and their relevance in world media from politics to entertainment can no longer be undermined by their entertainment facade.

It is more than laughs and memes now, it is also about awareness and plight. Podcasts are also there to be used by people of different backgrounds, who may use it to promote their products or branding while others may use it for greater purposes such as educating others.

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INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL

GENE EDITING

Sharvanth Saravanan

Gene editing is reshaping the way we understand and interact with life itself. Genome editing, as complex as it may sound, is quite an interesting subject. As the name suggests, gene editing enables scientists to change and alter the DNA of any living species, which allows us to make changes in our characteristics and traits. For example, genome editing enables us to change our eye colour, increase our lifespan, or develop resistance against a certain disease. There are many technologies that enable humans to edit genes, and although it has several advantages, gene editing has some ethical issues to consider. This technology is a glimpse into the future of science and humanity.

We have been able to edit genes since the 1970s, but recent technologies have created cheaper and more precise methods to alter genes. It may all sound pretty fascinating—how humans have advanced so far as to be able to edit our own bodies and other plants and animals in a way that gives us special powers—but many countries have forbidden research on such gene editing due to the many issues that might arise as a result.

Let us look further into gene editing in humans and how it saves lives around the globe:

Out of around 25,000 identified genes known to humans, mutations in around 3,000 genes have been known to cause diseases. Such diseases can be eliminated by this process of gene editing.

Gene editing has also enabled scientists to cure some forms of diabetes. Even diseases like HIV and sickle-cell disease can be treated by gene editing. This method can also help slow down ageing, though research in this field is still in its early stages of development.



Not only in humans, editing genes are also possible in plants and animals, allowing them to provide better yields, grow longer, and be harvested in a shorter season. Let us look at some examples.

In the US, researchers have used gene-editing technology on crops such as maize, soybeans, and others, developing varieties that are resistant against bacterial blights. Blights, being a major threat to the growth of several agricultural plants, are known to destroy 10% to 23% of all crops. Such blight-resistant varieties enable increased yield, satisfying the demands of a huge population and helping to solve world hunger. Gene-edited crops that are drought-resistant or pest-resistant are also being actively developed.

Chinese researchers have modified several important plants, including rice, wheat, and maize, making disease-resistant varieties. They have also created techniques to develop goats with longer coats and more muscle for increased meat yield.

Other modifications include barley crops in Denmark, wheat in India, and dairy cattle with increased milk yield and better quality.

In the US, hornless dairy cattle have been created, which avoids the painful dehorning of animals and allows for easier transport. Such modifications have not only improved the lives of these farm animals but have also made the lives of farmers, cattlemen, and herdsmen easier.



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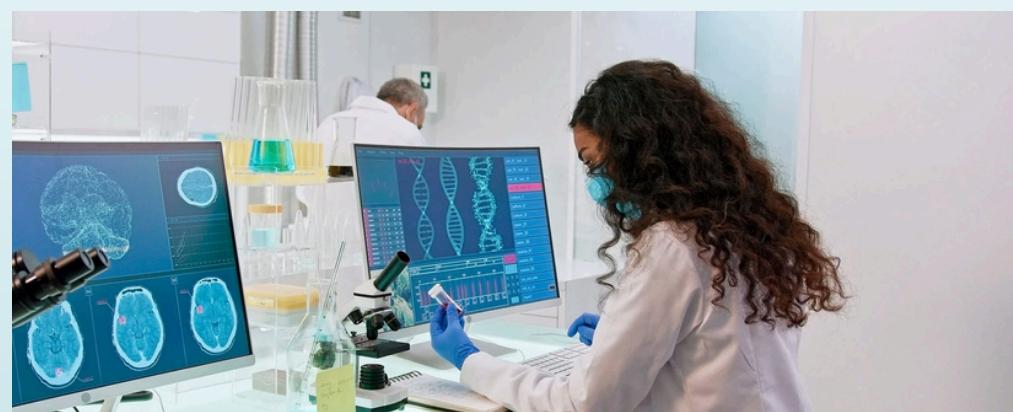
GENE EDITING

Sharvanth Saravanan

The Issues of Gene Editing

Though helpful in plants and animals, gene editing is severely condemned in humans and is restricted by several countries due to various challenges, issues, and religious barriers.

Parents could choose traits like intelligence, athleticism, or physical appearance, leading to a society where genetic enhancements become a privilege of the wealthy. This creates genetic inequality among people. The ethics of gene editing are complex and deeply tied to how society defines value. If certain traits, like intelligence, physical appearance, or athletic ability, are considered to be more desirable, there's a risk that these decisions will lead to more prejudices rather than equality and well-being. This could lead to a future where genome editing creates societal biases and prejudices, favoring certain groups over others and widening inequalities.



Another concern associated with gene editing is the autonomy of children. Parents could make irreversible genetic choices for children who are too young to consent. This in turn raises questions on individuality and what the child wants to be. What happens if a child grows up to reject the traits chosen for them, or feels different from other children who are not genetically edited? Such ethical dilemmas highlight the need for careful thought and regulation to ensure that

advancements in gene editing promote fairness and respect for human rights, rather than creating inequality and unfair prejudices.

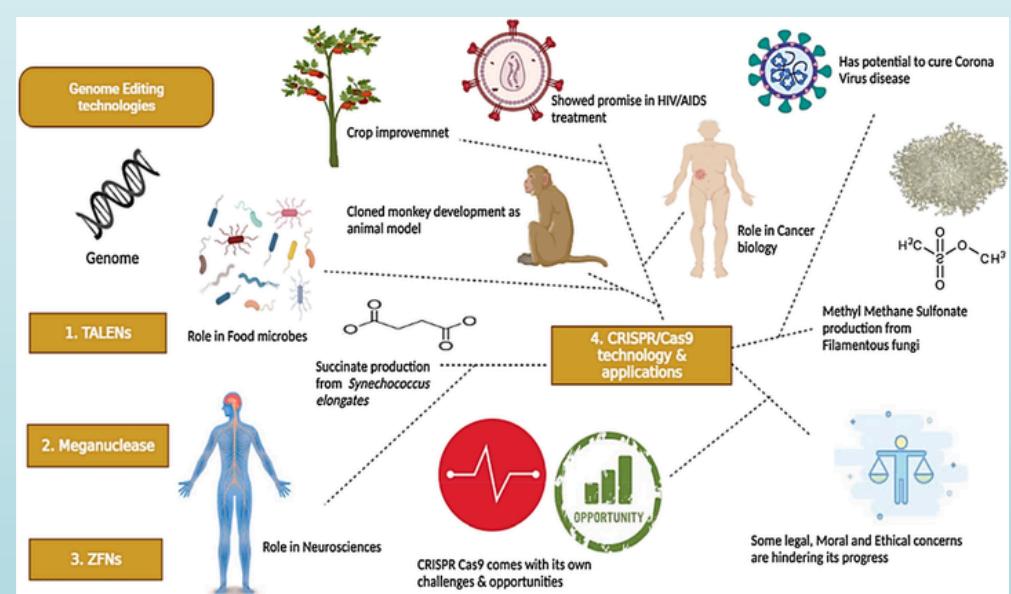
Genome editing in plants enables humans to increase yield, but it is condemned due to the side effects of consuming such genetically modified plants. Though not everyone is affected, the issue of bad gene editing and the side effects it creates is always a certain possibility.

Conclusion

Gene editing holds many promises, offering potential cures for diseases and a future free from many genetic disorders. However, its ethical challenges highlight the need for caution. The risk of creating social and genetic inequalities, unforeseen consequences, and the ethical dilemmas of altering human, animal, and plant genes call for global regulations and public dialogue.

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INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL

REDEFINING INNOVATION TO TACKLE STRAY DOG MALNUTRITION AND FOOD WASTE

Andrea Diaz

Stray dogs are animals that don't have a place in our society, nor do they choose to be part of it; it was the other way around (as we domesticated their species). Yet, we left many of them alone on the streets, and they are now a symbol of contamination and disease. We as humans forget they feel as much as we do. In our fast-developing world, is empathy disappearing little by little?

In an effort to survive, stray dogs are forced to scavenge through garbage to find what would be their only meal that day or even that week: spoiled food. Spoiled food can cause them to suffer from a range of health issues, including stomach aches, diarrhea, and even death. Additionally, the environment they live in has protozoa (parasites that reproduce in animals' intestines and wreak havoc) that are found in places with deficient hygiene measures. Unfortunately, protozoa are not a short-term issue; they are transmitted from one generation to the next, as adult animals are a source of infection and pass it to their offspring.

In simple terms, dogs eat spoiled food waste to survive; the places they reside and the items they consume damage their health. But what if there was a way to repurpose food waste from restaurants that would otherwise end up being part of the 6 million tons of organic waste in Peru, or 1.3 billion tons of food waste worldwide, to feed and deworm stray dogs?

Solutions have been proposed over the last few years, and numerous research papers have been published. Nonetheless, only some organizations have implemented these in real-world programs.

One such organization that has taken action through scientific research and social service is Foodstainable, the first Peruvian NGO (non-governmental organization) to upcycle food waste to deworm dog kibbles. By collecting chicken bones, meat, and "ugly vegetables" (not sold in stores due to their unappetizing appearance), the organization provides nutritious and sustainable meals for stray dogs in Cusco, Peru.



This solution isn't only focused on repurposing food but also using natural ingredients to improve dogs' health and, most importantly, to deworm them.

It is formulated with papaya seeds, known for their anti-amoebic (fights unicellular organisms that belong to the group of protozoa) properties in animals. After intense testing and approval from professionals, it is confirmed that the kibble helps eliminate parasites. While this may not solve all the problems that stray dogs have to endure, it is a step forward in improving their well-being.

Foodstainable was founded by Andrea Diaz, a 16-year-old, in 2022. She initially thought innovation was almost impossible to achieve in today's world. However, she realized that solution innovation can be done by combining different solutions and putting them into action in various contexts. The thought of innovation being something 100% from scratch only holds us back from seeing all the knowledge we already have access to and how we can uniquely combine many different ideas already studied to solve real problems.

By rethinking how we address pressing problems in our communities, we all can create a more sustainable and humane future, leaving no one behind, whether animals or people.

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INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL

HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS OF THE PLIGHT OF HAZARA PEOPLE IN AFGHANISTAN

Bidisha Gogoi

From their very long history to the post-Pashtun ethnic power struggle transfer to the current Taliban dominance, discrimination, persecution, and violence have been scourges that haunt the Hazara ethnic minority in Afghanistan. This paper aspires to dissect the socio-political challenges facing the Hazara community by relying on historical background, recent developments, and implications for contemporary governance. In that respect, the article analysis takes into account the sources of Hazara marginalization, risks they still face today, and continuous efforts to fight for rights and recognition in the highly fragmented nation.

The Hazara discrimination traces its roots back to the late 19th century under the rule of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan.



From the year 1880 to 1901, Hazaras suffered from mass killing, displacement, and enslavement. This was the birth of an institutionalized exclusion that has prevailed for over a century. Hazaras are considered Shia Muslim minorities in a Sunni-majority country, and hence as religious and ethnic "others" that experience targeted attacks and social exclusion.

Historically, Hazaras were repressed violently, but they were also dispossessed economically; they were deprived of fertile fields for agriculture and made to pay higher taxes. The Hazara's distinct physical features, language and religious beliefs set them apart from the Pashtun political and social elite. Under the rule of Rahman Khan, this difference led to their continued marginalization leaving the Hazaras as an excluded group in Afghanistan's political and social landscape.



In the 20th and 21st centuries, Hazaras have tried to incorporate themselves into Afghanistan's political landscape, demanding attention and rights through peaceful methods and, at times, even by self-defense movements. Despite certain intervals of comparative peace and political inclusion during the 20th and 21st centuries, their condition still remains unstable. Following the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the Hazaras saw an opportunity to again push for greater representation and for a time enjoyed relative freedom in civil society, politics, and education.

When the U.S. forces withdrew in 2021 and the Taliban regained control, the Hazara's situation took a dramatic turn.

Historically, the Taliban has expressed hostility towards the Hazaras which was largely due to their Shia beliefs and ethnic identity. The legacy of past violence, including the tragic events in Mazar-i-Sharif and Bamiyan during the 1990s, remains a deeply sensitive issue. As a result, many members of the Hazara community continue to express concerns about the potential for renewed marginalization and repression under the current regime.



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The Taliban's rule has again reawakened Hazara community fears since the Taliban took their seat back. A pattern of targeted attacks, forced evictions, and systemic exclusion continues to affect Hazaras under the Taliban's rule. International reports illustrate strategic disenfranchisement and violent targeting against Hazara communities - a continuation of historical patterns of oppression. These risks can be categorized into three major areas. Firstly, the Hazaras are the primary victims of attacks by groups such as ISIS-K, which views Hazaras as apostates. Bombings in Hazara-inhabited parts of the country, places of worship, schools, and community halls have killed many people. This has further driven a cycle of fear. For instance, in October 2022, a brutal attack on a Kabul educational center in a Hazara neighborhood killed over 50 people. The casualties were mostly students, which highlights their vulnerability when confronted with the barrels of sectarian violence.

The Taliban's governance structure has effectively secluded Hazaras from any meaningful political participation.



Key government and local administrative positions are occupied predominantly by Pashtuns, leaving little room for Hazaras to influence decisions that impact their lives. The Taliban's view of the Hazara community as outsiders has further entrenched their political exclusion, as the current leadership largely adheres to conservative Sunni interpretations that marginalize Shia groups.

Economic marginalization is perpetuated through discriminatory policies that are against Hazaras, which suppress access to resources in any Hazara-majority region. In addition, Hazara professionals have been denied equal opportunities in the professional sphere; they have been bypassed for positions or harassed frequently. Such structural inequality sustains poverty and restricts socio-economic mobility within the Hazara community, thus leading to the rise of feelings of disenfranchisement and hopelessness.

The international community response on the other hand has been unified with regards to the plight of the Hazara people. On one hand, human rights organizations and advocacy groups have brought to the fore the persecution of the Hazaras and pressured the Afghan government and international bodies to provide protection and support.

However, geopolitical considerations often trump other considerations, leaving the Hazara issue conveniently relegated to the background of the very international policy discussions regarding Afghanistan.

The United Nations has denounced such attacks against Hazaras and urged investigations.



However, the lack of mechanisms to enforce genuine change and limited leverage over the Taliban tangles their endeavors to establish meaningful change. Some nations offer asylum and refugee support to Hazara families; however, this does not suit the systemic roots of discrimination regarding Afghanistan.



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Despite the lack of tangible achievements, these initiatives have at least indicated that the society does not tolerate silence. Hazaras continue to insist on equal rights, justice, and the recognition of atrocities committed against them, which requires that emphasis of school access, balanced political representation, and safety.

A climate of fear and intimidation has not helped silence Hazaras and has not stopped them from striving for justice.

The tragic fate of the Hazaras vividly reminds one of Afghanistan's unfinished ethnic and sectarian fault lines. So, their fate will be decided internally as well as by international alliance. Their issues need to be responded to through a triple strategy - robust human rights advocacy, diplomatic pressure on the Taliban regime, and support for community-led initiatives that foster inclusion and justice abroad.



Only by acknowledging the past atrocities and committing to equitable governance can Afghanistan hope to step further into a more inclusive and stable future. For the Hazara people, it is not just a fight to survive-but to secure a better future where they can live in dignity, safety, and full recognition as equal citizens of Afghanistan.



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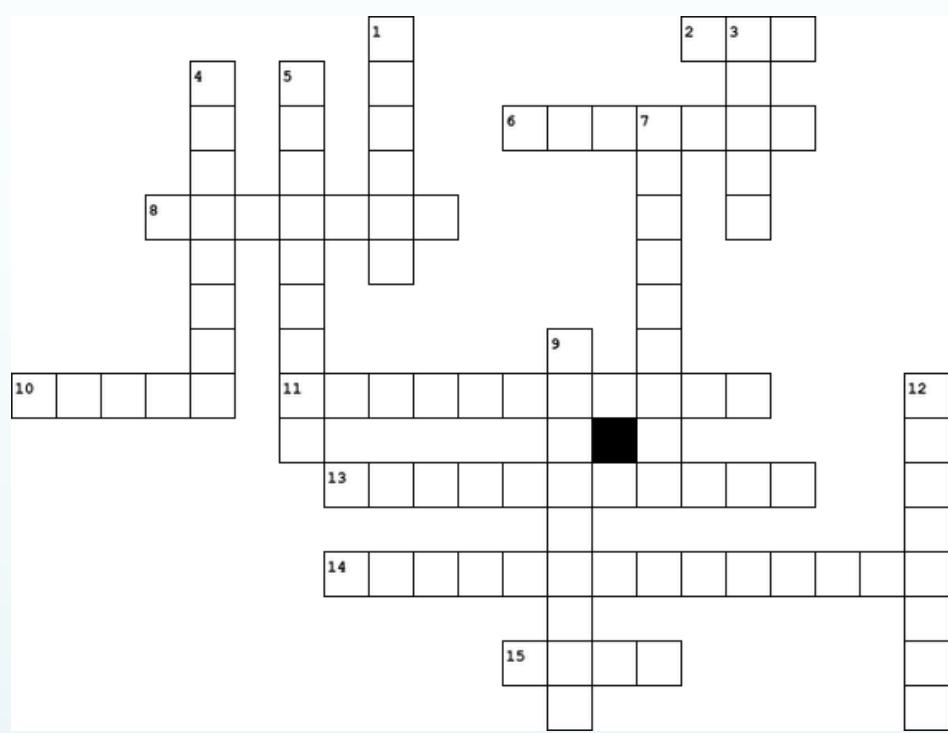
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Crossword: Women Ignored



Across:

- 2. How most people earn money.
- 6. What men making on average more than women is called.
- 8. It can spread if you don't wash your hands.
- 10. "Don't ____ Me": a song by Taylor Swift.
- 11. A major that requires precise measuring skills.
- 13. "An ____ of a lifetime."
- 14. Coercion to engage in intimate activity falls under this.
- 15. Flowers grow from them.

Down:

- 1. Treating one sex as better than the other.
- 3. The part that's connected to the fallopian tubes.
- 4. What you might take for a cold.
- 5. A butterfly to a caterpillar perhaps.
- 7. What happens at school.
- 9. It might make one plot of land more useful for farming than another.
- 12. It might cause you to get pricked every day.

Word Search: Playing God



Word Bank:

children
crispr
dodo
editing
extinction
genes
mammoth
reintroduction
species
traits

Crypto-Quote: Too Much Justice

**"ZU SUUG WN YUGADU WVU
SAFJUY HX TUNTPU LS
TYHQNSQ." -- FHRU WYODU**

Rules:

Figure out the quote from one of these articles by figuring out a simple code. In this code one letter will replace another, (it will be the same letter throughout the puzzle). Example: KLFFRFLP = SYNONYM. Solution is found through trial and error.