

Communication Design Project II | 2023

Unknown

Submitted by

Shivangi | 22M2272

Guided by

Prof. Arun Mascarenhas

Approval Sheet

This project report titled "Unknown" by Shivangi, Roll no: 22m2272 is approved for partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Master of Design Degree in Communication Design, IDC School of Design, IIT Bombay.

Guide:

Chairperson:

Internal Examiner:

External Examiner:

Date:

29.11.23

Declaration

I declare that this written submission represents my ideas in my own words and where other's ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any ideas, data, facts or sources in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause of disciplinary action by the institute and evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

Signature: 

Date: 29/11/2023
IDC School of Design,
IIT Bombay
Shivangi
Roll no: 22m2272

Acknowledgment

I express my gratitude to IDC School of Design, IIT Bombay, for granting me the opportunity to undertake this project. I would like to thank my guide, Prof. Arun Mascarenhas, for providing valuable insights at crucial stages of my project. I appreciate the guidance and support from Prof. Raja Mohanty and Prof. Aditi Chitre. Lastly, heartfelt thanks to my friends and family for being a steadfast support system and a source of motivation.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Objective

A museum plays a significant role in enhancing the tourist experience at a destination, although it may not receive as much attention as other attractions unless they have a specific interest in history.

Exemplify, Lord Krishna's birthplace Mathura, is a renowned location drawing visitors primarily for Janambhoomi and other temples. The narratives of the famous temples resonate with people. Unfortunately, many tourists overlook the government museum, Mathura an often unnoticed site that offers distinct sculptures from the divine sculptures that landed in these famous temples of Mathura. I aspire to educate and encourage them to also visit this site, acknowledging its historical significance and doing justice to the historic artifacts in Mathura.

The objective of this project is to cultivate awareness and understanding of what the government museum, Mathura encapsulates by utilizing easily accessible mediums. The aim is to make the beauty and knowledge held by this museum more accessible to a wider audience, ensuring that it doesn't remain a hidden gem but becomes a recognized and appreciated part of Mathura.

1.2 Personal Motivation

The list of approaches I proposed for the project centered around the Government Museum Mathura, as detailed below:

- The Interactive Museum Book project educates children about Government Museum, Mathura through activities and stories, creating an enjoyable learning experience.
- A modern comic, inspired by Marvel's style, explores Mathura's cultural richness with characters Rahul and Maya, emphasizing the museum's significance.
- Create a captivating coffee table book that highlights fascinating facts and insightful knowledge about the Government Museum, Mathura.
- Documenting Mathura artifacts, the project creates user friendly models for easy understanding, focusing on visual engagement for an innovative perspective on Mathura art.

Certainly, the common theme across all these proposals is a focus on the Government Museum, Mathura. Each proposal aims to contribute in distinct ways to enhancing awareness, engagement, and understanding of the museum's cultural and historical significance. This connection stems from my personal experience how I initially learned about the museum and the impact it had on me after visiting.

Since childhood, my dream has been to become a designer or artist, a journey marked by enthusiasm but lacking guidance in my small hometown, Mathura. Despite the absence of clear direction, I consistently prioritized painting as my subject a choice rooted in experimentation. It wasn't until my 11th grade, with the addition of art history to my painting curriculum, that my interest in history and art seamlessly blended. Introducing myself to Mathura's art in my 11th-grade art history book, I gained some insight but not a comprehensive understanding. Later, during my Bachelor's in Fine Arts, where art history was a subject, I delved into the significance of Mathura in the early era of artifacts. Until then, I was unaware that Mathura housed a government museum with these artifacts. This lack of awareness persisted because our visits were confined to temples, and no one mentioned this famous, knowledgeable place in the field of art history. Upon my first visit to the museum, I was struck by its overlooked status compared to crowded temples. Determined to change this, I aim to use my skills to make the Mathura Museum widely recognized and appreciated, fostering enthusiasm similar to my own.

I have discerned two distinct categories of issues.

Lack of Awareness:

In Mathura, temples have their own mythological stories attached to them that people circulate with others, but the museum merely showcases the history of artifacts. While there is a story behind every artifact, people aren't aware of it. Also, temples play a significant role in grand celebrations like Holi, Janmashtami, and kathas, gaining publicity, but the museum doesn't enjoy the same recognition. Through interviews with Sanjhi artisans in another project, I learned about their artwork being featured in the museum, but there's a noticeable lack of promotional efforts. Insufficient advertising efforts result in decreased visitor numbers and reduced public awareness of the museum's offerings

Lack of Educational Value:

I discovered that primary knowledge about Mathura art is available through books, including the 11th-12th grade NCERT Art history books. The online sites I have visited are museum websites and other art educational websites. However, these sources provide only a small portion of information and don't systematically describe the subject.

I thought this problem could be targeted by my project hence it became my topic and aim to make some small modules to educate the people so they take an interest and participate in the journey of these museum artifacts.

1.3 Government Museum

The Government Museum, Mathura, has undergone several name changes in the course of its history, initially recognized as the Curzon Museum of Archaeology, later as the Archaeology Museum, Mathura, and ultimately adopting its current nomenclature as the Government Museum, Mathura. Situated in the city of Mathura within the state of Uttar Pradesh, India, the museum occupies a distinguished red stone building characterized by an octagonal base. Established by F.S. Grouse in 1874, the Government Museum, Mathura, serves as a pivotal hub for the research, study, and preservation of the rich artistic heritage of Mathura.

The Government Museum stands as a testament to the secular nature of ancient Indian artistry, where sculptors skillfully crafted works catering to Brahmanical, Buddhist, and Jain beliefs. This distinguished museum houses a remarkable collection of ancient sculptures, representing the Mathura, Gupta, and Mauryan schools of art, spanning from the 2nd century BC to the 12th century AD. The distinctive use of spotted red (and at times buff) colored sandstone characterizes the artwork, with a special emphasis on the School's expertise in creating black clay terracottas. The exhibits also reflect the continuation of early art forms from Central India, particularly those observed in Bharhut.

Noteworthy is the fusion of the primitive Yaksha cult with a diverse pantheon of other sects, marking a transition from symbolic representation to anthropomorphic forms. The integration of foreign elements with indigenous motifs and the introduction of portraiture showcase the dynamism of the art collection. Tutelary deities, representing the popular phase of religion, hold a significant place, while the art delicately captures and charms with its exposition of feminine beauty.



fig (a) : Outside view of Government Museum, Mathura.

Ref: <https://www.holidify.com/places/mathura/government-museum-mathura-sightseeing-123104.html>

2. First Proposal

2.1 Interactive Museum Book

The project aims to engage middle-aged children, aged 10 to 15 corresponding to students in classes 6 to 9, who often explore museums through school tours or family vacations. Due to a lack of comprehensive information in their educational materials, these visits often lack insightful guidance, leading children to perceive museums as "boring." The project seeks to remedy this by providing age-appropriate resources to enhance their museum experiences, transforming their perception from monotony to curiosity and engagement.

2.2 Why Mathura museum?

The project will center its focus on the Mathura Museum due to its extensive and rich historical context. Noteworthy features of the museum include a diverse array of interesting characters, encompassing sculptures, religious deities, demigods, and representations of divine human beings who once ruled this region. Additionally, the museum offers valuable insights into the clothing, ornaments, toys, goods, storage containers, and instruments utilized during ancient times. Moreover, it presents numerous fascinating facts and stories about the sculptures housed within its exhibits.

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2.3 Medium

The development of an interactive book aims to elevate mundane museum visits into enjoyable experiences for children aged 10 to 15. This resource will integrate activities, games, stories, and interactive elements, fostering creativity and critical thinking while educating children about artifacts. The primary objective is to heighten awareness and interest in the museum setting. This interactive book not only guides visitors through museum artifacts but also serves as an effective tool for advertising, memorabilia, and education. Collaborations with traditional art and cultural artifact shops, information centers like Vrindhavan Shodh Sansthan and temples to enhance knowledge about Mathura's gems.

..... *Feedback: Left this approach midway due to lack of significance as a master's level design project.*

3. Second Proposal

3.1 Mathura Art Module

The project aims to document the art of Mathura and explore various aspects of its artifacts. The project aims to create user-friendly models for easy understanding, catering to those with limited knowledge of art history. What sets the project apart is the emphasis on the power of visuals over bookish knowledge, allowing users to engage with the content and explore concepts independently.

3.2 Area of focus

The Government Museum of Mathura features a diverse collection comprising secular stone and terracotta sculptures, as well as gold, silver, and copper coins, scripts, clay seals, and ancient pottery. Collaborating with project guide, I opted to categorize the exhibits into five key sections based on their themes: Coin Collection, Pillars and Architectural Artifacts, Male Anatomy Artifacts, Female Anatomy Artifacts, and Toys and Everyday Goods. Larger sections, covering topics such as pillars and male and female sculptures, required 2-3 weeks each, while shorter sections like coins and seals took 1-2 weeks each. The documented data will be utilized to create valuable outcomes, including online exhibitions, educational materials for schools, and the development of interactive visualizations and digital experiences.

3.3 feedback

My mentors expressed concern about my inability to access the museum for data collection. The information I've attempted to convey in my project lacks novelty, as it is already present in data forms or books. Consequently, my project lacks a personal touch and vitality. These concerns significantly impact the strength of both my project and the process of its development.

4. Incorporate Feedback

4.1 A day in CSMVS museum

To enhance my project based on the feedback from my mentors, I visited the renowned Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) in Mumbai. Before my visit, I familiarized myself with the museum's exhibits through online videos. With a dedicated effort to capture each art piece wholeheartedly, I immersed myself in the museum's promise of a captivating journey through time and culture. Spending ample time in every section, I aimed to extract impactful insights for my project. The museum's diverse artifacts, showcasing evolving techniques and a fusion of styles, underscored the resilience of creativity across generations, providing rich material for my documentation.

4.2 Personal Reflection

My museum visit deepened my appreciation for art and history, and I've documented my observations. However, I am concerned that while the museum is excellent for travelers due to its diverse exhibits from every corner of India, it poses challenges for a focused project. The rarity of artifacts in specific thematic categories makes it difficult to develop a substantial project on a single theme. Additionally, the prevalence of replicas, lacking originality, raises concerns for the research aspect of my project. On a positive note, The museum shop impressively blends knowledge, creativity, and

in its merchandise. It offering an intriguing perspective on how knowledge can be effectively conveyed to users.

4.3 Emotional Impact

I've invested considerable time in crafting the proposal for Mathura art. This subject has become close to my heart. While acknowledging the unique specialties of the CSMVS museum, I find a deep connection with the Mathura museum for my work. This space, dedicated solely to Mathura art, draws influences from various sources but maintains its unique originality. It resonates with me, and I find a profound connection with the sequential development of Mathura art, making it the focal point of my work.

4.4 Discussion with Guide

I have shared my above-mentioned personal reflections and emotional connection with my guide. Together, we concluded that museums, akin to immersive art environments, offer rich inspiration. Considering our goal of developing small modules, we determined that on-site visits weren't necessary, and we could effectively focus on the secondary research methodology for our project.

5. Data Collection

5.1 Secondary Research

Initially, I encountered challenges in my research due to relying on assumptions and having limited prior knowledge about the topic. This led me to explore less relevant areas, deviating from the specific focus required for the study. For example, I found myself studying around topics that were given below:

Mathura Sarasvati South Asia Archaeology pdf

The paper authored by Chandreyi Basu explores the depiction of Sarasvati in Mathura during the Kushan rule. Sarasvati is portrayed with an exposed torso and a squatting pose, akin to other fertility-associated deities, while her inclusion of a manuscript and rosary aligns her with Jain monks. The paper delves into the complexities of iconography, religious syncretism, and the changing roles of deities in ancient Indian art and culture, on Mathura during the Kushan period.

Gandhara and Mathura Art notes

This paper discusses the distinct differences and similarities between the Gupta and Mathura art styles, as well as their respective time periods, areas of influence, and characteristics. The paper lacks descriptive examples, which would help clarify the differences between the two styles. The author suggests that the Mathura style is entirely indigenous raises potential points of contention.

Planned Talks: The Art of Mathura

Discussing a stone piece depicting women from the 1st to 3rd centuries AD in Mathura, it reveals striking similarities with Gandharan art. Details such as grapes, musical instruments, clothing, and containers resemble those found in Gandhara, while Mathura sculptures specify dates. This highlights a challenge in Gandharan art, termed "Problems of Chronology," as the absence of dates complicates the accurate dating of artworks in this region.

Mathura Vrindavan: BRAJBHOOMI

The website I study primarily focuses on the geographical aspects of Mathura and Vrindavan. Additionally, it extensively covers the cultural influence of Shree Krishna, with minimal attention to their historical context.

Kushan Empire

I explore its origins, religious practices (with iconography from various religions), and the unique blend of Greek gods with reverence for other religions, including the worship of kings as divine beings. The artifacts from this period, especially coins, are easily accessible for analysis at the CSMVS museum.

I've also delved into papers like "Women in Indian Sculpture" by M.L. Varadpande. I encountered terms like Mahayana Buddha and Bodhisattva, these readings, though insightful, didn't directly contribute to my topic. It feels like I'm reading everything related to Mathura art, yet the direct relevance remains elusive.

Recognizing the need for a structured approach, I prioritized sequential reading to gain a comprehensive understanding. Initially, I turned to Wikipedia as a starting point to educate myself and obtain a preliminary sense of the topic. This platform offered accessible information on art history, clarified tricky terms, and outlined key rules. Importantly, it guided me through a chronological understanding of the subject over an extended time period and directed me to numerous reliable sources, including important journals, books, and primary materials, enabling in-depth study of Mathura art.

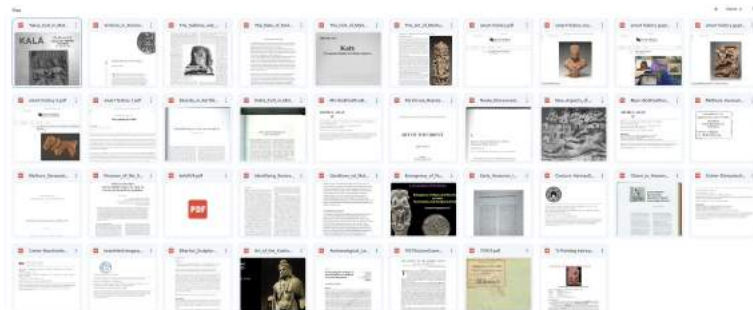


fig (b): Files collected for the project: read and yet to read.

Ref: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/13GqwCckGGK8jsr2oXCPshB9MmLKIBjRu>

I've managed to create a preliminary summary of the entire topic, but its vastness poses a challenge for a single project. I've decided to narrow down my focus to three crucial topics :

Evolution of Buddhist Art

This topic illuminates the evolution of Buddha art, emphasizing that while Mathura art is commonly associated with Buddha art, there's often a lack of deeper insight into the evolution specific to the Mathura art period.

Transition from Kushan to Gupta Art

This topic acts as a bridge between the two other themes. It delves into the artistic shifts from the Kushan to Gupta periods in Mathura, analyzing changes in style, iconography, and the cultural influences that defined these transitions.

Hindu Iconography

As mentioned earlier, Mathura art is often represented by figures of Buddha. However, this theme shifts focus to the rise of Hindu art, Gupta-era Mathura. It specifically explores the evolution of Vishnu's iconography and the incorporation of Lakshmi. The study encompasses other deities such as the sun god, demigods, Shiva-Parvati, shedding light on rise of Hindu iconography during this period.

5.2 Methodology

I have opted for a methodology where I've created small, rough models supported by references from papers and books, without physically visiting the museum. These models not only provide knowledge but also offer a visual approach to understanding sculptures. By prioritizing visuals over text and exhibiting them online, I aim to enhance the user's recognition of sculptures based on their attributes. This interactive approach focuses on making learning enjoyable and memorable, steering away from traditional bookish modules.

Inspired by the engaging presentation style of Google Art and Culture, an app that showcases art and culture worldwide, I aim to adopt a something similar approach. This medium, rooted in experiential learning, holds the potential to effectively convey my topic, fostering curiosity and interest. Looking ahead, I plan to extend this methodology to encompass additional projects, including my initial work on Sanjhi. By organizing these projects into separate sections, I intend to contribute to a comprehensive exploration of Mathura's rich cultural heritage.

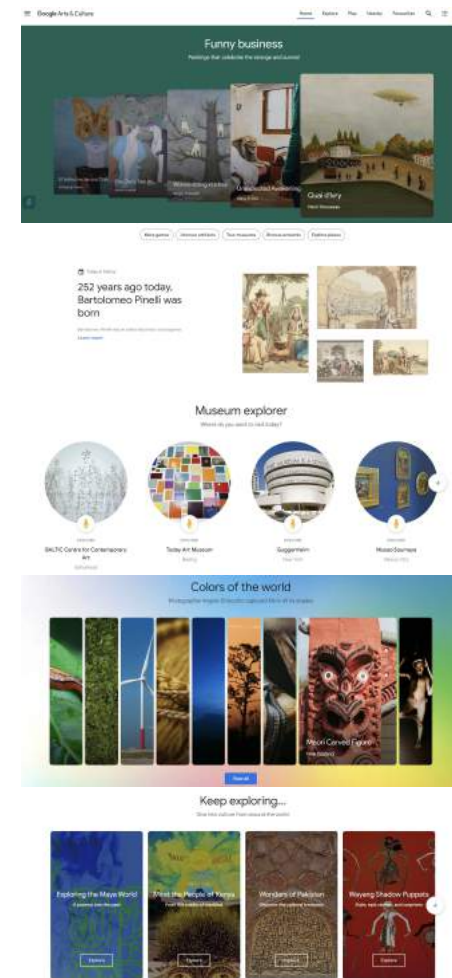


fig (c) : Images from Google Art & Culture website for reference. Ref: <https://artsandculture.google.com/>

..... Feedback: The need for a more original and dynamic project instead of reformatting existing data.

6. Third Proposal

6.1 An interview with me

An interview-style session took place between me and my mentors, which I am portraying here in a question-and-answer format. The questions were asked by the mentor, and I provided the answers. All of this was done to bring out an approach that more accurately reflects my life and is connected to the data I have covered so far.

Q1. How'd you end up here at IDC?

So, I'm Shivangi, born and raised in Mathura. I did my early studies there and always had a thing for art. I studied applied art in the College of Art Delhi, then aced exams like CEED, NID, and NIFT, but decided to go for my master's at IDC IIT Bombay.

Q2. What gets you excited about Mathura?

Not much, just that I'm from there, and it's a nice chill place. Mostly known for Krishna and his tales and temples, but honestly, I haven't explored it much, so I don't know a lot about Mathura.

Q3. Why haven't you visited the temples? Mathura is mainly known for them, right?

Yes, but since our family identifies as atheists and followers of Ambedkar, we rarely get the chance to visit devotional sites.

Q4. Why follow Ambedkar?

Because our family belong to the SC category, we've always been introduced to Ambedkar as god. My dad, he's got this strong dislike for the creators of Hindu texts, the Brahmins, and the god stories. He thinks they never taught us anything sensible and always gives us examples to make his point. Instead, he'd rather motivate us with Ambedkar's life than stories of Ram and Krishna. He wants us to lean more towards Buddhism because it encourages reasoning about religion and its teachings, unlike Hinduism, where you're just supposed to follow whatever's written in the scriptures without questioning.

Q5. Why does your father have this mindset?

He was born in a village that was deeply devoted to devotion, where the caste system was prevalent till now date. I also experienced it during my early childhood while living in that village, so I think that's where it comes from. No matter how successful we are, we can never escape that caste system.

Q6. So, you didn't worship any god? Instead of Ambedkar?

No, we worship Buddha and Ambedkar, and my dad is even thinking about converting to Buddhism. In our home, we have a Buddha statue as a devotional sculpture, but there's no image of any other god in our home.

Q7. So, Is this the reason you want to do your project on Buddhist sculpture?

I'd say this statement isn't entirely accurate, but I can see where it's coming from. Growing up in the art field exposed me to art history, where I learned a lot about sculptures, more than anywhere else, to be honest. At home, we don't chant Hindu mantras or anything. The knowledge I have about Buddhism also comes from sculptures and paintings of Buddha, depicting Jataka Kathas, and even sculptures of Hindu gods like Shiva and Parvati interest me more than anything. For example, Ravan shaking Kailash in the Elephants Caves or Ardhanarishvar. Exploring paintings, temples, and sculptures through my interest in mythology, I respect every religion, especially my own, as an artist. This perspective allows me to see and observe things in my own way, and I appreciate my atheist family background because not having direct knowledge pushes me to discover stories through artifacts, fascinating and fueling my passion for the subject.

So, my interest in art history and mythology led me to this project—a passionate and enthusiastic approach I have for the Mathura Museum and its incredible artifacts.

Q8. Didn't you do puja during Hindu festivals at home? Also, did you join the celebrations at IDC and suggest organizing Ambedkar Jayanti events?

Yes, I do like to embrace Hinduism and celebrate festivals, and I also enjoy being a part of Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations. However, I don't do puja in the typical way; I just hold my hands, as I was never taught the traditional devotional practices. Festivals at home are low-key, without elaborate pujas, just a small celebration.

On the flip side, Ambedkar Jayanti is a big deal for us at our place. The whole family participates, and we hold a puja for our late grandparents, Buddha, and Ambedkar. However, I don't like to judge which celebration is better. It's a personal choice. I feel it's more of a political stance. I just want to be myself and support my community by being there. With my skills, I aim to publish books for children to educate them about following the path Ambedkar laid out.

6.2 Theme

After the interview, several alternative themes emerged that align with my current progress, ensuring that the work I've done so far is not wasted. These topics include exploring:

- The significance of Buddhism within the Scheduled Caste community.
- Understanding why Ambedkar converted to Buddhism.
- Examining how Buddhist and Hindu sculpture is utilized in contemporary contexts compared to its use in temples, and more.
- My life journey as a member of a Scheduled Caste family.

This suggestion highlighted the need to make data more relevant through modern and engaging mediums for better understanding and awareness. Despite this shift, I'm fully open to embracing the change in my topic and am eager to continue working on it.

I've decided to move forward with exploring the life journey as a member of a Scheduled Caste family. I realized that since childhood, I've faced numerous experiences related to my SC background that I want to portray. While this topic may not be directly related to the data I've collected so far, it seems to have more potential than other themes I've considered.

6.3 Objective

Aim to develop illustrated book intimately narrating the life journey of a Scheduled Caste family member, with chapters depicting each family member's life, weaving their stories together to illustrate the collective journey toward a better life. This project reflects the evolution from a local community to an urban setting, highlighting changing values over time, such as the importance of education, teachings, mutual support, and emotional landmarks.

6.4 Data Collection

As my topic to focus on my personal experiences within my unique environment. To facilitate this change, I intend to conduct interviews with my parents and siblings, given their substantial influence on my life, particularly in the context of my Scheduled Caste status in the varna system. The process of interviewing my family members will help me to gather the necessary information.

6.5 Interviews

Mr. Dinesh Kumar: I started with my father's interview because he's well-known in our native place, supporting the community. Unfortunately, I didn't get any personal or achievement stories. He's a good speaker, and during the interview, he addressed societal issues faced by Scheduled Caste people like a speech, not opening up personally. It felt like a downside to my project, as I expected more personal insights considering the challenges.

Mrs. Gaytri Devi: My mom isn't really into social participation; she's a simple soul who takes life as it comes and lives in the present. She candidly shared her current thoughts, acknowledging the biased views some colleagues hold due to her Scheduled Caste background. Despite this, she strives to support children and parents in our society. When I delved into her past, she recounted an incident where a roommate changed rooms upon learning about her SC community background. In her early teaching days in a village, she wasn't allowed to drink water from the school tap. She doesn't open up much about these incidents and doesn't remember many details. From my perspective, she has undergone significant changes. While she initially leaned towards Hindu dharma, she now shares my father's views on casteism. Gradually, she's embracing an aesthetic approach and supporting Ambedkar's beliefs and his community.

Mrs. Ruchi Kumari: My sister, the positive rebel in our family. During our chat, I discovered a wealth of potential in her experiences. We reminisced about similar moments—those times of solitude and shared meals with kids from our community. Now, here's the twist: she's adopted, and before people knew, they assumed she might be a Brahmin. The perk? Most of her friends treated her well, but, as life would have it, a few showed their true colors in moments of selfishness. There were instances where they wouldn't allow her to sit with them, yet conveniently asked to borrow her notebook for study purposes.

She highlighted encounters with genuinely good people who offered true friendship. But, in the corners of her mind, caste still lingers. It's intriguing how our childhood environment shaped our perceptions, making us feel proud when an upper-caste friend did something kind.

Ms. Shivangi: Incidents happened to me:

2003-2005: A Glimpse into Village Life

I grew up in the village with my older sister before moving to the city. I was always an active child, playing with all the other kids my age. However, there was this one house whose kids weren't allowed to play with us, and vice versa. Despite all this, when they spoke nicely to me, I would happily share it everywhere.

It got even weirder when they used to started fights with my sister just because we filled our water pot from the tap before them.

Nights of October or November, we went to see the Ramlila, sitting on the opposite side of the ground near the old pond while they occupied the city area side. Curious, I asked my sister if the brother who never allow to play with us was doing well, especially as a part of the Vanar Sena. I wondered if I could be a part of it too. But I went sad and hit hard when my sister explained that we could be a part of this play; it was organized and held exclusively by upper-caste members.

2005 - 2007: Village School Life

Back in our school days, we rode the bus because our parents had good jobs and we were doing well financially. When it came time to share seats, we usually ended up at the back. As a little kid, I didn't understand all of this, but my sister spilled the ugly truth one day. She told us that some students said we belonged to a lower caste, so we should sit at the back alone. They even insisted our bags shouldn't touch theirs if we shared a seat. In a bit of rebellion, my sister took advantage of this situation and decided to sit in the front seat. While we weren't allowed to share food, seats we would still ask for a notebook for the work. Top of all this, teachers would inquire about our surname, subtly trying to figure out our caste.

2007-2018: Moved to the City:

When we moved to the city, we found a really nice home in nice location new colony. In the village, most houses were related to our caste, but in this colony, there are just two homes related to our caste. It's relatively open, but there's a friend of mine whose grandma has a devotion and an old mindset. My mom mentioned me about it someday, and before that day it affects my friendship because I feel nervous about going to his house, thinking maybe she doesn't like it. Then there's another incident where our vehicle got stolen along with another vehicle from another home belonging to the same caste in our vast colony. It seemed like a bizarre occurrence. My mom felt these people weren't happy about our success and were playing dirty politics. However, as a family, we stayed strong, didn't dwell on the negativity, and being with people who believe in humanity helped us during this time. It's disheartening to witness the colony's bad behavior towards the sweepers, though.

2013: 7th class

In my family, everyone rocks a different surname. Meanwhile, I struggle to pick one, with no one offering a help. A new girl who not only looks like me but also mirrors my behavior, causing a delightful mix-up. The catch? She has a surname; I don't. So, my pals dub me "Khalli vali Shivangi."

They quizzed about my surname, I proudly declare, "I'm Jatav," leaving them scratching their heads, trying to connect it to the upper caste called Jaat.

2018-2023: Reservation Realities

As I ventured into university life, I consistently excelled, achieving success in every college I applied to, be it for my bachelor's or master's degree. However, my accomplishments were overshadowed by the unwarranted gossip that linked my success to reservation, without a proper understanding of its criteria. They even commented on my family's financial status, insinuating that we could afford to pay the full fees, but reservation was allowing me to pay only half.

What struck me the most was when a girl from my hometown, the same place I hailed from, joined in the criticism. They made these comments without knowing the whole background of my family. I don't feel the need to prove anything about my family. For instance, my parents actively contribute to the marriages of less fortunate girls and engage in various acts of kindness. I've learned not to feel the need to prove anything about my family's values to anyone.

2023: First Parade March

I wasn't initially keen on supporting Ambedkar Jayanti, but this time, my father was in charge of one of the parades

Our whole family came together to support him. It was my first time joining the parade, and the atmosphere during Ambedkar Jayanti was incredibly positive, brimming with celebration, appreciation for success, and a sense of equality. During the award ceremony, I observed both the strengths and weaknesses of our society. Later, I had a spirited discussion with my father over the phone about the community and related matters, and surprisingly, it had a very positive outcome. This experience made me realize the significance of being part of a community, and I began to feel a positive connection to belonging to a community that has faced challenges in the past but is growing stronger day by day.

2023: Chai Cup Truth

An incident, from the same one house of upper-caste family in our old village. After 20 years, they saw us succeeding and offered us warmth and Chai when we visited our old home. However, there was a twist when I returned a cup. The aunty hesitated initially, and my mom insisted on washing it before she accepted it. It struck me that despite living in a more progressive society, she still clung to old societal norms, revealing an ugly side towards us. Despite such encounters, we've never let anything hold us back. We hold no resentment; instead, we respect the twists life threw our way.

7. Unknown

7.1 A new approach

Since the interviews with my parents and siblings provided valuable data but didn't align with my topic's objectives, I shifted the focus to portray only my own journey. I highlighted themes that stood out from my incidents, shaping the chapters of my book from a fresh perspective.

7.2 References

I found valuable references in illustrative books that delve into casteism, and Ambedkar. Examples include "Bhimayana" and "The Boy Who Asked Why," both narrating the life of the extraordinary man, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar, who energized the fight against caste prejudice.



fig (d) : Bhimayana Book for reference study. Ref: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhimayana>

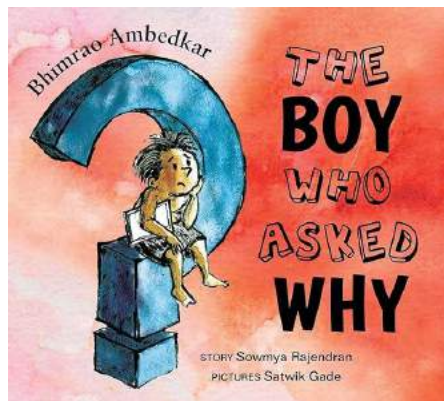


fig (e) : The Boy who asked why children book for reference study. Ref: <https://www.amazon.in/Boy-Who-Asked-Why-Ambedkar/dp/0999547607>

Bhimayana

The book is crafted for an adult audience, presenting facts through illustrations by Gond artists. The indirect narration adds complexity, fitting the target audience seamlessly. Gond artists, belonging to the Scheduled Caste, contribute to the work with great respect. Inspired by the intricacies of Gond art, I aim to feature a chapter in my illustrative book showcasing similar excellence.

The Boy Who Asked

This book follows a similar storyline but presents it in a simpler way. Its narration and visuals are straightforward complements each other, and able to creating an emotional appeal. This book holds significant importance for children, serving as an encouragement for them to embark on the journey of Bhim. I find a personal connection with the incidents in Babasaheb's life even in this era. The book also covers the change in Bhim's surname, a theme I also explore in a chapter of my book, illustrating how a surname can alter the course of a story. I take pride in the existence of such works that contribute to educating the world."

I have read other books like 'A Gardener in the Wasteland,' but my story is more closely related to the aforementioned books, both in terms of content and illustration style. Thus, these books serve as crucial references for my narrative.

7.3 Story Development

While reading the reference books, I discovered that I could easily relate to Bhim's story. Though not in the same way, similar incidents happened in my life. Casteism targets each member differently, and in my chapters, I portrait my own storyline by patriating my incidents.

Chapter 1:

This chapter delves into my quest for a surname, traditionally defining one's caste. In my family, we lack a regular, consistent surname, unlike many others. I've faced criticism and embarrassment for not having a typical surname. Nevertheless, the concept of surnames has always fascinated me, especially during my childhood. My curiosity led me to learn many things. I aim to depict this journey in a positive light, like a fantasy world of discovering my own surname, with my expressions conveying the story of my changing perspective and acceptance over time. The visually conveyed through my character 's expression

Chapter 2:

This chapter explores the derogatory language used in our patriarchal society, delving into its impact on our identity. Through the recounted experiences of myself, my parents, my sister, and my brother, collage sketches capture the complexity of our journey.

A single dialogue carries the weight of a world that often makes us feel inferior due to our lower caste. The narrative doesn't solely focus on negativity; it introduces a rebellious character who takes pride in their caste, seeks revenge, accepts their identity, overcomes embarrassment, and gains confidence.

Chapter 3:

While growing up, our family adhered to a distinct form of devotion shaped by my father and his teachings. He is not only my first but also my lifelong mentor, and I deeply respect his guidance. Through my project, I aim to portray the significant influence of devotional teachings in the Scheduled Caste community, inspired by his impactful lessons, of which I am a dedicated follower.

Chapter 4:

Portraying two interview sections with me, the narrative revolves around the village life and chai cup, unfolding in two timelines: one marked by harsh treatment and the other by kindness due to success. The graphic novel in a comic format effectively illustrates how societal behavior shifts with achievements. Despite newfound kindness, the underlying adherence to discriminatory rules evokes a familiar sense of discomfort towards society.

Chapter 5:

Guidelines play a crucial role in shaping actions, and this chapter introduces characters who have provided guidance throughout my life as a Scheduled Caste (SC) individual. These guidelines, both positive and negative, have had varying impacts, boosting my confidence in some instances while causing embarrassment in others. The embarrassment serves as a form of protection, highlighting the need for additional guidelines to overcome challenges. The narrative will be illustrated through characters, and presented said things in a chat box format. Facing adversity, particularly in childhood, is a harsh reality for SC individuals. The chapter emphasizes the importance of parents educating their children, instilling resilience and pride to help them overcome challenges and boost confidence.

7.4 Visual References

The goal is to give each chapter a unique style and presentation that aligns with the essence it aims to convey. For chapter one, I employ a character-based storytelling approach, where the narrative revolves around the central character. This style is influenced by works like "Spy x family," where the story centers around a girl with special powers.

What excites me about this approach is that the world revolves around the character, and her expressions add depth and expressiveness to the narrative.



fig(f): Images of Spy X Family, Anya Forger character Expressions. Ref: <https://in.pinterest.com/search/pins/?q=spy%20x%20family%20anya&rs=typed>

For Chapter 2, I will use a graphic comic narrative to convey the storyline, as it appears to follow a single, cohesive narrative that can be easily connected through panels.



fig(g): Images of Comic strip. Ref: <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/459930180705829751/>

Ref: <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/11399805453185040/>

The collage consists of eight illustrations from the book 'The Little Girl Who Sailed the Seven Seas'. The top row features three illustrations: a girl running from a giant hand, a girl in a blue hat and green dress, and a girl in a blue hat and green dress. The bottom row features four illustrations: a girl in a blue hat and green dress, a girl in a blue hat and green dress, a girl in a blue hat and green dress, and a girl in a blue hat and green dress.

..... Unable to complete all five chapters, the focus was on developing the aforementioned three essential chapters.

8. Conceptualization

8.1 Chapter 1

Framing: Chapter 1 uses the long spread, Imagine opening the book, and the pages unfold like a long, inviting panorama. This isn't just a design choice; it's a metaphorical window. Where, the narrative unfolds freely, allowing you to explore the setting around main character, and events with spaciousness and flow.

Scripting

Surname, huh? Surname, what surname? Shivangi, This, that... Who? Who? Who is Shivangi? Shivangi is Shivangi, arre nahi, Shivangi, tumhara surname kya hai? Mujhe apni register mein likhna hai, teacher, I don't have it.

Shivangi, tera surname nahi hai, toh tujhe hum kya bulaye, khali vali Shivangi?

Arre, surname hota kya hai? Tumhe kahaan se mila? Sabko apne Garhwalo se milta hai, jo unke naam ke peeche lagta hai. Mere Garhwalon ke naam ke peeche toh kafi kuch lagta hai - Kumar, Kumari, Devi, Vati, Kapoor, Raj or bhi. Main kya lagao?

Ye sab kyun lagaye hain? Aur mere naam ke peeche kya sunder lagega - Varma, Sharma, yaah Soni?

Arre, nahi nahi, tum aise kisi ka bhi surname use nahi kar sakti. Tum ho kya? Main mujhe nahi pata, par log hume "Chamar" bula ke chidate zaroor hain.

Arre, mujhe yaad aaya, ek baar meri cousin ne apna naam chawal wale necklace par likhwaya tha, jisme ek taraf uska naam tha, dusri taraf basne. Basne? Haan, basne, jo ki baas ki puja karte hain. Par basne toh bas marne jaisa lag raha hai. Haan, ye saayad accha nahi hai, or mujhe nahi lagana!

Toh main kya lagao? Meri mummy ne apna surname change kiya shaadi ke baad. Shayad tumhe tab mil jaye jisse tum shaadi karogi. Toh main usse shaadi karungi, jiska surname mere naam ke saath accha lagega. Arre, nahi nahi, tum sirf apne samaj ke logon ke saath hi shaadi kar sakti ho.

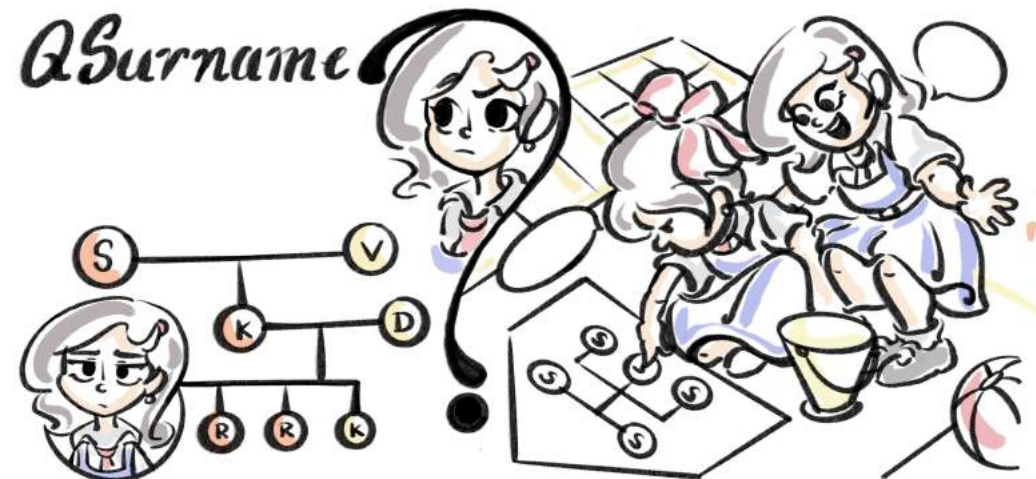
Toh tumhe shayad milega Singh, Chaudhry. Arre, mujhe toh pata bhi nahi, ye humare samaj ke hain bhi ke nahi? Jat Chaudhry hote hain, par hum toh Jatav hain! Par Jatav kya, Jatav word hi nahi laga sakte?

Tumhe pata hai, maine ek baar ek show dekha tha, jisme ek ladke ne apni mummy ka naam use kiya tha for surname, to show respect toward motherhood. Main bhi karti hoon. Achha, tabhi tumhari email Shivangi Gayatri ke naam se hai. Haan, par tumhe log Gayatri bhi kehne lage es wajah se? Ye to azeb hai.

Arre, tum itna kyun sochti ho? Pehle toh khali lagta tha, but ab en apps or document requirement ki wajah se sochna padta hai.

Are tum surname me apna hi naam likh diya karo. Esse un saval karne valo ko unka jawab khud mil jayega or tumhe bhi. Ke surname tumhari identity nahi, tumhara vajud tum khud ho. Esliye khali vali Shivangi hi sahi.

Illustrations







8.2 Chapter 2

Framing: As the story progresses, the book shifts its form, Chapter 2 uses the square spread to focus on the narrative structure. Here, the tale tightens, presenting key moments and developments in a more structured, block-like format. This shift in framing focuses on building the narrative, highlighting important details.

Scripting

Author: Saal 2005 ka tha, meri behen or mere bachpan ki baat. bevi, ne apna bade hone ka farz bachpan se hi badi achhi tarah se nibhaya. Hum sath khelte, sath padte, aur sath hi Ramleela dekhne jate the aur maine usse pucha,

Author (Childhood): Bevi, me bhi Vanar Sena me bhag lungi.

Sister: Nahi laali, humari jaat uchi nahi hai.

Author (Childhood): Bevi, hum aapke sath khele?

Upper cast girl: humare maa-baap ne kaha hai tumhari jaat valo se dur rehne ko?

Author (Childhood): Bevi, aaj humne jaldi pani bhar liya.

Sister: Haan, ab khelne jayenge!

Author: Tabhi, peeche se kisi ne gadhe (water pot) ko dhakka maara.

Upper cast girl: Chamariya, teri himmat kaise huyi humse pehle naal chune ki?

Sister: Ma, us upar jaat vali ladki ne gadha gira diya, keh ke hum pehle pani nahi bhar sakte.

Mother: Lali, ro mat, main baat karti hoon.

Mother to upper cast aunty: Agar humara pehle pani bharna, pani ko achhoot kar deta hai to, aap apne jaat-paat ke dong karne se pehle pani bharne aaya kariye, bhala hoga sabka.

Author: 18 saal beet gaye aur mere jivan mein kai bade badlav aaye. Maine unchi padhai ki aur kadam badhaya, ant mein ek acchi naukri payi. Mere aur mere parivar ki mehnat ne hume safalta, shiksha, aur samajh mein ek sammanjanak naam ki prapti karayi.

Author: Mere maata-pita aksar gaon jaaya karte hai, lekin mere liye dusre shehar se ghar aana, apne parivar ke saath woh bachpan ke din dobara jeena, yeh sab bahut kam hi milta. Is sukoon ko paane ke liye hum log gaon gae.

Author looking the village vei: yaha aake laga waqt tham sa gaya ho. Har gali, har kone mein woh bachpan ke pyare palon ki Chavi dikhayi padti. jese ki sab waisa ka vaise hi ho.

Author: Mai jese hi apne ghar jaane lagi to wahaan humare ghar ke samne rehne wali Tayi ji apne muskurahat bhare chehre ke sath mere maa se baat kar rahi thi. Maine kaha,

Author: Tayi ji, namaste.

Upper cast aunty: Radhe radhe! Ab to tum badi aur kamyab ho gayi ho. Tum chai piyogi na, coffee hume banani nahi aati.

Author: Waah! Namak vali chai, isme woh yaadein hain jo coffee mein nahi. Tayi ji, Shukriya.

Author: chai itni achhi thi ki khatam ho gayi, Ye lijiye.

Upper cast aunty: Radhe radhe!

Maa: Arey Ladki, Cup mujhe yahan do! Meri maa ne jhat se cup mere haath se le liya aur ghar ke andar chali gayi.

Author: Maa, ye kya tha, ye juthan tha, juthan!

Juthan? Ye shabd maine padha ek kitaab mein, jo saalon pehle likhi gayi thi. Ismein ek chhote dalit ladke ki kahani hai, jise bachpan se hi samaj ne lagatar utpeedan aur bhed-bhav ke saath vyavhaar kiya gaya. Ye the famous writer Omprakash Valmiki. Sharmindigi ki baat hai ki itne saal baad bhi ye shabd "Juthan" abhi bhi samaj mein apni pakad banaye huye hai, logon ko sharminda karne ke liye. Chahe vo kisi bhi makan par poochhe jaaye, par unhe yaad dilaya jayega ki vo kahan peda hue hain.

Aur in Radha-Krishna bhakti karne vale logo ko batao ki Krishna ko kabhi Mathura ka raja nahi bola gaya, lekin Mathura ka gwalan bola gaya. Unhone ispe garv kiya aur pyar se apnaya. Aur yahi log is Bhagwan ke naam ko estemaal karte hain, humse sudhiee paane keliye!

Illustrations







8.3 Chapter 3

Framing: The third chapter employs a square format, yet deviates from previous chapters by incorporating a dialogic structure. Chat bubbles are utilized to present information in a conversational manner, fostering reader engagement through multiple perspectives. This approach transforms the page into a dynamic platform for the exchange of ideas.

Scripting

So in this chapter, I'm providing the things my family members said to me in the context of castism.

Grandmother: Ammaa... Edhar aa la tera hath kaat kar dekhati hu or uska bhi, dekhti hu tum dono me kiska khoon neela hai or kiska laal.

Jab tum dono ki banavat ek hi hai toh farak kesa. Tum insan ho, tumhe insaniyat par dhyan dena hai. Samajh me log tumhe kya bolte hain, us par nahi.

Father: Aap jo bhi kar rahi ho, waisa hi karo, tum essa karo tum meri tarah karo. Jese ki, Jab main kalam utha leta hoon naah! Tooh meri kalam beech mein nahi rukti; woh sirf 'the end' ke baad hi rukti hai. Tum shaareerik bal aur shabdon ki taqat se ek se ladoge, do se ladoge, kuch nahi hoga, ho sakta hai tumhe hi chot lag sakti hai or sayad mushkilein bhi ayein,

par mujhe vishwas hai ki tum woh kalam ki shakti se ladho, aur is samaj ko ache karmo se Navajo, jese Ambedkar ne kiya aur kaha, "Ek mahaan vyakti ek prasiddh vyakti se alag hota hai, kyunki vo samaj ke liye sevak banne ke liye taiyar hota hai."

Mother: Me jab Jatipura me padati thi, toh vaha sare other teachers pandit the or vo bedh bhav me mante the. Mujhe aumati nahi thi ke me apne aap khud se us pani ke gadhe se pani pee sako, par waha ke head, jo pandit Dau Dayal Sharma the, unhone bhut cooperate kiya. Vo mujhe alag se pani bhar ke dete the. Haan! Hum khud ke bal par lad sakte hain, lekin hume jeetne ke liye aise sanrakshako ki bhi zarurat hai.

Jativad mene bachpan me face kiya, or kahi na kahi abhi bhi karti hoon. Par khud ka belief, khud ki shakti hi in chezo se ladne me himmat deti hai. Aur ye himmat milti hai apno se, apno se sirf mera matlab nahi ke meri family hi, par har vo vyakti jo mere saath khade hote hain, mere liye.

Par ye sach hai ke mujhe positive baaton ne bhut attract kiya. Mene sirf unko hi bhav dena jaruri samjha.

Sister: Di, usne mujhe chamar bola....Arre toh haan, tum ho chamar, main bhi hoon, aur humare ghar mein sab hain. Arre, vo log kyun na bolein, ye sabdh humara hai, humare liye banaya gaya hai.

Unke chamar bulane se tum change thodi ho jaogi, jo ho vahi rahogi. Tooh tumhe sharmindgi kaisi? Iss se accha 'chamar' shabd ko garv se apnao. Iss se tumhe kabhi bhi kisi ke bolne ka bura nahi lagega, kyunki tumhe pata hoga ke tum kya ho, aur tum usse nahi badal sakti. Nahin hi tumhe kabhi badalna chahiye.

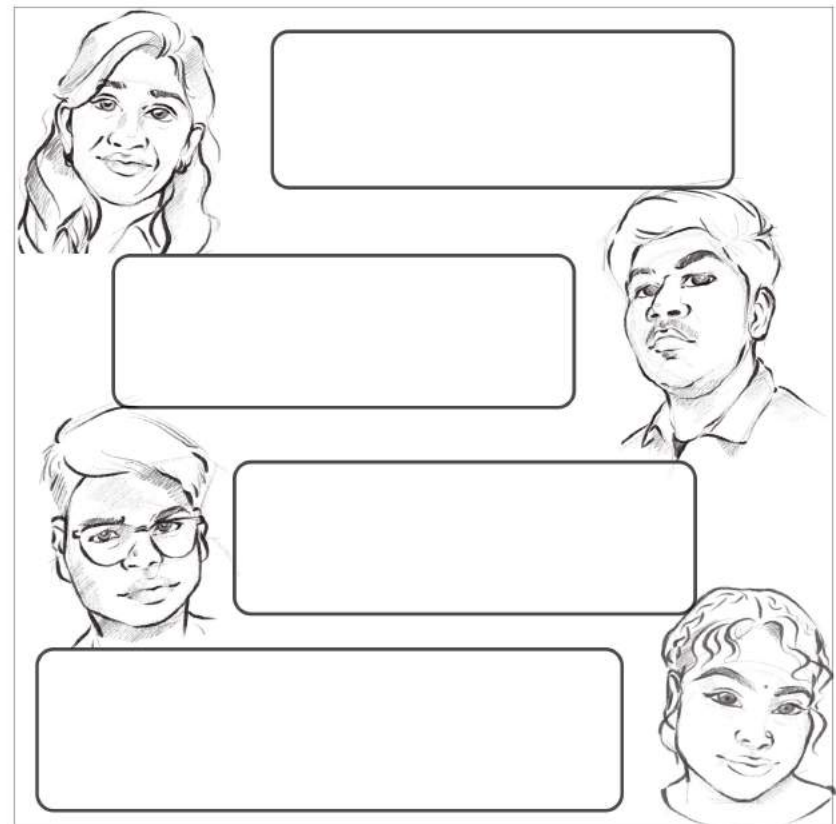
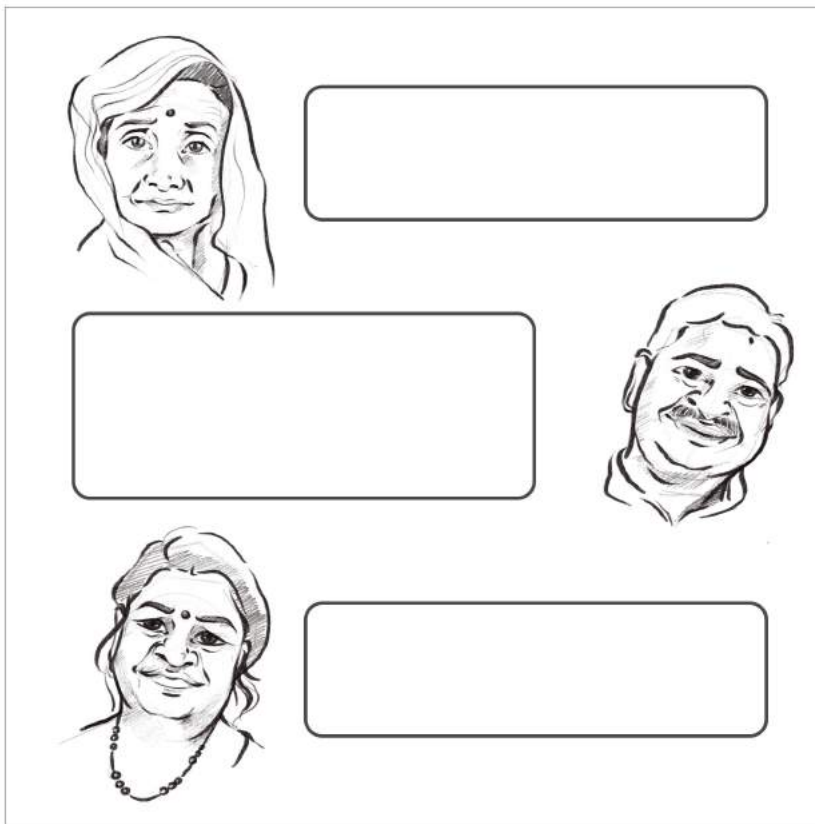
Older Brother: Haan, ye sab toh logon ka dhong hai. Mere logical mind mein jaata nahi. Main mostly ignore karta hoon, aur log kab tak hi bolenge?”

Lekin, karm karne ke mamle mein sabse pehle aajate hain, help mangne. Bhai, textbook dede, exam mein ye question bata de... Kamiyabi effect karti hai bhai. Kuch bhi kaho, vo keha hain na, “Lakshya jyada door nahi hai, bas apni raftaar thodi tez karni hai. Aaj khamoshi se padhkar, kal apni safalta ki kahani likhni hai.”

Younger Brother: Di, mujhe kya, main toh Mathura mein paida hua hoon, lol. Aur mujhe kabhi kisi ne nahi bola ke khana mat kha, aur agar aise bolega bhi toh main kyun hi kaun jab usko meri respect nahi hai. Main uspe dhyan deke uski respect kyun karun? Esse accha toh main apne upar dhyan doon, khud ko aage badhne ki koshish karoon.”Aap bhi na, kya hi puchti ho mujhse. Aap toh samajhdar ho.

Author: Har schedule cast member ki alag-alag kahani hai, lekin haan, kahani zaroori hai, jaise maine yaha apni aur apne parivar ke kuch anubhavon ko bataya hai. Main bachpan se hi alag-alag roopon mein jativad ka saamna kara hai, aur kahi na kahi, aaj bhi karti hoon. Ye ghatnayein aapko ehsaas dilati hain ki aap alag hain aur aapko ek mental pressure bhi deti hain. Main guzarish karti hoon is desh ke shikshakon se jo humare parents aur teachers hain, ki ve bachon ko is samajik samasya se jagruk karein taaki kisi ko bhi jativad se zyada asar na ho aur isse saamna karne mein madad mile.

Illustrations



9. Final Output



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