

Interaction Design Degree Project on

# Addressing Racial Prejudice and Stereotyping issues

Project By

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Under the Guidance of

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**Industrial Design Centre**

Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay

2014



“ Racism is the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially to distinguish the inferiority or superiority of the race from others. ”





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# Declaration

The research work embodied in the written submission titled “Addressing Racial Prejudice and Stereotyping issues” has been carried out by the undersigned as part of the Post-Graduate program in the **Industrial Design Centre, IIT Bombay**, India under the supervision of **Prof. Girish Dalvi**.

The undersigned hereby declares that this is his original work and has not been plagiarized in part or full from any source. Furthermore, this work has not been submitted for any degree in this or any other University.

I understand that any violation of the above will be a cause for disciplinary actions by the Institute and can also evoke penal action if need arises.



**Pritam Pebam**

126 330 003



# Approval Sheet

The project entitled “Addressing Racial Prejudice and Stereotyping issues” by Pebam Pritam Singh, 126 330 003, is approved in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Design (M.Des.) Degree in Interaction Design.

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Date: 16 July 2014

Place: Mumbai



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I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my parents for their love and motivation that kept me going.

Last but not the least, I thank all my friends and relatives who helped me during my research.

Hoping to witness a discrimination free society.



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# 1. Abstract

Racial discrimination and stereotyping is a well established and known practice that we see everyday in our society. The very existence of such a malpractice has been a big obstacle in the progress of the human civilization. Such a society usually exhibits unstability and are prone to violent activities due to its discriminatory nature. To help understand the core issue, several researches on societal practices, studies on racialization of religion resulting in conflicts,<sup>[1]</sup> distinction between race and caste<sup>[2]</sup> etc. has been undertaken. Various researchers have tried to define the term racism<sup>[3],[4]</sup> so as to set a common language and help understand the issue. The findings of these studies are exhaustively used or referred to on this project.

In the last couple of years, there has been a rising voice against racial practice in India, especially from the citizens of the North Eastern (NE) states in the country. Triggered by the death of 4 NE students on separate cases<sup>[5]</sup>, there has been an upsurge of several protests nationwide. Debates and discussions have been conducted to help understand the root

of the issue and thence to establish the de-facto nature of racial practice at various levels.

To help curb the issues, or at least reduce the adverse effect caused by racism in the society, various organisations and responsible citizens have suggested ways to address the issue. Steps like the review of the national school curriculum to put content from the North East, hotline for emergency cases, vigilance programs through online and television media etc. have already been taken up to bring awareness to the general masses.

A literature study conducted to understand the root-causes of racism identifies that one of the most important cause is '*lack of awareness*' or '*non-vigilance*'. To alleviate and abolish the ill effects of racism, this project attempts to dissipate information to help bring awareness. This project attempts to address the issue through design intervention and leverage modern technology to its advantage.

## 2. Introduction

Racism is considered as the belief that all members of each race possess *characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race*. These attributes are especially used to distinguish the *inferiority or the superiority* of the race from the others.<sup>[6]</sup> Such beliefs have led to severe form of discriminations in various countries over time. Through various uprisings and struggles, historical evidences have exemplified that for a modern society to sustain a peaceful environment, such discriminations need to be rooted out. Some considers racism exist in every society as a basic human nature. However, once it is institutionalised to suppress a certain section of the society against the interest of the superior or stronger races, it becomes dangerous.

Over last several years, the existence of racial discrimination in India has been questioned by several section of the people. There has been several alleged activities which directs towards stereotyping people who belongs to certain race or region within the country. There are reports on incidents and scuffles between people originating from North India and South India, or Eastern or the North Eastern part of the country etc. However the existence of racist practices have been decried<sup>[7]</sup> upon by major political or





NE citizens campaigning against Racism in New Delhi  
[Photo: AP]


administrative organisations as well as the major section of the population. Converging towards a united perspective that ‘*when racial prejudice is supported by institutions and laws, racism is present*’,<sup>[8]</sup> many have alleged that the government is negligent and is ignoring racist crimes. Many others on the other hand have counter claims that what exists can not be classified as racism.<sup>[35]</sup>

In this project, we consider the issue of racism raised by several organizations and student bodies from the North Eastern (NE) part of the country as a major case-study. The death of four NE students on separate incidents in different cities of India has sparked widespread protests. These deaths are allegedly results of racial base crimes and has made the case of racism stronger in the country. These protests and fresh debates has helped establish the ignored issues caused by racial discrimination, which otherwise are subtle and usually de-emphasized at large. The protests generally seek the authorities and the government to take necessary actions to protect its citizens and enact proper anti-racist laws<sup>[9]</sup> to safeguard the interests of different sections of society.

The wake up call to discriminations primarily started from the small groups of citizens hailing from the North Eastern states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura residing in various different cities of



STOP RACIAL STOP VIOLENCE

 WE AREN'T ASKING YOU TO LOVE US ... ONLY IF YOU COULD JUST TOLERATE US

STOP RACISM

DOWN WITH RACISM

UNITED WE STAND FOR A RACISM - FREE INDIA

Massive Protest at Janta Mantar  
[Photo: Binalakshmi Nepram, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=825226627491392>]

the country. The Indo-Tibetan origin and mongoloid appearance of the people from these states have made it phenotypically distinguishable from the rest of the population in the country. Citizens from NE states have been raising voices since several decades being the victims of racial stereotyping based on their appearances, food habits, lifestyle and language<sup>[10]</sup> which are some of the major root-causes of discrimination.

In the last one year, several sections of the society including political and administrative organisations have begun to accept the existence of racism in the country. A general opinion while addressing such an issue is that the major step to solving the issue is to accept that it exists<sup>[11]</sup>. This is an observation that positively affects the general mentality of the population. Following which, steps to address the issue has been taken up at multiple levels. This report discusses some of the various awareness programs online and the television media has started, the safety guidelines laid down for NE citizens and laws formulated to help safeguard the interest of the people of these region.

The following section discusses the case-study in details.

## 3. Background Research

Through the background research, several traits are identified as to why such prejudice conjure up at the first place. The major ones are discussed below:

### 3.1. Causes

#### 3.1.1. Immediate Cause: The killings

Although the fight against racial discrimination has been going on for a long time, the immediate cause of the recent upsurge is primarily led by the death of four NE students in separate cities on separate cases. *Richard Loitam*, hailing from the state of Manipur was bullied and brutally assaulted to death<sup>[12]</sup> in Bangalore on April 17, 2012. It has been alleged that the governing authorities are inactive and are not handling the case sincerely with possible cover up. After a week, in April 24, 2012, *Dana Sangma*, hailing from the state of Meghalaya, a student at Amity University committed suicide in her hostel room<sup>[13]</sup>. Similar to Richard's case, it is alleged that the police were deliberately not taking steps under the law against the university and are mishandling of the case. On May 29, 2013, a 21 years old *Rengamphi Awungshi* died under mysterious



Protest across multiple location against the killings  
[Photo: E-Pao, Facebook Groups ]



# #Justice4Nido

ARE YOU A SOMEONE THAT RESPECTS A DIGNIFIED LIFE?

To Bring Justice To Nido

Sign Our Petition

[change.org/nido](http://change.org/nido)

Earlier they bullied and brutally assaulted **Loitam Richard** to DEATH ...  
I remained indifferent and silent; As I felt I wasn't a victim!

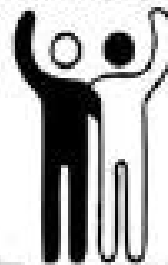
Then they falsely accused, humiliated and abetted **Dana Sangma's** DEATH ...  
I remained silent; Because I didn't want to spoil my reputation!

Then they assaulted, brutalised and MURDERED **Reingamphi Awungshi** ...  
I remained silent; Because I didn't want to be branded an anti-nationalist!

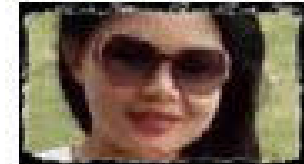
Now they mocked with Racist taunts and assaulted **Nido Tania** to DEATH ...  
I remain silent; Because this is how I support Racism!

THEN WHEN THEY CAME FOR ME, EVERYONE WAS SILENT ...  
THERE WAS NO ONE LEFT TO SPEAK OUT!

**UNITE AGAINST RACISM  
FOR A LIFE WITH DIGNITY**



Campaign For Humanity ^1^  
— a Justice4Richard initiative



circumstances<sup>[14]</sup> of which many blame the authorities for handling the case in their own ways. On January 29, 2014, an Arunachalee student, *Nido Tania* was beaten up with iron rods and sticks after a brawl with a shopkeeper in South Delhi. The brawl broke out as he was mocked and made fun of his appearance using racial slurs. Following the fight, he sustained severe injuries and succumbed to death.<sup>[15]</sup>

### 3.1.2 NE Exodus

In 2012, a major clash between the Bodo tribe in Assam and Bengali speaking Muslims had displaced more than 300,000 residents.<sup>[16]</sup> The Bengali speaking Muslims claim to be descendants of East Bengali Muslims but are allegedly illegal migrants from Bangladesh. The death of several Bengali speaking Muslims has resulted in a targeted physical attack on North Eastern residents in various cities in India

NE Citizens fleeing Bengaluru after racial threats

[Photo: <http://archive.indianexpress.com/picture-gallery/north-eastern-exodus/1739-1.html>]



# Delhi: 'Khap panchayat' bans tenants from northeast in Munirka

by FP Staff Feb 17, 2014

#Delhi #Manipur #Munirka #north eastern states #Racism #tenants

Tweet 44 Share 0 LinkedIn Share Like 307 52 Comments Email Print



[Source: <http://www.firstpost.com/india/delhi-khap-panchayat-bans-tenants-from-northeast-in-munirka-1394707.html>]

## ALSO SEE



including Mumbai, Bangalore and Pune. Following threats of more attacks, more than 30,000 NE residents fled<sup>[17]</sup> the city of Bangalore to their hometown.

Several websites, online discussion boards and online group URLs including Twitter were blocked (or planned to be blocked) during the exodus to stop rumors from spreading. Bulk SMS and MMS were also banned and number of SMS allowed per day were limited.<sup>[18], [19]</sup>

### 3.1.3 Restriction to North East Tenants

The people of NE are considered to be a bad influence to the kids and the society in mainstream India. NE women are looked down as loose in morals and sexually promiscuous while men are considered heavy drinkers and potentially violent. Such speculations on the outlook results in landlords resorting to either not offering rents or increase rent charges. Additionally, some of the food items native to the North easterners have unfamiliar odours to the locals. This also results in landlords driving up rental charges so as to compensate complaints from the neighbours. There are also instances in which separate rules and timings have been set for the NE tenants. A '*Khap Panchayat*' specifically bans tenants from the NE at Munirka in New Delhi.<sup>[21]</sup>

These incidents, as discussed above, create a ruckus to the sentiments of the people from the North East. This resulted in a skeptical view about how a non North Easterner perceive of the lifestyle, food habits and the morality of the NE people. The difference thus creates a lacuna between the NE people and the rest of the population. It has also been observed that the local people and the NE migrants hardly interact and mingle with each other thus widening the gap.

### 3.1.4 Historical Background

Just after the British left India, the North East comprises of the Assam plains alongwith the hill districts and the princely states of Manipur and Tripura.<sup>[22], [23]</sup> Due to various political and administrative reasons, the princely states were merged into the Indian constitution through merger agreements in the subsequent years. The people of Manipur claims that the Indo-Manipur merger agreement was made on gun point and is a forced annexation.<sup>[24]</sup> The people of Manipur are also skeptical about the policies the Government of India impose on the state. Citizens have claimed that the government of India does not fulfill the clauses as laid down in the merger agreement.<sup>[25]</sup> Laws such as the “*Arms Forces Specials Power Act, 1958*”<sup>[26]</sup> that gives special protection to the armed forces to kill citizens of these region are termed as racist.



The North Eastern states after the India Independence in 1947  
[Figure: Wikimedia Commons]



In 1995, Smt. Indira Gandhi visited Aizawl, Mizoram. Shortly after that, in 1966 she became the PM. Within 2 months in office, she ordered the bombing of Aizawl to contain the Mizo National Army (MNA) revolting against India.

[Photo: LR Sailo]



In September 1949, The King of Manipur, Maharaj Bodhchandra signed the Merger Agreement to join the Dominion of India. However many denounced the agreement and says the king was forced to sign under unremitting coercion.

[Photo: E-Pao]

The law is a major cause of controversies and debates and widespread protests and voices have been raised to repeal this act from the region.

In 1966, following revolutionary activities in Mizoram, the then Prime Minister of India Smt. Indira Gandhi ordered a mass bombing in Mizoram. The act is much criticised because of the heavy loss of lives and the vast destruction it caused. It is despised upon by the people of the region because of the use of machine guns and airplanes to bomb its own citizens within its own territory.<sup>[27]</sup>

## **3.2 Root Causes of Racial Stereotyping**

All these incidents as mentioned in the previous section have severely underserved the sentiments of the NE citizens and have led to questioning the belief of one India. Secessionist activities are triggered in the region and law and order issues are affected.

A literature study carried out to understand the fundamental reason of the existence of racism points out to certain traits.

### **3.2.1 Cultural and lifestyle differences:**

There are over 220 ethnic groups in the North East Region. Each one has its own culture and the lifestyle of each ethnic group is different than the other. However the difference is very apparent in comparison with that of mainland India. The food habit is also one primary area of concern as some of the region's local native food are considered smelly to the mainland Indians and restricts are made to cook as a tenant.

### **3.2.2 Physical Appearance:**

The Indo-Tibetan and mongoloid origin of the people from North East gives a more eastern-asiatic appearance. A flat nose and narrow eyes are the major features of a person hailing from the North East. This makes a person from NE visually distinguishable easily. Modern influences in terms of fashion and lifestyle, perhaps from the western or east asian cultures, also have affected the way younger generations grew up in the region.

### **3.2.3 Language Barrier:**

Broadly considering, many NE students generally have a language barrier while communicating in Hindi. This

restrains a freeflow communication between the locals and the NE people. Tenants and the local people thus find it difficult to communicate and miscommunications sometimes arise.

#### 3.2.4 Preset Notion:

There are general misconceptions and beliefs that are passed on as word of mouth and eventually builds up into something out of proportion. The term '*chinky*' has usually been used with the a connotation of a person with *loose morals* or *easy*. The NE population as such, because of their squinted eye and flat nose appearance, are often called *chinky* and girls are mocked as being of loose morals.

#### 3.2.5 Aloofness from the locals:

In an study conducted on racial base attacks on Indians in Australia, it was found that the cause was because the Indians residing in Australia does not mingle with the mainstream population there. Similarly, led by social stigma, the people of North East stays isolated and mingles within the circle of friends from the region itself. This creates a lack of understanding between the local people and the NE residents and devoid them of knowing each other deeply.

### 3.2.6 Non vigilance or ignorance:

The major cause of racism is based out of ignorance. The exclusion of the entire NE history and content related to the region from the national curriculum is one main reason leading to the mass ignorance of what's happening in the region. Policemen demanding NE citizens to produce passports, asking them to join the foreigner's queue in public places (mistaking them as a foreigner), detaining NE citizens despite producing identification cards inadvertently mistaking them as Tibetan Refugees etc. have sparked huge agitations. These agitations voice the ignorance and non-

acceptance of the ground reality of the mainstream Indian population.

Taking account of these root causes, we try to understand steps taken so far to address the issue and help abolish racial discrimination in the country.

Arvind Kejriwal and Rahul Gandhi at protest dharnas In New Delhi [Photo: Daily Mail, Northeast Calling]





“ In 63 years of independent Republic of India, the history of 45 millions of its (NE) citizens are missing ”

- Binalakshmi Nepram, Social Activist

[Photo: Erendro Leichombam]

### 3.3 Addressing the Issue

Several steps have been taken up to address the issue at various spheres. To help understand the approach, we classified these steps into three main spheres.

#### 3.3.1. Political Sphere:

Earlier, no political organisations have openly accepted that racial stereotype exists in the country. Recently, various political leaders have openly acknowledged the importance of eliminating racial stereotype in the country. A big shift towards the mentality of the people in general is made possible through the acceptance and the acknowledgement.<sup>[28]</sup> This leads to the upbringing of a hope to the particular section of the population that tangible results may come out as more and more people become sensitive of the issues. Several political groups are starting to support the fight against racism and have promised to protect the people and prevent such crimes. Steps are also taken up to increase the number of NE representatives in the Lok-Sabha to help put adequate importance to the region.



National Curriculum Review [Photo: E-Pao]

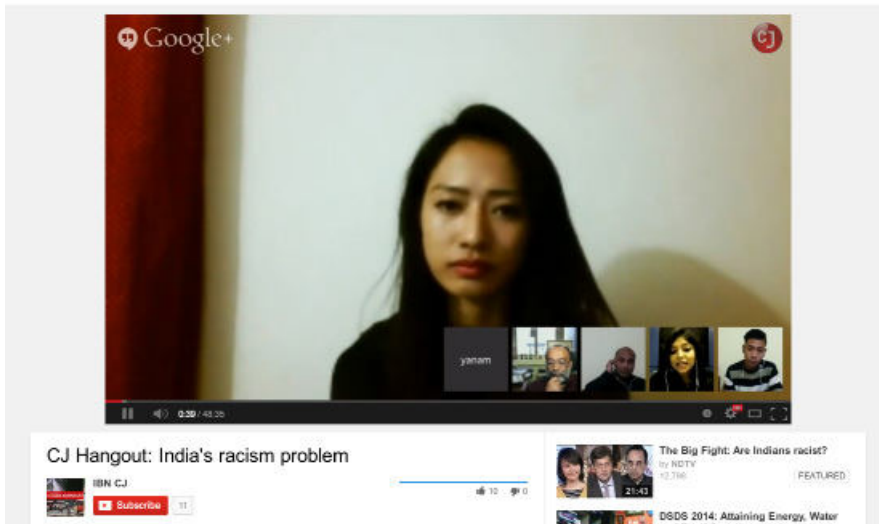


NE Carnival at Bengaluru

[Source: <https://www.facebook.com/northeastcarnival>]



Weekly documentary Program ‘North East Interface’  
[Source: Youtube, DD News Channel]



Google Hangout on Racism In India  
[Source: Youtube, IBN CJ Channel]

### 3.3.2 Administrative & Education Sphere:

In this sphere, several steps are taken up to address the issue on a long term basis. As an activist, *Binalakshmi Nepram* has been one of the key player who is helping review the national school curriculum to include North East History.

To help promote awareness, cultural programs displaying products from north-east, cultural items, songs and cultural carnivals etc. are conducted in different cities by different organisations.

Online forums and media are also a major platform which promote discussions and debates on the issue. Apart from several debates aired on major television channels, discussions and expert talks through Google Hangouts also helped understand the issue. Short movies and social experiments uploaded on youtube are also highlighting the issue. In an attempt to bring general awareness to the mass, starting April 2014, the national TV channel started broadcasting “*North East Interface*” a program which carries information related to the North East. Sensitisation programs, documentary films and street plays have been major part of move to promote awareness.

The Ministry of Home Affairs Committee has constituted a committee to look into the various issues and concerns the NE people faces. This committee is responsible to identify the root causes of the issue and take up necessary steps for security. Measures have to be established to abolish such a practice and legal remedies need to be enacted.<sup>[29]</sup>

Delhi, being one of the major cities which witnesses such kind of crimes and issues very often, the Delhi Police suggested a '*Code of Conduct*' handbook for NE people indicating them to do/not do certain activities, dress/not dress in certain ways or eat/avoid certain food etc. However, the move was an unwelcome one and has been criticised of being racist itself.<sup>[30]</sup> Apart from this, the Delhi Police Helpline 1093 is dedicated specifically for crimes and offences related to racial profiling.<sup>[31]</sup>

On another controversial move, it has been planned to construct separate hostels for Northeastern students in various cities where NE students come to study. Some groups of people consider it a good step to protect the integrity of the community however others are skeptical suggesting it may further isolate the community from the locality widening the gap between the local community.<sup>[32], [33]</sup>



Imphal Talkies, an Imphal based band voices strongly against racism through their songs



[Photo: E-Pao]

### 3.3.3 Individual Sphere:

Individual citizens have been proactive on several instances to fight against racism. Poets and singers have written and sung songs based on the issue. This has helped in reaching out to a wider audience which ultimately helps in bringing awareness. Individuals have been responsible for organising protests and activities in various cities to bring general awareness.

## 3.7 Classification

To set a design intervention, these steps are classified into 2 major categories depending on their nature and impact time frame.

### 3.7.1. Long Term:

Both the political sphere and administrative/Education Sphere will take a long time period to come into actual practice majorly because of bureaucratic reasons. A political group, even though manifested the urge to address and solve the issue, will take the help of the administration which requires passing laws and bills before applying it. These channels will have to follow the legal and constitutional procedure which may take years to realize.

The administrative and educational level will probably update the curriculum or enact laws to take preventive measures to abolish the practice. However the dissipation and the penetration of information among the masses, or protecting the laws and preventive measures in itself is a humungous task. It will be a long time till the younger generation becomes more aware of the differences and learn to accept the differences in the society. The eradication of such social issue will be tough and take multiple generations to achieve it.

However, in the long run, these steps have the potential to permanently eradicate racism in the country.

### 3.7.2. Short Term:

The individual sphere often comprises of a single to a few individuals working together to organize and conduct programs to bring awareness or merely to express their concerns over racism in the country. Such activities lead to mass awareness often causing immediate actions from the citizens.

Even though short term activities makes a direct connection with the people, it usually do not persist for a longer period. Short Term steps essentially back the long term steps in undertaking the situation and finally solving the it.



An independent Graphic Designer helping create awareness through posters [Design: <http://naorem.com/>]

# 4. The Project

## 4.1 About the project

### 4.1.1 Brief

Due to differences between the basic socio-economic status of the residents of different regions in the country, working class people migrates to metro cities in search of better lives. This often creates a disparity between the original settlers and the migrants. As such hate crimes are observed and witnessed majorly on metro cities. As a result, the targeted user group has been taken as the working middle class population residing in major cities in India. In order to address the issue through design intervention, some design concepts have been formulated following certain philosophies behind it.

### 4.1.2 Objective and Goals

The main objective of the project are:

#### 1) Promote Awareness

The project attempts to dissipate information and help bring awareness. Although information is readily available online, people

are not motivated enough to learn these information. The project chunks information and provide succinct factual data through an engaging way and attempts to get it mulched to the general mass.

## 2) Nudge people to be sensitive and responsible

By bringing awareness, the project attempts to help people be more sensitive of such issues and become responsible of their deeds.

### 4.1.3 Scope:

The project essentially contextualizes the issue of racism that the North Eastern citizens face in metro cities. The project strategize to target the section of the people which are directly liable with this issue. Primary targets are middle class working citizens residing in metro cities.

The core philosophy of the project addresses the fundamental question of racism on a humanitarian approach. Thus the project shall handle diverse issues relating to racial discrimination in other regions as well. The content can be altered and contextualized to a specific targeted group of people and the structure can be implemented to be utilized

elsewhere. The project also has the scope of addressing any other form of awareness base campaigns.

To achieve out the aforementioned targets and goals, several design ideas are conceptualized. The following section discusses the concepts in details.

## 4.2 Concepts

Several design ideas are conceptualized into possible design solutions to the issue of racism. The following section discusses the concepts.

### 4.2.1 Concept 1 — Responsible Citizen

This concept makes an assumption based on informal discussions and observations that the young generation of today considers being socially responsible *cool*.

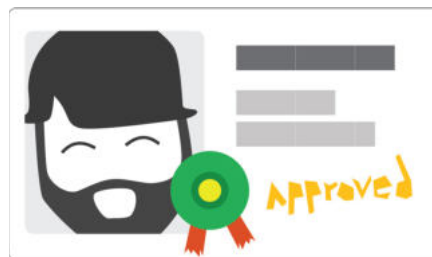
The idea is to conduct short and succinct quizzes which help educate the user interfacing the system. The quizzes are designed to educate rather than actually test the knowledge

of the user. At the end of the quiz, the user is rewarded with a tangible *badge of approval* indicating his performance mapping to how responsible a citizen he is. The badge acts as the seal of approval for a responsible citizen and carries the URL to a web portal where the user can view his profile, analyse his results or take more quizzes.

The setup is a kiosk installed in public places. Users interact with the kiosk through gesture base input. This setup acts as the first touch point as well as an entry node to the main information portal. As this concept targets public places like malls and airports, there is a possibility that users may have a *tourist* approach and may not get enough attention from the public.



User approaches a kiosk and takes the quiz



User gets a printed *badge of approval*



User then checks out his profile online

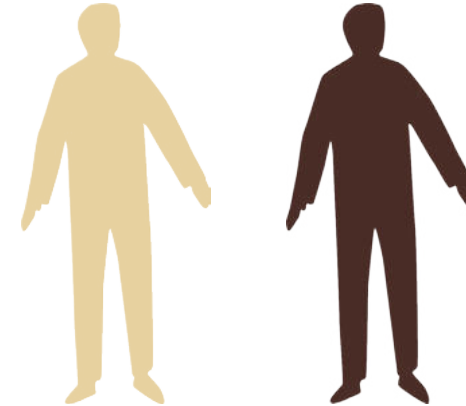
#### 4.2.2 Concept 2 — Yes or No

This concept tries to harness the psychological effect exerts by a person under *the Gaze*. The effect suggests that a subject loses a degree of autonomy upon realizing that he or she has an external appearance,<sup>[34]</sup> like reflection in a mirror.

The concept relies on an extremely simple yet powerful categorization through the quick decisive behaviour of human. A user is shown two photographs each with a person belonging to a different ethnic background. The user chooses one of the two depending on his preference. As the user repeats this over 10 to 20 times, the result will be displayed indicating which ethnicity he is biased towards. This shall give an introspection as to how each of us has our own bias in the society. This will also generates valuable data that will help identify the universal inclination to each ethnic group.


The concept is inspired by The Pulse Project [<http://pulse.media.mit.edu/>] and the GIFGIF Project [<http://gifgif.media.mit.edu/>] carried out by researchers at the MIT Media Lab. This design idea can be piggybacked on Concept 1 discussed earlier and a full fledged system can be developed.

Who would you choose as your team mate?









PLACE PULSE 617,553 clicks [Vision](#) [Rankings](#) [Data](#) [Experiments](#) [Papers](#) [About](#)

Which place looks wealthier ?



For this question: 111,989 clicks collected Goal: 500,000 clicks

SEE REAL-TIME RANKINGS

RANK	CITY	CLICKS	TREND	RANK	CITY	CLICKS	TREND
1	Washington DC	2014		54	Rio De Janeiro	7423	
2	Singapore	5124		55	Belo Horizonte	3927	
3	London	5345		56	Gaborone	1340	

Place Pulse is a project carried out by researchers at MIT Media Lab to help identify safe cities worldwide

### 4.2.3 Concept 3 — Feedback tweet visualization

This design idea focuses on the human nature that gives us satisfaction by doing something good about others. The idea is to visualize existing tweets having certain keywords (related to racism) made across the world. The visualization will have multiple axes indicating the sentiments of the tweets. The user will be prompted to tweet something nice by providing facts to tweet. As the user tweets, the shift in the visualization will be visibly apparent. The contribution in the overall sentiment of the visualization will be affected as a result of the single tweet. Users are as such encouraged to make several positive tweets to improve the overall sentiment in the visualization.

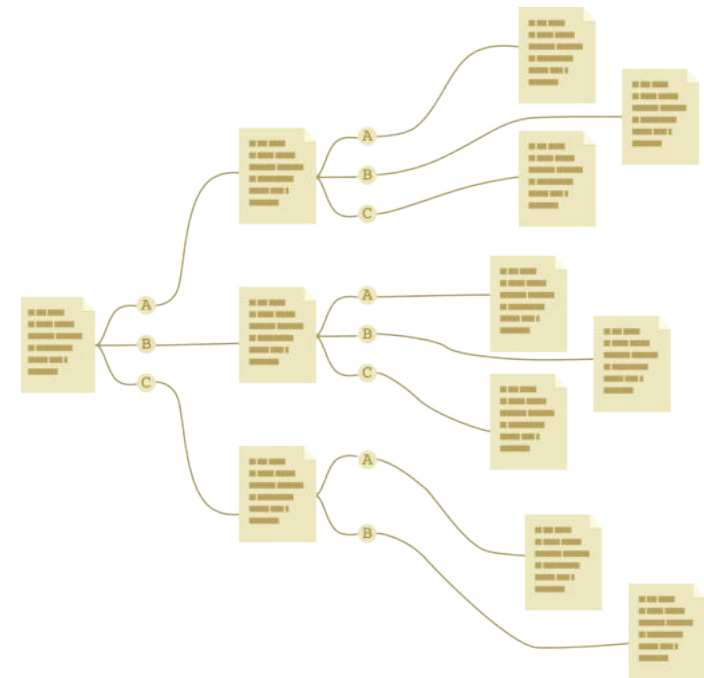
The visualization is a full wall scale size display in public forums and malls where several users can come together at one time and tweet. The concept assumes that this act will promote awareness and spread the word to million other socially active users online. However, due to technical challenges, sentiment analysis algorithms are still imperfect and are likely to yield incorrect results. This will adversely affect the project's main purpose.

#### 4.2.4 Concept 4 — Vicarious Story Telling

This concept is an attempt to leverage the power of storytelling to give a visual walkthrough of certain regions in the form of travelogues or real historical stories. With each step, users will have the option to choose what he or she can do next. As the user proceeds, he or she will encounter what he or she may face in real life, or follow the real sequence of the historical event that happened.

The concept attempts to make the user familiarize with a different region or society elsewhere vicariously. For example, a person who has went through a travelogue to a North-Eastern state in India will experience a very similar scenario in real life. The story will introduce cultural artefacts, locations and societal essence of the region. The idea here is to bring a remote place closer to the user experiencing the story. This is backed by the belief that understanding the differences between various society and regions, even though vicariously, will bring awareness and encourage people to accept their differences.

The concept however is considered too demanding from the users' end. The user has to proactively participate to learn the story.



The story acts like a gamebook such as the “Falcon Series” in which after every paragraph, the reader gets to decide which flow the user takes



# NIGHT WALK IN MARSEILLE

Explore the sounds, streets and soul of the city

Start your walk

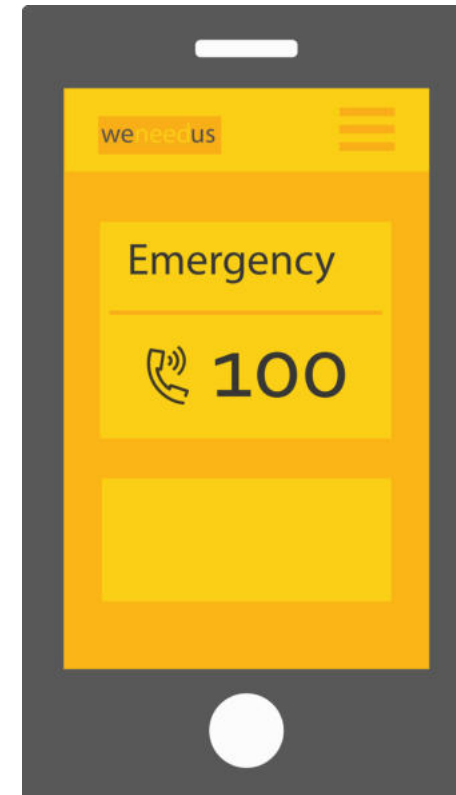
Nightwalk is an experimental project by Google allowing users to take a loosely guided tour through the streets of Marseille to help experience and explore the city vicariously [<https://nightwalk.withgoogle.com/en/>]

#### 4.2.5 Concept 5 — Safety App

All the previous concepts target to educate potentially the groups of people outside the north east. This concept however is basically a mobile phone app which focuses on the victims of racial stereotyping and discriminations. The idea is to make them feel secure and help protect themselves by being vigil.

Similar to women safety apps introduced to protect women in the cities of New Delhi, the app updates on security measures, carries emergency numbers to inform racial or hatred based crimes. The app acts as a guide to safe locations, help the user understand and learn basic local slangs or terminologies etc.

In a practical situated, there is an immediate need of an app of such kind. However, the app does not deal the issue from its fundamental root. The app addresses the issue of racism only from a higher level.





#### 4.2.6 Concept 6 — Awareness Wall

In this concept, users will be interacting with a huge wall size map display. The map carries hidden facts and media items like images or short video clips carrying racial awareness information. Users are to open their cellphones, open a particular camera app and hover over the map to detect hidden codes. Once a code is detected, a small piece of information will pop up on the mobile screen. These information are chunked and designed to educate the user on generic knowledges pertaining to racial practice and to help bring awareness. The whole experience is to be made social allowing multiple users to search for the code at the same time. The progress of each user will be displayed on the wall display to promote a surge of competition among the participants.

This concept attempts to gamify the act of consuming factual information through active participation by introducing the social layer into it. The concept however has a limited scope of information dissipation as users will be interacting with the set up perhaps only once. In that one time, only a limited amount of information can be provided to the user.

#### 4.2.7 Concept 7 — Main Concept

The main concept is a mixture of smaller design ideas picked from the concepts discussed above. The smaller design ideas are bound together as part of a bigger system. Considering *ignorance* or *non-vigilance* as the primary cause of racial profiling and stereotyping, the system is designed to bring awareness and to dissipate knowledge with the belief that it will ultimately keep the citizens vigilant. Users find entry into the system through social media links shared by friends or people who he follows.

The system comprises of 3 blocks:

##### 1. Short Quiz

It is a brief quiz usually not lasting more than 30-40 secs with content specifically aimed to educate and promote insights and awareness of the user of the issue. Users will be led to this quiz from social media links shared by his friends and people who he follows. Once the user takes the quiz, the insights and result of the quiz is shown in a visual way. The user will be prompted to improve the score or may just share the result. In case the user shares and then leaves the

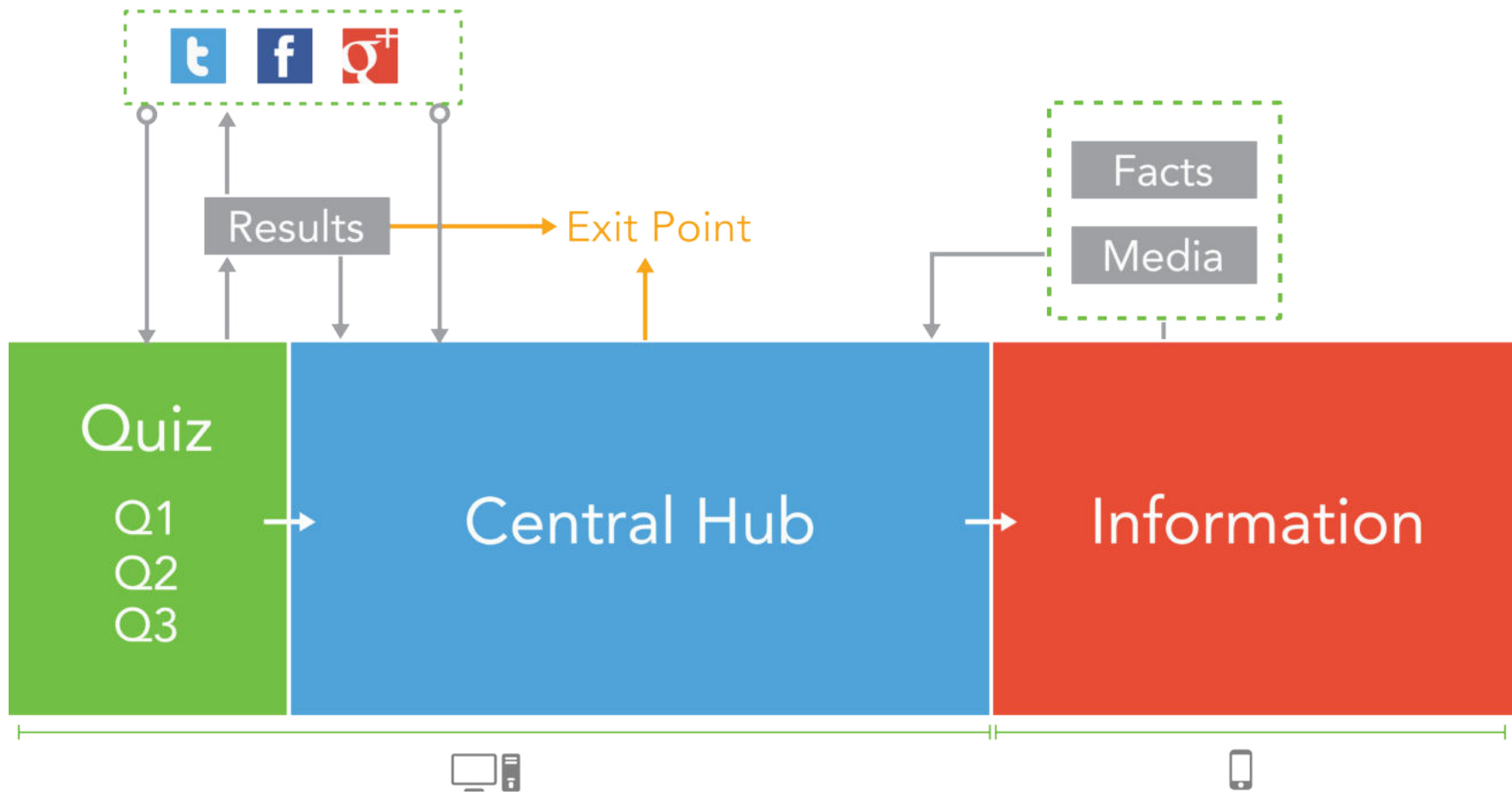
system, the shared link acts as a potential entry point for another user. In case the user chose to improve his or her score, he'll be led into the central hub.

The quiz is aimed to attract users and get them involved at the first place. A user is expected to take different quizzes which will lead the user to learning different information through the Central Hub.

##### 2. Central Hub

The Central Hub is the major part of the system. It is where a user spends most of the time learning facts information pertaining to racial issues.

In the central hub, a contextualised map along with the earlier result of the quiz the user has undertaken is displayed. In case the user entered the system at this block and not through the quiz, the result will only be a generic graphical representation of the results of all the participants. At this stage, the user will be prompted to open a particular URL on his smartphone. A non-smartphone user gets the option to select a desktop only version basic version which serves the same purpose but the interaction mechanism is different.

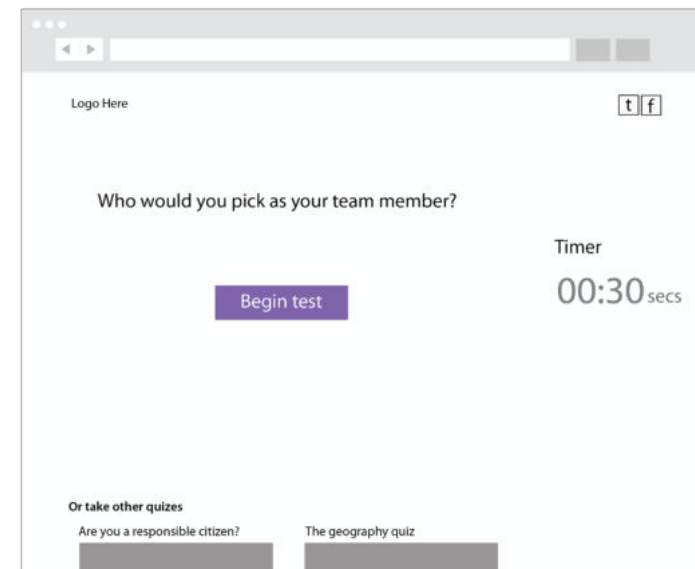


The 3 blocks integrate into a single system that strengthens the probability of users accessing the information which helps in bringing awareness on the issue

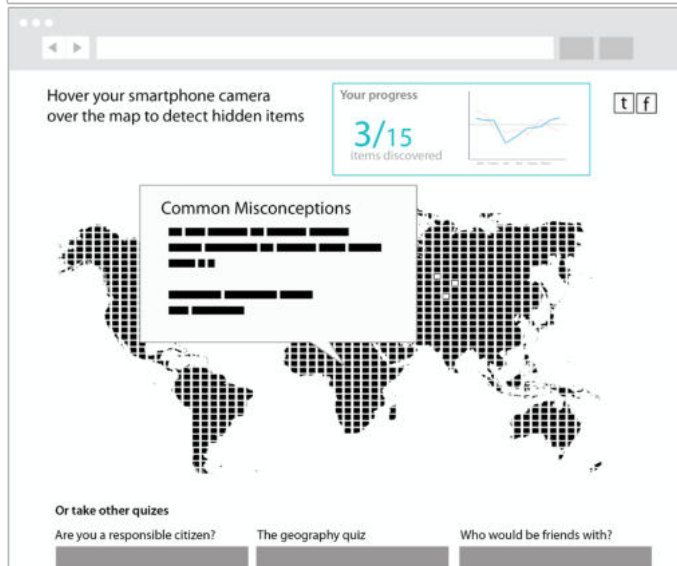
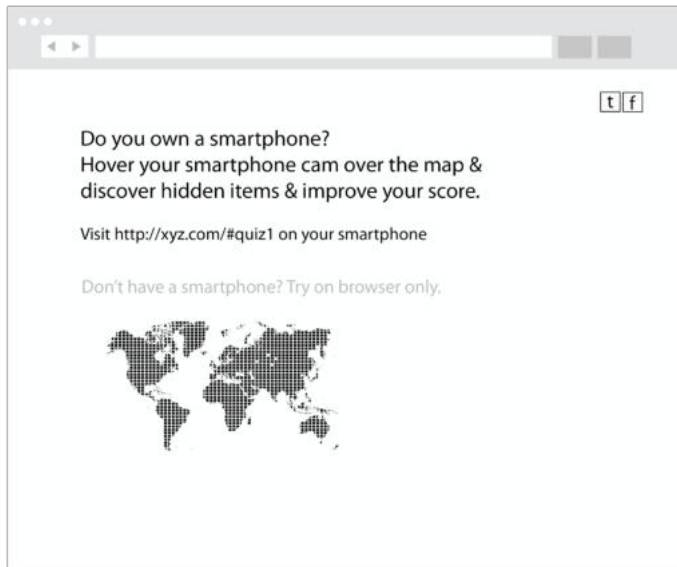
As the user opens the url in his or her smartphone, an enlarges version of the map can is visible on the smartphone screen. The user is indicated to pan through the map on the phone. As the user pans the maps, the map on the browser screen will behave accordingly. on the phone screen, there will be visible icons which are not visible on the computer screen. As a user taps on the icons, a modal pop-up appears. The pop-up carries specific contextual information about the location in the map which are relevant to the quiz the user has just taken. These information comes under the information block of the system. The user can thus discover more tappable icons on the map and keep learning more facts, media clips and images of cultural artefacts etc which eventually help in understanding the issue in hand. Once the user discovers all the tappable icons, a comparative graphical presentation of the improvement he made from the quiz result he gave earlier is provided and is nudged to share the result.

In case the user doesn't own a smartphone, the map on the screen will carry progressively disclosed clickable icons. As a user clicks on the icons, a pop-up with come similar to the one when you tap the icon on the smartphone.

The central hub is aimed to keep the users engaged through an interactive and awesome user experience.



Wireframes of the basic UI



Wireframes of the basic UI

### 3. Information

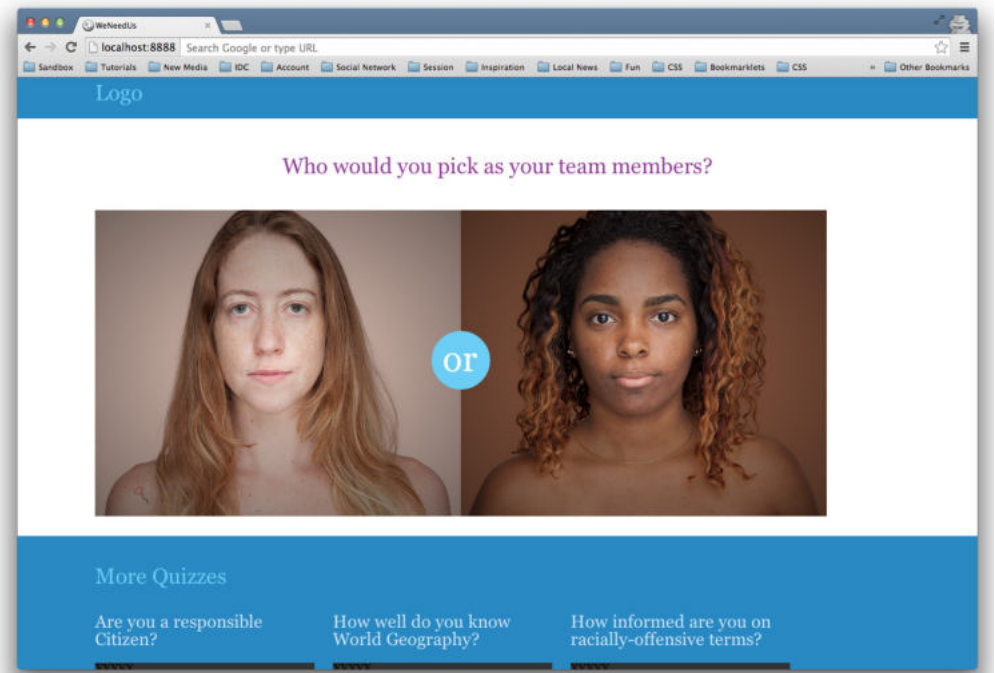
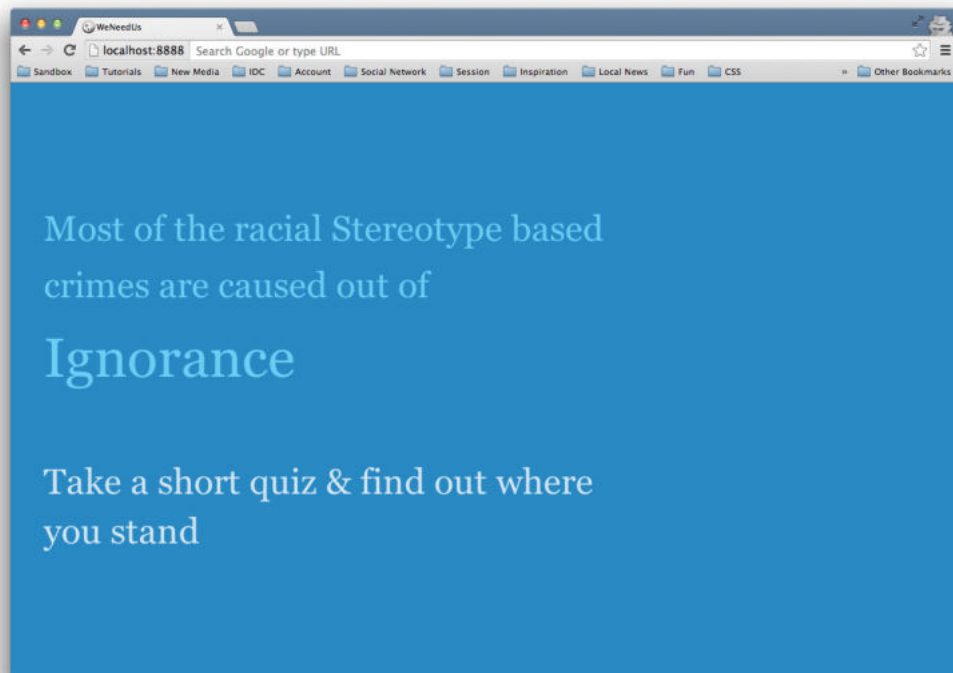
This block is where the major learning happens. The content is chunked and designed to take only a very small amount of time to consume. Each content fact card will directly educate the user of certain misconceptions about racism or provide general information to create awareness. As a user opens a fact card, the system assumes that the person has consumed that piece of information. The system then reflects the improvement from the quiz result he has taken earlier on the screen in real time.

In order to understand the actual impact and improve upon the concept, a prototype is developed. Through the prototype, users' tests are carried out and analytics are embedded to help understand the real impact and actions carried by the users through the system.

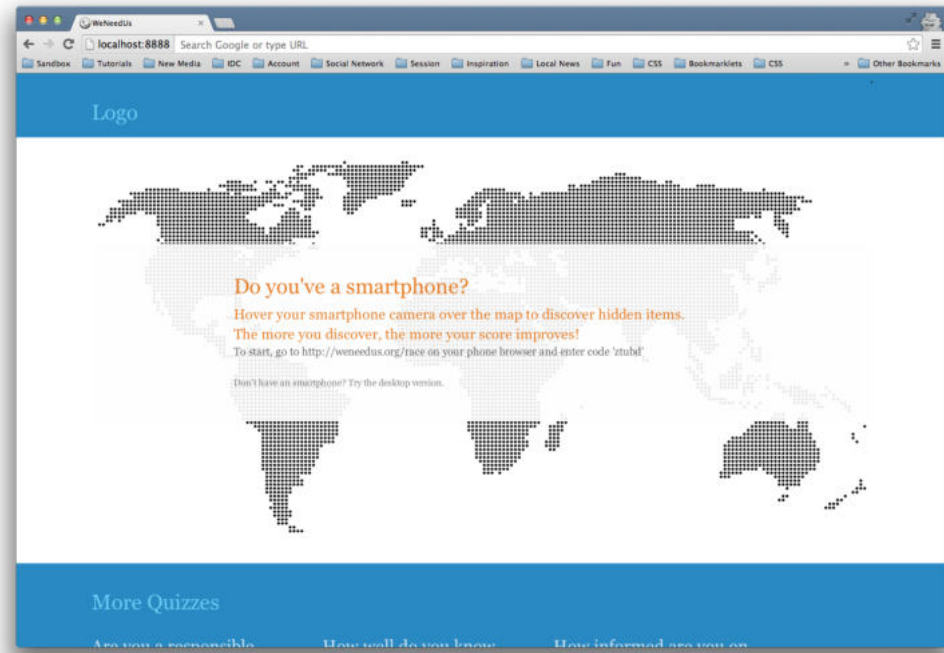
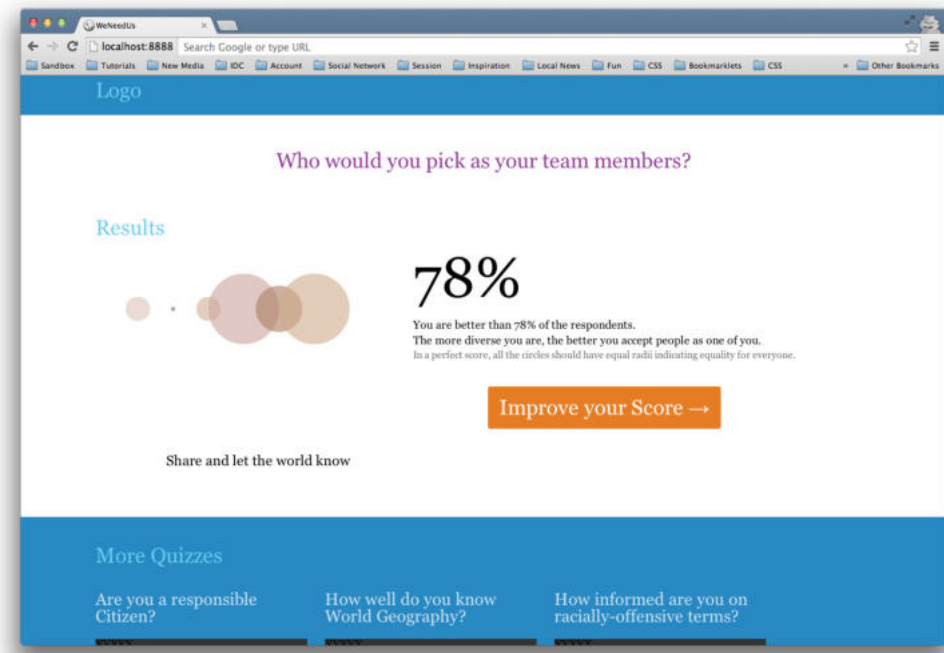
## 4.3 The Prototype

A prototype has been developed with basic HTML5 and JavaScript and leverages the HTML5 socket technology to communicate between the browser on the screen with the

browser on the phone. Real time updates are triggered and sent over the socket to update the map and the information cards on the screen. The basic gestural interactions enabled by the smartphone are leveraged upon to interact with the elements on the screen.



Screenshots of the Prototype



Screenshots of the Prototype

## 5. Contextualizing the project

As one of the root cause of the practice of racial based discrimination and stereotyping is *ignorance* or *non-vigilance* of the various differences in our society, it has been observed that it is extremely hard for an ignorant citizen to accept the differences and consider a person as its own. The ideal way is to accept the differences instead of tolerating it.

The project believes that '*knowledge*' or '*being informed*' is the first step to acceptance. Hence it concludes that any

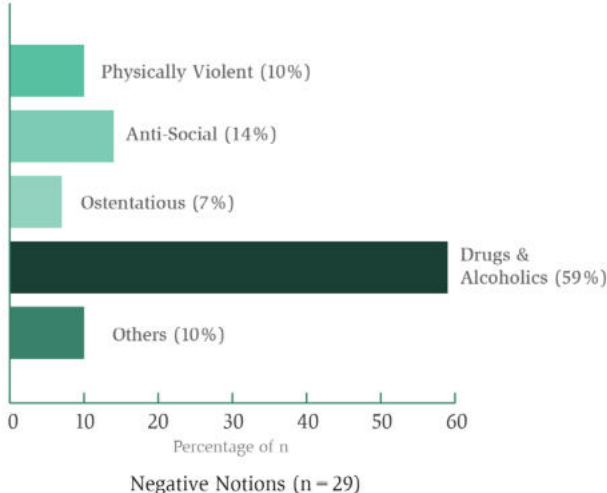
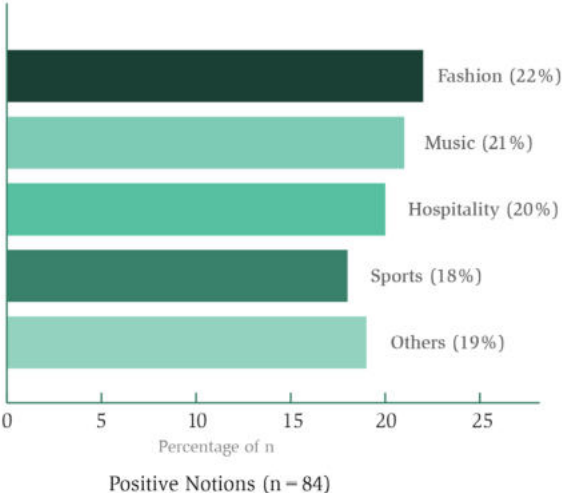
system which promotes awareness will help curb the issue no matter how small the contribution is. The project hence, is an attempt to engage users while dissipating information. It thus promotes a way to sustain and educate people of the various misconceptions and pass on general information about the various ethnic groups across the region. In the classification (*discussed on page 19*), this project aims to create an impact in the medium term.

Student organizations protesting [Photo: E-Pao, Aljazeera]

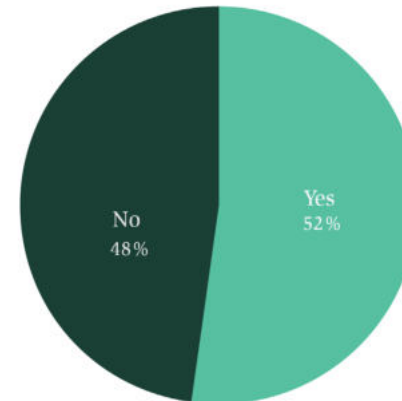
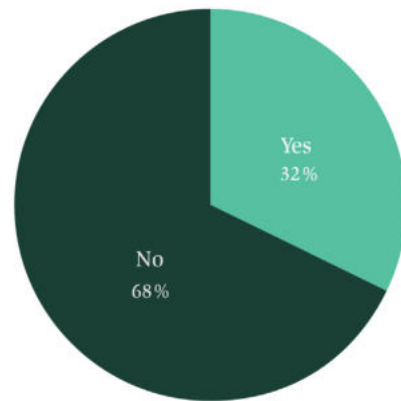
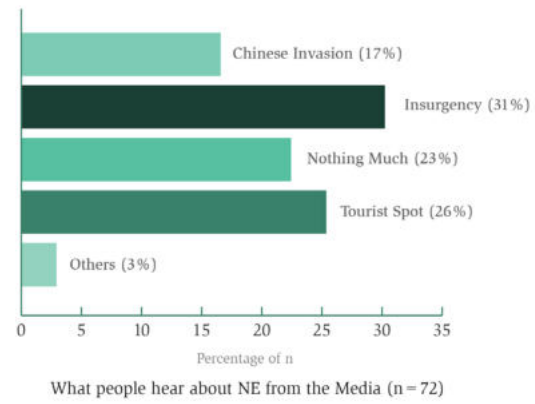
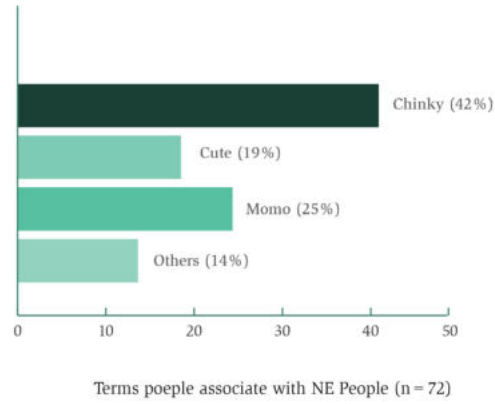


In order to help contextualize the solution to the issue of racial discrimination, an online survey is conducted. The objective of the survey is to help contextualize the solution specific to the issues faced by the citizens of North-Eastern India. The survey aims to identify the major misconceptions about the culture, the people and the life-style of the people of the region.

Based on the survey results, the following charts are prepared. A total of roughly 180 people from across the country participated in the survey. After a thorough analysis, the resultant output shows some of the obvious as well as not so obvious misconceptions about the culture of the people of the north-east.



General Opinion about the people of the North-East



Have you faced any type of racial discrimination?

## 5.1 Analysis Results

### **Usage of derogatory term ‘Chinky’**

Many considers that the term ‘Chinky’ is cute. Majority of the respondents use it without the knowledge of what connotation it carries. They use it because they think it is cute, or simply because their friends use it.

### **Drug Addiction & Alcoholism**

Some of the respondents have known people from NE who are into drugs and some into alcohols. This probably creates a general impression of addiction & alcoholism among NE citizens. The local people thus becomes hostile and alleges the NE residents of spoiling the native culture and affecting their younger generations.

### **Ostentatious and Overspending**

There are 3 major types of NE migrants:

1. People with White-Collar Jobs,
2. Students who came for higher studies
3. Workers/Job seekers (usually employed in lower level jobs)

There is a notion that all NE citizens are ostentatious and overspend on costly materialistic possessions probably based on

behaviours of the white-collared richer section of the people.

### Anti-Social

The NE people are known for being anti-social to people outside the region. Lack of proper communication skills also restrict the interaction between NE people and the non NE people. Lifestyle differences and different food habits are hurdles in bridging the gap.

### Sexual promiscuity

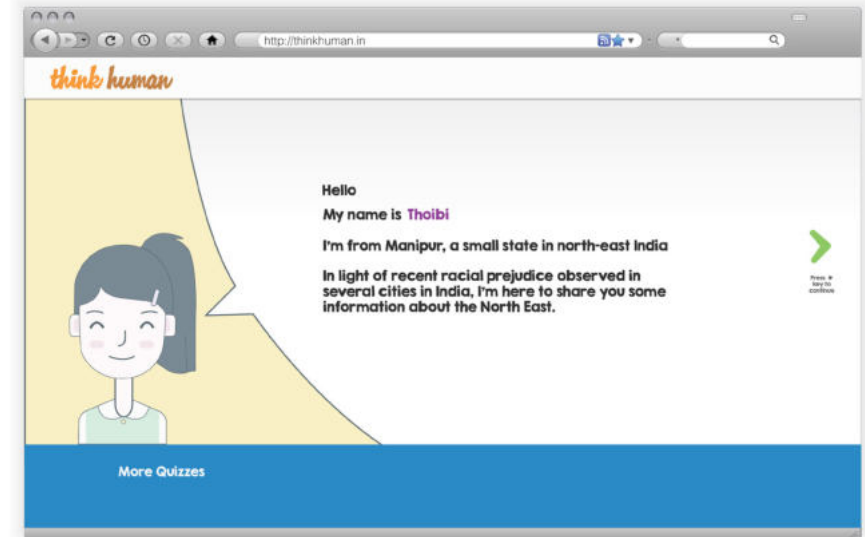
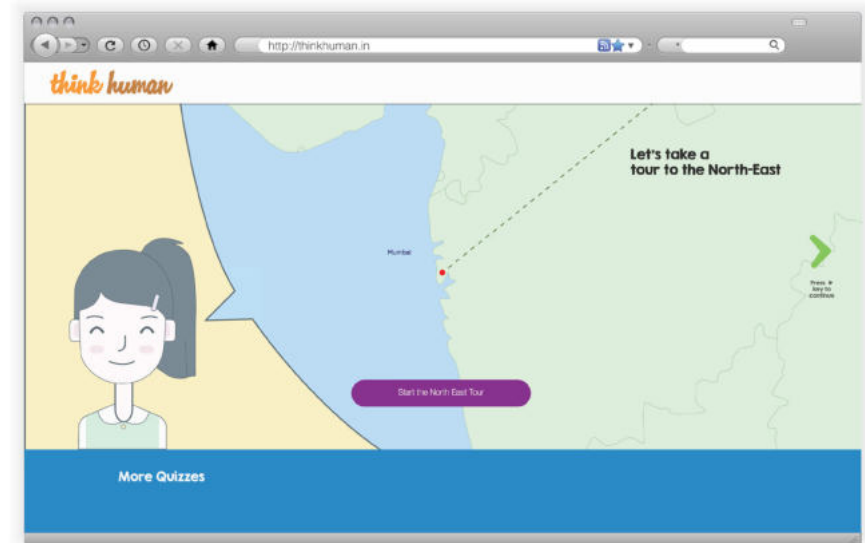
Male and female individuals often staying together in cheap rents as tenants create a false impression of promiscuity. NE girls are tagged as ‘easy’ and open for prostitution.

### Food habits

Majority of the respondents have not eaten NE food. One possibility is that there are very few to no eateries who cater NE food outside the region. These leads to speculations from non NE people who raised questions like “Does the NE people eat raw fish?” or “Is dog eaten regularly?” which are sometimes offensive.

### Violent nature

Activities of insurgent groups have projected the general nature of NE people as “*violent*” or “*emotionally disturbed*”.



Final Prototype with improvements after contextualization



## 6. User Testing

A dipstick user testing has been conducted to gather quick qualitative feedback of the system.

Improvements are made in terms of language, interactions etc. and a more rigorous user-test is conducted in two different ways — through Google Analytics and through direct user testing.

Through analytics results, overnight the site *bounce-rate* reduces by roughly 20% and the average time on the site increases by 30 secs.

The quantitative results of the user test establish that users are likely to share 80% of the times, 60% of the users find the information provided in the site fresh and new, 80% find the interaction and information chunking in the site convenient. Qualitatively, users feel they should be given more choices and control in the interaction. The usage of keyboard navigation is extremely convenient. Some users prefer reference links of content to validate the authenticity of the information provided.

## 7. Evaluation Plan

The system is based online. Heavy analytics will be implemented to help understanding the virality of the system. To measure the impact of the system, certain assumption are made as such

1) If the the number of social media shares and frequency of shares are high, the system is successful in sustaining and spreading out the information. To Measure the number of shares, system level analytics code are to be embedded in the system.

2) The results of the quiz give a general insight on how the world is inclined towards a certain race. If the overall inclination towards a certain race or ethnicity is established, steps can be taken to address it. The system is thus considered effective if it enables us to establish the same.

3) It is considered that if a user opens a info-card through the system, the user has consumed that piece of information. The higher the number of cards accessed, the more the information has been accessed. As a result, the system shall be evaluated based on the number of information cards discovered and accessed by the users.

## 8. Conclusion

Although the main aim of the project at its inception was to provide a humanitarian way of solving the issue, the current implementation is contextualized to address racism as it exists in India at the moment. However, the solution is not specifically bound to any race, ethnicity or region. As such, the project can be extended for various groups of people by contextualising the content to serve its purpose.

Apart from racial profiling cases, it can be used to promote any form of awareness programs. The system merely acts as an information dissipation medium using modern day technology.

### 8.1. Learning

Racism is a highly subjective case to be dealt with. The subjective nature of the issue mandates the objectification of the essence of racism. This helps in breaking down the broad issues caused by it into rigid smaller insights. The break-down thus helps in understanding the root causes of the issue through channelized classification. This essentially makes it easier and help set a more clearer focus of the project. The entire process brings a deeper

enlightenment of the issue and has brought out the sensibilities towards humanitarian engagement as an individual.

Since the inception of the project, attempts are made to look out for possible design interventions using different approaches. To break down its subjective nature, a philosophical approach is considered to set a direction towards the design intervention. This approach ascertains answers to questions on ethos and ethics. Following which, the project attempts to engage the target audience which are the younger generations residing in metropolitan cities of India. During this phase, several gesture sensing technologies like Microsoft Kinect, Leap Motion and image processing are explored. The final project uses HTML5 Socket API to build the interactive web app.

## **8.2. Problems & Difficulties**

The first and the foremost difficulty faced is in understanding racism without personal biases. As a research project, there are no rooms to get the findings go tainted with personal biases. Major difficulties otherwise resulted from contextual enquiries made on users. Users are sensitive when approached and screen their answers to contextual enquiries. In order to get pass this, the questions and the language in which they are asked, need to be

carefully crafted to give a neutral voice and answers are not too personal.

### 8.3. Future Work

The final concept as discussed in the concepts section is targeted for the medium term (Classifications Page 19). A major responsibility that the project undertake is to bring awareness among the masses with a vision to help avoid inadvertent mistakes over sensitive issues. This however leaves room for more works to help nudge people towards certain behaviors. For instance, the current project handles information dissipation but how these information will be utilized is beyond the system design. At this stage, the project considers that the first step to start addressing the issue of racism is to dissipate information.

The scope of this project focuses on bringing awareness to the majority of people who are outside the north-eastern region. However, to effectively bridge the barriers as discussed under the root-causes section, concept 6 becomes important. Although concept 6 doesn't deal with the root causes at the first degree, it can improve security and confidence to possible victims of racism. More works can be done to address the issue from this perspective.

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