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MYSTIC AURA

MAGAZINE

PIYUSH
PANDEY

DR. DIPSIKHA BHAGAWATI

TRENDY LOOK

STYLE WITH A SCARF IN WINTER

TAWANG
NORTHEAST BEAUTY

WINTER STYLE
FOR MEN

Photography: Kaushik Brahma
Model: Sweta Basak

Ethereal Beauty
Wings of freedom, unseen forces

2025

MYSTICAURA

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From Editor's Desk



Honoring heritage and culture this November issue we tried to bring before you the traditions that shaped our identities.

As the year unfolds its final pages, we reflect on moments that brought us joy and people who made a difference.

In this issue, we covered the topics about the beauty of nature and followed by our regular pages of attraction Aura pages and an exclusive interview of a fashionable fashion personality. We hope all will love it.

Regards

GITALI PATHAK DEKA

Proprietor & Editor-in-chief

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COVER

on the

Sweta Basak

The GOOD and the EVIL

Conceptual photography..

Every person walks a fine line between light and darkness — between the good that uplifts and the evil that destroys. As a photographer, I have always been fascinated by the duality of human nature — how the same person can hold both purity and

Model

Sweta Basak

Photography

Kaushik Brahma

Makeup

Daniel Marak

Concept & Styling

Kaushik Brahma

chaos within. This thought became the inspiration behind one of my most memorable conceptual shoots, where I captured two contrasting portraits of the same model — one embodying Good, the other Evil.

The first frame is a complete contrast to the other. Here, she stood as an angel — serene, gentle, radiant with calm light. The wings that stretched behind her represented purity, forgiveness, and inner strength. The same candle she held earlier now symbolized hope and truth. The soft blue tones around her created a sense of peace, reminding me how goodness often speaks in whispers, while evil shouts in chaos.

The second frame, bathed in red light and mystery — the woman stood as a witch of the night, wrapped in shadows, holding a candle that flickered like forbidden fire. Her gaze was intense, her presence powerful yet haunting. Every element — from the dark leather attire to the mist curling at her feet — symbolized temptation, control, and the raw energy of the darker side that lives within us. She was not evil by birth, but by the choices she made — the choices that every human faces when

confronted by desire, anger, or pride.

Through these two portraits, I wanted to convey one truth — good and evil do not exist in separate people; they exist in the same soul. The same heart that can show compassion can also harbor jealousy. The same mind that dreams of creation can also crave destruction. What defines a person is not the presence of good or evil, but the one they choose to nurture.

This project taught me that photography, like life, is about balance — about shadows and light coexisting in one frame. When I looked through the lens, I wasn't just photographing a model in two attires; I was capturing the eternal battle of every human being. The witch and the angel are not two different people — they are both her, and they are both us.

In the end, the message I wanted my audience to feel was simple — we all carry a spark of light and a shadow of darkness. What we choose to let shine defines the story we leave behind.

Model: Sweta Basak
 Makeup Artist: Daniel Gogoi
 Photography & Concept: Kaushik
 Brahma Photography (B&B Studios)

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

MY JOURNEY, LIVING MY TRUTH

Unapologetically me...

Dipankar Kashyap

1. Your introduction and your lifestyle in a nutshell.

I was born into a middle-class Assamese family. My mother was a government school teacher, and my father was a Divisional Superintendent at Assam State Transport. I completed my schooling at Don Bosco, Guwahati, and later earned my Master's degree in English Literature from the University of Poona.

From my school days, I was deeply interested in fashion and dance and used to participate in numerous cultural events. During my university years, fashion came into my life — I did my first show there in 1991, when fashion was still new to most of us.

After completing my post-graduation, I returned to Guwahati and I was offered to do the costumes in Mridul Gupta's film Krishnasura. After that, there



was no looking back. I became a fashion designer — though without formal training, my passion for creativity guided me. Of course, it took a lot of hard work.

At the same time, I developed a liking for direction. When Prag Channel was established, I joined hands with Krishna Baruah, Kopil Bora, Kaushik Nath, and Sanjive Narayan. Together, we created a range of programmes — New Year specials, personality features, style and talk shows, music vid-

eos, short stories, and VCD films. In total, I've directed around 12 video films, designed costumes for 16 films, and worked on numerous music videos.

I've spent 34 years in the fashion industry, and today, I've also directed a big-screen film titled Sitore Xemeka Rati – The Winter Rain, which has brought me both national and international recognition, winning 27 awards.

2. What inspires your personal

expression of confidence and attitude. When you're confident in what you wear, it naturally shows. If you feel unsure, it reflects too.

Usually, I decide what to wear a couple of hours before an event, though for special occasions like weddings, I plan at least ten days ahead. Still, I often change my outfit depending on my mood or better options that come up.

I avoid western formals because I don't feel comfortable in them, but I love Indian formals. Tarun Tahiliani is my absolute favourite for wedding attire.

5. How do you balance staying on-trend with being true to your personal style?

-I love clothes. So I always have options with me. I mostly don't follow trends. I wear doing lots of experiments. I love jewellery too so I keep shopping for earrings, neck pieces & pendants. I wear clothes which I feel would look nice on me and I will be able to carry.

6. How do you think fashion can be used to break down barriers and promote acceptance and understanding?

-Unisex dressing has become the IN thing now. Short jackets high heels bell bottoms etc are all flavours of the season. So the difference of styling between genders have become narrower. We no longer follow a typical format.

7. Who are some LGBTQ+ icons or figures in fashion that inspire you, and why?



-Everyone inspires me. Now I have started adding bit of femininity in my dressing style which I never use to do that before. Thought I never cross dress or put makeup of late I have started adding jewellery to my styling and look. I love to celebrate whatever I wear and a mantra I follow always 'WEAR IT AND FORGET IT'. Once you wear something never be conscious of what you are wearing. That way you give out lots of positive aura and people start loving that positivity in you.

Personal questions :

1. What's your favourite way to spend a day off, and how do you like to pamper yourself ?

A perfect day off for me means doing absolutely nothing! I love lazing around, having a late breakfast, and then curling up in bed with the TV on. I often go for a hair spa or an occasional crystal facial — it refreshes me instantly. Hair spas, especially, are deeply relaxing and rejuvenating.

2. How do you think your personal style reflects your personality?

In our profession, looking good and dressing well are essential. Over the years, my wardrobe has evolved so much that I no longer need to put in extra effort — it's already well-curated. I rarely repeat outfits, but when I do, I mix and match smartly, especially with tops. People may not notice the lowers, but at social gatherings where you're photographed, the upper clothing definitely stands out — so I pay more attention to that.

3. How do you stay confident and authentic in your own skin ?

-Nothing like being honest to yourself. Try to be a good human it will reflect on your face and confidence within. I always try to be a good human irrespective of what I am wearing.

4. What hurts you most, any incident u like to share in brief with our readers.

-Cheating and rude behaviour hurts me most. I cannot take fake people. I wonder why they fake it. You know it's not you so why can't you be yourself. You don't like me? It's ok. Just avoid. Please don't go and spread false things about me. Another thing is when someone shows attitude. When I know where you stand why do you need to have this air? As it is inside you you yourself know that you are faking it. So don't do. You have only one life so be happy. Live and let live.

5. What's the most iconic gay movie or TV show that you love rewatching, and why?

-It has to be Heartstopper. It's young, energetic, and all about pure love — love that rules the world. The innocence and sincerity shown in the series are so refreshing. I adore both the lead actors; the way they portray the beauty of first love is simply heartwarming.

6. If you could have dinner with any gay icon, who would it be and why?

-It would definitely be George Michael. I've grown up listening to his songs, and I absolutely love his music. If I could have dinner with him, I'd ask him to sing "Father Figure" for me — again and again throughout the evening. It would be a dream come true.

7. Have you ever been on a blind date that turned out to be a total surprise? Share the story in brief.

-No, not really. Since I am in the fashion industry, people usually already know me. This image or public persona has, at times, been a little hindrance in experiencing some of the sweet surprises of life.

8. If you could switch lives with a gay character from a book or movie for a day, who would it be and why?

-Have you seen Romil and Jugal? I would love to be Romil and fall for Jugal. They are neighbours with nothing in common, yet destiny brings them together. Interestingly, Romil's sister had a crush on Jugal, but as fate would have it, Romil and Jugal fall in love. It's such a beautiful and unexpected story of connection.

9. How do you see your future ?

-Future looks beautiful to me. I am a very positive person. I am 55 but I still have marriage in mind. I am hoping to get a good human soon. He should be literate and have great sense of humour like me. And very chilled out. Can be young but very mature inside.

And Adoption. A daughter. I don't mind a grown kid. My friends Sucho and moromee have both adopted girls and how much they loved them. Once I get married to great human within a month I will apply for adoption. But a grownup kid. 10-12 years. And have a happy family.



AURA Trends



Model:

Gitali Pathak Deka

The model is wearing designer Kangkana Choudhary's collection Toss muga mekhala Chaddar which is Assam traditional wear. Beautifully captured by popular photographer, Unique Borah.

Muga silk is a type of silk fabric that originates from the northeastern state of Assam, India. It's known for its Golden sheen that has a distinctive golden color, which is due to the unique properties of the silkworms that produce the silk. Toss Muga silk is known for its strength and durability, making it a popular choice for traditional garments.

The fabric has a natural, smooth texture that drapes well and is comfortable to wear and is an integral part of Assamese culture, often used in traditional ceremonies and celebrations.



THE MOMENT OF CHOICE

The Art of Decision Making in Life

By : **Jishnu Vijayan Nair**

Actor/Writer/Motivational, Speaker, Kerala

Every step we take in life begins with a decision. Some are small - what to wear, what to eat, when to speak. Others are life-defining - where to work, whom to love, when to move on, or when to stay. Between hesitation and action lies that silent, invisible pause - the moment of choice. It is here that life takes shape.

As passionate beings driven by purpose, we all wish to make the

right decisions. Yet, reality teaches us a humbling truth: not every decision turns out to be right, and not every mistake turns out to be wrong. The art of decision-making, therefore, is not about perfection - it's about awareness, courage, and growth.

The Weight of a Choice

Decisions are powerful because they carry consequences. A single "yes" or "no" can change

the direction of your life. But what makes decision-making complex is not the act itself - it's the mind behind it. Our decisions are shaped by countless invisible factors: our upbringing, culture, past experiences, fears, and even the opinions of those around us.

The child who was discouraged from expressing ideas may grow into an adult who hesitates before taking bold steps. The one who faced criticism for failures might fear trying again. The environment we grow in silently programs our response to life's choices. Yet, as we mature, self-awareness gives us the ability to rewrite this script.

Fear - The Hidden Decision Maker

For many, fear is the invisible hand guiding their choices. Fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of judgment. It whispers, "What if you're wrong?" and convinces us to stay in comfort zones that limit our potential.

But the truth is, not deciding is also a decision - a decision to let life happen to you instead of through you.

The irony of fear is that it often makes us avoid the very experiences that would make us stronger. We think we are protecting ourselves, but we are only delaying our evolution.

Confidence, then, is not the absence of fear - it is the courage to act despite it. When we take decisions with awareness, not anxiety, we invite growth into our lives. **The Illusion of the "Right Time"**

We often wait for clarity, certainty, or a "perfect moment" to make big choices. But life rarely gives



such guarantees. The truth is, no decision is ever made in absolute clarity. Every choice involves risk, uncertainty, and a leap of faith.

A polished term like “the right decision at the right time” sounds elegant, but life is far messier. The reality is this:

“A decision taken at the crucial moment - with clarity and without fear - is the right decision.”

Even if it turns out differently than expected, it still serves its purpose - because every decision shapes the person you are becoming.

When Past Mistakes Hold You Hostage

Many of us struggle to make new decisions because of old ones that went wrong. We replay them in our minds like broken records - “I shouldn’t have trusted,” “I should’ve waited,” “I shouldn’t have quit.”

But the past is not a prison; it is a teacher. Every decision you’ve taken, whether successful or painful, was made with the

awareness and wisdom you had at that moment. It was a reflection of who you were - not who you are becoming.

The danger lies not in making wrong decisions but in letting past failures paralyze future choices. Growth begins when we forgive our past selves and trust that we now have deeper wisdom to guide us.

The Inner Compass

The best decisions are not made by overthinking; they are made by alignment. When your heart, mind, and values move in the same direction, clarity emerges naturally.

Before making a major decision, ask yourself three simple questions:

1. Does it align with my purpose?
2. Does it bring peace to my inner self?
3. Will I still respect this choice five years from now?

If the answers feel right within, trust the inner compass - even

if others disagree. The voice of intuition is quiet but never wrong.

Turning Fear into Fuel

When you begin to act decisively, you may not always be right - but you will always be alive. Every choice teaches you something about yourself: your patience, courage, or clarity. The key is to stay flexible, humble, and open to learning.

Confidence in decision-making doesn’t come from always being right; it comes from knowing that, whatever happens, you can handle it.

The Power of Decision

Every great transformation - personal or professional - began when someone dared to decide. A dreamer decided to try. A leader decided to speak. A soul decided to change.

Decisions shape destiny because they are acts of creation. Each choice says, “I am ready to take responsibility for my path.”

So, don’t wait for perfect clarity. Don’t let the ghosts of your past guide the steps of your future. Life rewards movement, not hesitation.

Decisions define who we are not because they are always right, but because they are ours.

So, take them with awareness. Take them with courage. And when fear whispers, remind yourself - the power to decide is the power to create your destiny.

Because in the end, it’s not the decision that shapes the person - it’s the person who shapes the decision.

Aura Style

NEPALI ATTIRE





Winter Style for Men

a few tips to look classy

By: **Agniv Chatterjee**, Kolkata, India

As the temperatures drop, it's time to revamp your wardrobe with the latest winter styles for men. From cozy sweaters to stylish coats, essentials to keep you warm and stylish.

Layering is crucial for winter style. Start with a thermal base layer, add a sweater or fleece, and top it off with a waterproof coat. This will keep you warm and allow you to adjust your layers according to the temperature.

A Cozy and good sweater is a winter wardrobe staple. Opt for thick,

chunky knits in neutral colors like beige, gray, or navy. You can pair them with jeans or trousers for a stylish and comfortable look.

Stylish Coats always gives a classy look in winter. A waterproof and breathable coat is a must-have for winter. Look for styles with a hood and adjustable cuffs to keep you dry and warm. Parkas, pea coats, and trench coats are all great options.

Accessories and important parts that give an overall fashionable look. Add a scarf, hat, and gloves

to keep you warm and stylish. You can also add a statement piece of jewelry like a watch or a leather belt to elevate your look.

Winter Boots, too add a flavour to your style in winter. Winter boots are a must-have for cold weather. Go for waterproof boots with good grip to keep your feet dry and stable. Chelsea boots, ankle boots, and hiking boots are all great options.

***Style Tips ideas :**

- Mix and match different textures



like wool, leather, and denim to add depth to your outfit.

- Don't be afraid to experiment with different colors and patterns.
- Keep your outfit balanced by pairing bold pieces with neutral ones.
- Pay attention to fit – make sure your clothes fit well and aren't too tight or too loose.

Some popular winter style trends for men include:

- Oversized coats and sweaters

- Neutral colors like beige, gray, and navy
- Statement accessories like hats and scarves
- Waterproof and breathable fabrics
- Comfortable and stylish boots

By incorporating these essentials and style tips for into your wardrobe, you'll be sure to stay warm and stylish all winter long.

***winter outfit ideas for a fashionable Outlook.**

- A cozy sweater paired with dark jeans and boots for a casual look
 - A stylish coat paired with a dress shirt and trousers for a formal event
 - A pair of waterproof boots paired with leggings and a tunic for a functional and stylish outfit
- Whether you're hitting the slopes or just braving the cold, these winter style essentials will keep you warm and stylish. So go ahead, bundle up, and own the winter season .



SCARF

Elevate Your Winter Style

By: **Rajiv**, Ex-student (NIFT), Fashion stylist

A scarf is a versatile and stylish accessory that can instantly elevate your winter wear. Whether you're looking to add a pop of color, texture, or warmth to your outfit, a scarf is the perfect solution. In this article,

we'll explore the various ways to style up your winter wear with a scarf.

Why Scarves are a Winter Essential

Scarves are a must-have accessory

for winter. Not only do they keep your neck warm, but they can also add a stylish touch to your outfit. With so many colors, patterns, and textures to choose from, you can easily find a scarf that complements your winter wardrobe.

Ways to Wear a Scarf

1. ***The Classic Drape***: Simply drape the scarf around your neck, with one end hanging longer than the other. This is a timeless and effortless way to add a touch of sophistication to your outfit.
2. ***The Knotted Scarf***: Knot the scarf loosely around your neck for a relaxed, effortless look. This is perfect for adding a casual touch to a sweater or coat.
3. ***The Infinity Scarf***: Wear the scarf in a loop around your neck for a chic, modern look. This is a great way to add a pop of color to your outfit.
4. ***The Headscarf***: Wear the scarf as a headscarf to add a stylish touch to your outfit. This is perfect for bad hair days or adding a bohemian touch to your look.

Scarf Styling Tips

1. ***Mix and Match***: Mix and match different textures, patterns, and colors to create a unique and stylish look.
2. ***Balance Your Outfit***: Balance your outfit by pairing a bold scarf with neutral-colored clothing.
3. ***Add a Pop of Color***: Add a pop of color to your outfit with a brightly colored scarf.
4. ***Layering***: Layer a scarf over a coat or sweater for added texture and warmth.

Scarf Materials

1. ***Wool*:** Wool scarves are warm, breathable, and perfect for cold winter days.
2. ***Cashmere*:** Cashmere scarves are luxurious, soft, and warm. They're perfect for special occasions or adding a touch of luxury to your outfit.
3. ***Silk*:** Silk scarves are lightweight, breathable, and perfect for adding a touch of elegance to your outfit.
4. ***Faux Fur*:** Faux fur scarves are a great alternative to real fur and can add a stylish touch to your outfit.

Styling a Scarf with Different Outfits

1. Wear a scarf with a coat for a chic, sophisticated look.
2. Wear a scarf with a sweater for a cozy, relaxed look.
3. Wear a scarf with a dress for a feminine, elegant look.
4. Wear a scarf with a hat for a stylish, winter look.

In conclusion, I can say that a scarf is a versatile accessory that can instantly elevate your winter wear. With so many ways to wear, style, and choose, you can easily find a scarf that complements your winter wardrobe. So go ahead, get creative, and style up your winter wear.



Aura Style

"GLAMOUR
MEETS ART,
ATTITUDE
MEETS GRACE,
WHEN BEAUTY
REFLECTS,
IT FINDS ITS
PERFECT
PLACE."

Designer
Richa Rabha 's collection



The New Age of Masculine Vitality

By: **Brian La Cour**,
Author/writer/Entrepreneur, US

Forget the crash diets and overhyped supplements. The real shift in men's health isn't happening in the gym, it's happening at the molecular level. The buzzword? **Peptides**.

Once reserved for Olympic athletes and billionaires with private doctors, these microscopic protein fragments are now redefining what it means to be strong, sharp, and ageless. From Los Angeles to London, men are quietly tapping into a new era of science-backed vitality, and the results are re-writing the playbook for modern masculinity.

At their core, peptides are short chains of amino acids, the same building blocks that make up your muscles, skin, and hormones. They act like biological text messages, telling your cells to rebuild, repair, or regenerate.

As we age, those signals fade. Stress, late nights, bad takeout, they all interfere with your body's ability to recover. Enter peptides:



synthetic versions of the messages your body already knows how to read. Injected, ingested, or applied topically, they whisper to your system, wake up, let's get back to work.

Different blends do different things. Some, like **BPC-157**, speed up healing and soothe inflammation. Others, like **CJC-1295** or **Ipamorelin**, trigger the release

of growth hormone, enhancing muscle tone, fat metabolism, and sleep quality. And then there's **GHK-Cu**, the blue-tinted peptide behind some of the most luxurious anti-aging serums on the planet, collagen in a bottle, minus the marketing fluff.

The men leading this movement aren't bodybuilders, they're CEOs, founders, and creatives

who live life in overdrive. They're not chasing bigger biceps; they're chasing recovery, mental clarity, and longevity.

"I wasn't looking to get ripped," says Jason, a 42-year-old entrepreneur who started peptide therapy after years of burnout. "I just wanted to stop feeling exhausted all the time." After a few weeks on a medically guided protocol, his sleep deepened, his energy stabilized, and his training became effortless. "It's like my body finally got the memo."

Across elite wellness clinics in Miami, Dubai, and Paris, stories like Jason's are becoming the norm. Peptides are now part of the toolkit for men who treat health the way they treat business, strategically, efficiently, and with results that show.

The aesthetic benefits are the unspoken bonus. Peptides that repair tissue and balance hormones often have a visible side effect: better skin, brighter eyes, fewer late-night lines. The "well-rested" look isn't luck, it's cellular efficiency.

Luxury skincare brands have taken note. You'll now find peptide complexes in high-end men's serums, eye creams, and recovery masks. The language has shifted from "anti-aging" to "performance skincare." It's not about vanity, it's about presence. Looking like you're in control of your life, even when you're running it at full speed.

Of course, not all peptides are created equal, and this isn't

something you buy off a sketchy website. The good ones come through licensed practitioners who tailor protocols to your biochemistry. Used carelessly, they can do more harm than good. Used correctly, they can be transformative.

"Peptides are precision medicine," says Dr. Miguel Cortez, a regenerative medicine expert based in Madrid. "They're not a shortcut; they're a system reset. But they require respect, discipline, and supervision."

The modern man is evolving. He's no longer the stoic workhorse running on caffeine and bravado. He's informed, intentional, and understands that longevity is the ultimate flex.

Peptides are part of that evolution, a fusion of science, self-awareness, and subtle luxury. They're not about becoming someone else; they're about returning to your best self, with a little help from modern chemistry.

Call it the **bio-renaissance** of masculinity. The quiet confidence of a man who knows that strength isn't just muscle, it's balance, recovery, and control. And in this new age of performance, that's what power really looks like.



TRAVELLING



THE TAWANG ODYSSEY

Exploring Beauty & Nature

By Kaushik Brahma

As a photographer, I often find myself longing for the hills — for the mist, the scent of pine, and the peace that only nature can offer. During the Bihu holidays, I finally decided to visit Arunachal Pradesh — a land that has always fascinated me for its pristine beauty and serenity. Being a lover of hills and wilderness, the excitement was immense. This time, I wasn't alone; my family accompanied me — my aged mother, Mrs. Shefali Brahma, a retired school headmistress and a passionate writer; my better half,

Ranu Brahma, an English teacher with an ever-smiling face; and my dynamic champ Master Saurya, who, though a bit mischievous, is a true nature lover — especially fond of fishes and snakes.

We started a little late that day, around 12:30 p.m. Everyone was cheerful and in high spirits. As we crossed into the foothills, the winding roads and cool air welcomed us warmly. However, to enter Arunachal, an Inner Line Permit (ILP) was required, so we stopped at the Bhalukpong check gate. Just before reaching, an

unfortunate incident occurred — a car coming from the wrong direction collided lightly with mine. Thankfully, no one was hurt, but a few scratches on my vehicle made me a bit disheartened.

Due to this delay, we decided to halt for the night, as our was still two hours away. While arranging the ILP, a very friendly young lady who was working at the computer counter suggested a place called Jameri, saying her relatives had a homestay there. As darkness slowly fell and I was driving through unfamiliar hilly roads, everyone

grew a bit anxious. Suddenly, to my utter surprise, I saw a board — “Jameri Homestay.” My wife quickly noted the contact number and called the owner. After a short conversation, he assured us of a good room and even offered a discount. It felt like a blessing after a long, tiring day.

The climb to the homestay was a bit steep, but with my years of driving experience across the hills of Sikkim and North Bengal, it wasn't much of a challenge. Soon, we reached the gate. A kind and smiling man named Bachhu welcomed us warmly. Later, I learned that he was the owner himself. The homestay was beautiful — spacious rooms with wooden interiors, and the surroundings decorated with vibrant flowers — orchids and roses in full bloom.

As a family, we love cooking our own food during trips, and I always carry my portable kitchen set. When I asked Mr. Bachhu if we could cook in the backyard, he agreed wholeheartedly and even helped us set up. What touched me deeply was his kindness, especially toward my mother. On hearing that she was with us, he immediately arranged an extra bed free of cost. His humility reminded me of the bus conductor in A. G. Gardiner's essay “On Saying Please” — a man who spread kindness through simple gestures.

That evening, he plucked fresh berries from his garden for us, and the next morning, he served us a delicious homemade breakfast — chapatis and rajma from his own farm. The breakfast area opened



to a breathtaking view — towering mountains, and a stream that sang softly in the background. Before we left, he called us over and honored us with a traditional tribal cloth, a gesture of respect and goodwill. It was truly heartwarming.

We bid farewell to Bachhu da and continued toward Dirang. The road meandered through mesmerizing green hills and meadows. We stopped at the Dirang Sheep Farm, where herds of sheep grazed peacefully. Unfortunately, I real-

ized I had forgotten my memory card at home — a real heartbreak for a photographer! Still, I captured the beauty with my phone.

By afternoon, we stopped by a vast meadow to cook lunch. Horses and cattle roamed freely around us — a perfect picture of rural peace. Nearby, we spotted a beautiful hotel. Though the manager initially said no rooms were available, after waiting for a while, he kindly arranged one for us. That night, we cooked khichdi, omelet,

and fried potatoes. In the cool mountain air, the aroma of ghee made the meal unforgettable.

The next day, we set off for Tawang — the most awaited part of our journey. I had never seen snowfall before, and my son, Saurya, was equally excited. As we climbed higher, he kept asking, “Where is the snow, Papa?” I smiled and told him, “You’ll see it when the trees disappear, and the world turns white.”

After a while, tiny flakes began to fall on the windshield. “Snow!” everyone shouted with joy. We stepped out, laughing and playing, throwing snowballs at each other. The landscape was wrapped in white — silent, pure, and magical. Though the cold and thin air made breathing difficult, I stood there in awe, soaking in the beauty of the moment — a lifetime experience.

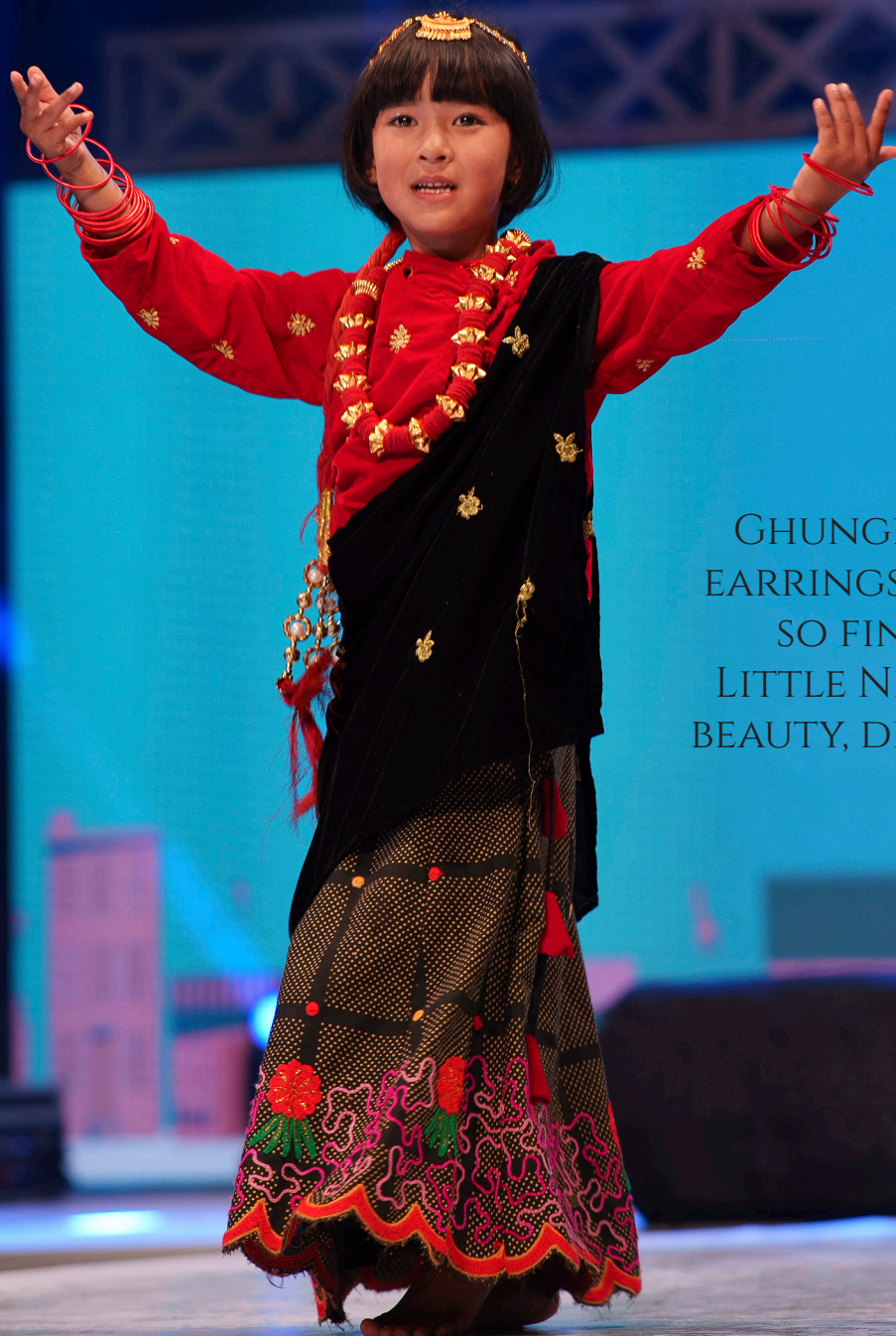
That evening, we returned to Jameri Homestay once again, where Bachhu da welcomed us like old friends. The next morning, we drove back to Guwahati, our hearts filled with memories.

As a teacher, mentor, and photographer for over 22 years, I have met many people and stayed at many places. Some were courteous, some purely business-minded. But very few, like Bachhu da, leave a mark with their kindness.

What did I bring back from this trip? Countless memories, warmth of human connection, and the serene beauty of the Himalayas — truly, a paradise on earth.



Aura Style



GHUNGROO
EARRINGS, SARI
SO FINE,
LITTLE NEPALI
BEAUTY, DIVINE."



WHISPERS THROUGH THE PINES

The Haunting Beauty of Dow Hill, Darjeeling

By Manikangkana Devi, Writer, Poet, Artist & Translator

Located in the mist-covered hills of Kurseong, just a few hours from the busy town of Darjeeling, Dow Hill presents a unique blend of natural beauty and mysterious atmosphere. The area is known for its fresh, crisp air and ancient stories hidden beneath dense green canopies that move gently with the breeze, creating a landscape that is both captivating and slightly unsettling.

In the early morning, as sunlight filters through tall cedar trees, Dow Hill displays vivid shades of green. From this vantage point, visitors can see the vast expanse of the Himalayas while experiencing the strong scent of damp pine

needles. Despite its serene appearance, there are reports of unusual sounds-footsteps heard in the quiet that seem disconnected from normal activity.

A significant part of Dow Hill's intrigue centers on Victoria Boys' School, a historic institution considered one of India's most haunted locations. During school breaks, when the building is empty, many people have reported hearing faint whispers believed to be voices of children from the past. These sounds contribute to an eerie silence within the corridors, which are said to carry lingering emotions tied to these youthful echoes.

Local forest guards regularly report sightings of a headless boy wandering along the narrow path between Dow Hill and the forest's watchtower. This ghostly figure is described as silently moving through the area before vanishing into the mist, creating an eerie atmosphere. As evening approaches at Dow Hill, an unusual energy is said to emerge from the ancient pine trees.

As daylight fades and shadows lengthen, individuals walking alone in this area often experience a sense of unease. The sunset quickly disappears behind large deodar trees, which seem influenced by unseen forces. Many visitors re-



port feeling watched or touched by cold sensations, attributed to roaming spirits. Lanterns sometimes flicker in the darkness, paths appear distorted, and directions become confusing, prompting a strong instinct to leave the area.

Despite these supernatural reports, Dow Hill is noted for its unique natural beauty. The early morning light often casts a lilac glow over the landscape, enveloping it in mist and creating a mystical environment where reality seems blurred. This combination of striking scenery and reported hauntings attracts dreamers, adventurers, and those interested in the paranormal.

Dow Hill offers tourists more than a typical hiking experience; it provides an opportunity to explore a location rich in folklore and histor-

ical significance. The area's mysterious atmosphere creates numerous possibilities for exploration, photography, and moments of solitude. Visitors walking through the dense forest or touring the historic Victoria Boys' School will notice

how legends and natural beauty are closely connected, creating a unique environment that intrigues and captivates.

Many visitors return with stories of unusual experiences, sharing these encounters with others. The fascination with Dow Hill remains strong, much like the subtle sounds heard in the surrounding woods. Whether it is spotting the figure of a headless boy or sensing a cool breeze on the skin, these moments become memorable parts of their visit to Dow Hill.

More than just a scenic hill, Dow Hill represents the enduring power of storytelling, blending elements of life and afterlife within its natural setting. It is a place where history resonates among the pine trees and invites those interested in its mysterious charm. Whether visitors come seeking peace, adventure, or to experience local legends firsthand, Dow Hill serves as a meaningful reminder of the beauty found both in nature and in folklore at the heart of the Himalayas.



Aura *Fashion*

Model
Kartik Sharma

Outfit
Tarun Tehlani

Photography
Kamal Dey

Makeup
Akash Das

Styling
Dipankar kashyap



The Piyush Pandey

- *Scaling Harder Mountains*

Dr. Dipsikha Bhagawati
Film Critic | Translator | Published Writer | Member, FCCI

“PLAY WHERE YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE”

Piyush Pandey, Pandeymonium: Piyush Pandey on Advertising

Ad films are the backbones of the film world, being a powerful and creative means of branding, storytelling, and advertising. They efficiently establish a connection between commercials and content. Their relevance lies in their ability to produce emotional reactions, increase brand familiarity, and create consumer action, and thus making them necessary on both conventional and digital platforms. Despite their ultimate purpose being commercial, they are being

seen more and more as works of film in their own right that can entertain and have lasting impressions. Their real genius is in managing to wrap up strong feelings and grand concepts into a concise package.

The history of Indian advertising is incomplete without Piyush Pandey's name. Amidst a world where commercial communication borrowed its idiom and aesthetics from the West, Pandey re-appropriated the Indian voice with

unparalleled wit, warmth, and wisdom. Pandey didn't just make advertisements; he made moments that got into public consciousness, repeating the sounds, odors, and emotions of India's streets, homes, and communal heart. His death in 2025 was not just the demise of an advertising great but also the exit of a storyteller who set ordinary India as the protagonist of its own story.

When Piyush Pandey entered Ogilvy & Mather India in 1982,

advertising in India was predominantly elitist, communicated in English, and addressed the ambitions of an urbane upper class that defined sophistication on foreign terms. Pandey rewrote that grammar permanently. He knew, more than anyone else possibly could at the time, that India's emotional range could not be served by borrowed idioms. The actual magic of persuasion, he understood, was in communicating to the heart rather than to the mind. He viewed advertising as an emotional greeting between brand and consumer — a dialogue based on humour, compassion, and cultural commonality.

Pandey's creative credo was based on the uncomplicated yet deeply held conviction that the local was universal when narrated genuinely. His advertisements were never Indian versions of Western cut-outs; they were conceived out of India's living experience. He incorporated the street language and the voice of the ordinary. Hindi slogans, popular wordplay, and accessible visual metaphors took the place of chilly English words. His imagination world borrowed from small-town life, bazaars, cricket pitches, and family meetups. In his hands, advertising became a reflection of India's emotional complexity- a space where tears and laughter existed together, where emotion had the strength of persuasion.

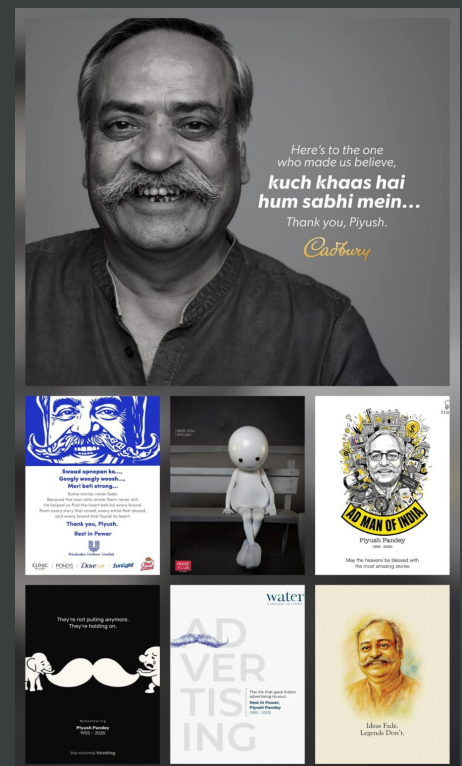
Among Pandey's earliest successes, the Cadbury Dairy Milk advertisement of 1993 is still an iconic instance of his brilliance. The ad is set on a cricket pitch, where a young girl runs ecstatically onto the pitch as her boyfriend reaches

a century. The uninhibitedness is contagious; her free-spirited dance violates social nicety but exudes innocence. The phrase "Kuch Khaas Hai Zindagi Mein"- there's something special in life — sums up the essence of the moment. By one brushstroke, Pandey shifted chocolate from a child's snack to an adult's manifestation of happiness. The commercial breached gender and convention boundaries, hailing the unbridled playfulness of Indian life. It was no longer about chocolate; it was about the liberty to feel. Pandey transformed a brand into a metaphor for joy, and in doing so, he altered the emotional topography of Indian advertising.

Cadbury's sweetness meant joy, but Fevicol's humor was all about toughness. The Fevicol ads? Those are probably Pandey's most famous work. The line Fevicol ka jod hai, tootega nahi- Fevicol's bond never breaks — everyone started saying it.

There was this one crazy ad where a super packed bus speeds down a dirt road, people hanging off everywhere, but nobody falls. It's so over-the-top, but funny because it feels real. It shows how strong the stuff is, plus it's like how India is — somehow holding it all together, even with the chaos and crowds. So, Fevicol became more than just glue. It stood for being together, family, and bonds that won't break. The cool thing was how they mixed comedy and what it all meant. Pandey made regular glue into something people talk about.

Fevicol's ads were special because they felt real, not just because



they were smart. They used everyday scenes from India — tea shops, dirt roads, carts, and local crafts. Pandey liked the normal stuff and found something great in it. His jokes weren't mean. They were friendly, making you laugh at yourself. He thought ads should be about sharing experiences, not trying to act fancy. He made it for everyone.

He used this same feeling in his Asian Paints ads. The Har Ghar Kuch Kehta Hai — every home tells a story — thing turned paint into something emotional. He made paint a memory, a part of the life lived in a home. The ads were quiet- a dad painting his daughter's room, a couple fixing up their place. It showed how paint brings warmth and memories to relationships. The paint wasn't the main thing, but you felt it. That was Pandey's thing — making brands human until they felt like a part of your life.



He got really good at this with the Hutch pug ads. A kid walks around with his pug following him. At the end, it says, Wherever you go, our network follows. No talking, no trying to sell anything- just a story about friendship. The pug- Cheeka, became like India's symbol of being loyal and trusting. Again, Pandey turned phones into something you could feel. He proved that good ads don't need to be loud. They need to have heart.

But Pandey's repertoire ranged well beyond commercial names. His imagination worked habitually for the greater good, most famously in the "Do Boond Zindagi Ke" polio eradication campaign. With Amitabh Bachchan, the ads worked in colloquial Hindi and straightforward call to action to get parents to immunise their offspring. The impact of the campaign was monumental, adding to India's winning battle against polio. Once more, Pandey's narrative blended empathy with urgency. He handled a government communication with the same innovative respect as a multinational assignment, demonstrating that advertising really could turn lives around, not

merely consumers' decisions.

His Gujarat Tourism work, "Khusboo Gujarat Ki," with Amitabh Bachchan, once again proved him adept at leveraging celebrity presence without allowing it to overwhelm content. The campaign interlaced cultural pride, visual stunning, and emotional warmth into a story inviting travellers to discover the "fragrance of Gujarat." Pandey could make any topic be it glue, chocolate, tourism, or telecom, a story about humanity.

Yet, his oeuvre was not without controversy. The 2014 political campaign "Ab ki Baar, Modi Sarkar" brought him into the domain of electoral communication. The slogan became the centrepiece of Narendra Modi's general election campaign and reshaped political messaging in India. While it demonstrated Pandey's unmatched understanding of the national mood, critics argued that his creative influence had crossed into the territory of political propaganda. The controversy raised ethical concerns about advertising's ability to shape public opinion. But even that scandal

reasserted the power of his words, a phrase he used became the rallying cry of a whole political movement.

To appreciate Pandey's influence, one needs to factor in the advertising landscape he worked in as well. In the 1980s, Indian advertisements tended to look outside, to London or New York — for ideas. The aspirational tone was urban, the faces fair, the environments Westernised. Pandey reversed that gaze. He gazed inwards — to the chai-stall jokes, to the street Hindi, to the small pleasures of middle-class living. He did not represent India; he revelled in it. His campaigns addressed people in their own language that they thought in, not in the language they were taught to revere. That change of register, from aspiration to authenticity, is what made him revolutionary.

His artistic universe was not fuelled by market studies alone but by emotional smarts. He believed that the better idea must originate in observation, not analysis. A bus conductor's smile, a wedding's chaos, the voice of a cricket

commentary — these were his data points. Pandey's genius was the ability to see the extraordinary in the ordinary. The wit in his ads never came across as artificial because it was taken from real life. When a Fevicol carpenter clung on to his chair, when a Cadbury girl danced on the ground, when a pug trailed behind its master — each was a piece of human truth.

In critical terms, Pandey's method can be interpreted in postcolonial aesthetic terms. He decolonized the language of advertising in exactly the way filmmakers such as Satyajit Ray or writers such as R.K. Narayan re-Indianized their mediums. His advertisements were performative statements of cultural pride. They demanded that feeling, rather than glamour, characterized modern India. Even his comedy had philosophical overtones — laughter as strength, bonding as a strength. In that way, his advertising presented an alternative to consumerism itself: he advertised things by extolling individuals, rather than property.

However, Pandey's tales tended to lean towards sentimentalism. Sometimes, his work was accused of being too idealistic, of romanticising an India that lived more in the imagination than in fact. The rural paradise of Fevicol or the model family of Asian Paints might seem too rosy. And yet, that very idealism was his poetic truth. He employed advertising to convey an aspirational vision of togetherness, to remind the viewer of what they might be. It was not so much propaganda as persuasion by hope.

What makes Pandey steadily relevant is that his impact went beyond advertising. He redefined the language of communication itself. His lines — "Fevicol ka jod", "Kuch meetha ho jaaye", "Har ghar kuch kehta hai" — became part of common conversation. His jingles became folk songs. His commercials were not breaks in shows on TV; they were the part that people recalled more than the shows themselves. In a land of many languages and divided audiences, he did the impossible: he brought people together with laughter and tears.

In addition to creative brilliance, Pandey's leadership formed a generation of advertising professionals. As Ogilvy India's Chief Creative Officer and later Executive Chairman, he cultivated a culture of authenticity over artifice. He was known for his humility; he used to say that ideas are found on the streets and not in the boardroom. He asked young copywriters to listen to tea stall people, observe how children played, learn from the rhythm of common speech. His impact produced a legacy of Indian creatives who knew

that cultural intimacy is the real money in communication.

The best part about Piyush Pandey's ads is that they stand the test of time. His campaigns remain fresh even decades after they were released because they were grounded in truths, not fads. There may be other changes in technology and ways to consume news but the emotional DNA of his narratives continues to move people. Even large companies from all over the world who visited India borrowed his concept of localisation, meaning communicating in the language of the consumer rather than instructing them in a new one. He demonstrated that creativity based on cross-cultural understanding can be applied to anywhere in the globe. In retrospect, Pandey's career was not just a profession; it was a revolution of culture. He made the Indian middle class feel important and noticed. He dispelled the myth that sophistication must be sound-ed Western. His moustached face, warm smile, and earthy sense of humour became synonymous with advertisement : Transforming Branding into Bonding.





THE BENGAL FILES

A cinematic chronicle of forgotten histories © film critic Lalit Rao (FIPRESCI)

Indian cinema has often grappled with history—sometimes reimagining it, sometimes distorting it, but rarely compelling audiences to confront silences in collective memory. With “The Bengal Files”, director Vivek Agnihotri ventures once again into turbulent historical terrain, depicting an episode largely absent from mainstream narratives—Direct Action Day of August 16, 1946, and its aftermath. The film does not merely tell a story; it interrogates the selective amnesia embedded in Indian historiography.

The film begins with CBI officer Shiva Pandit, a Kashmiri sent to

West Bengal to investigate the disappearance of a Scheduled Caste girl. What appears to be a straightforward procedural quickly expands into a reflection on the rot within governance: compromised politicians, fearful policemen, and a fractured society. These present-day struggles are intercut with flashbacks to Partition-era Bengal—Lord Mountbatten’s midnight deadline, Jinnah’s ominous declaration, and the bloody communal violence that followed. In one of the film’s most searing sequences, Justice Banerjee, who pardons a Muslim convict in the name of secularism, is killed by the very man

he forgave. The irony encapsulates the fragility of ideals when confronted with unyielding violence.

Central to the film is its unflinching depiction of Direct Action Day, when Calcutta witnessed unprecedented communal riots after the Muslim League’s call for action. Thousands died, yet history textbooks often reduce this turning point to a footnote. “The Bengal Files” restores its scale, turning cinema into an archive of memory.

Figures like Gopal Patha, who defended Hindus from slaughter, are foregrounded, while Gandhi’s insistence on disarmament is por-

trayed as naïve. The narrative positions the Hindu Mahasabha as protectors and paints the Congress as complicit or ineffective, especially during the atrocities in Noakhali. In doing so, Agnihotri contests mainstream historical discourse, claiming it has been sanitized and politically biased.

Actress Pallavi Joshi delivers a standout performance as Bharti Banerjee, or Maa Bharti. Initially an ardent believer in philosophy of nonviolence, she loses her parents to communal riots, a tragedy that shatters her idealism. Her transformation makes her an allegorical figure of India itself—betrayed by lofty ideals, scarred by violence, and forced to confront bitter truths.

Visually, the film impresses. Attar Singh Saini's cinematography captures both the chaos of riots and the stillness of despair. Rajat Poddar's set design meticulously recreates colonial Calcutta and modern Bengal, anchoring two eras in visual continuity.

The ensemble cast strengthens Agnihotri's vision. While Mithun Chakraborty's eccentric portrayal of a stammering madman feels forced and is perhaps the weakest link, the frustration of Shiva Pandit as an honest cop recalls Om Puri's role in Govind Nihalani's *Ardh Satya*. Both films explore how violence and power perpetuate themselves across generations.

More than entertainment, "The Bengal Files" positions cinema as pedagogy. Agnihotri asserts that millions remain ignorant of Direct Action Day, and dramatizing it serves as a corrective to historical erasures. The film's U.S. pre-re-

lease tour revealed audiences shocked at learning about events absent from their education, underscoring its pedagogical impact.

Vivek Agnihotri has cultivated a reputation as a filmmaker unafraid of controversy. His detractors question his selective choice of subjects, but the film itself retorts that demanding "XYZ files" of him is akin to asking Da Vinci to paint Picasso's *Guernica*. Supporters hail him as a director who dares to visualize what others avoid.

Ironically, despite being rooted in Bengal's history, the film has faced obstacles in West Bengal. Reports of restrictions on screenings over there highlight tensions between artistic freedom and political sensitivities. In fact, resistance to its release only strengthens its symbolic power as suppressed history.

The film is not flawless. Superstar Mithun Chakraborty's role distracts from the narrative's intensity. Yet its strengths—compelling performances, meticulous research, striking visuals, and a bold historical interrogation—far outweigh its shortcomings. Above all, it insists that the violence of the past continues to shape the present.



"The Bengal Files" is more than a film—it is an act of historical reclamation. By dramatizing Direct Action Day, it forces viewers to confront uncomfortable truths erased from mainstream narratives. Whether one agrees with Agnihotri's interpretations or not, the urgency of his cinema is undeniable.

Grounded in research yet steeped in personal conviction, the film exists in paradox: fictionalized but feeling like lived history, suppressed at home but resonant abroad. Love him or hate him, director Vivek Agnihotri has ensured one thing—his films cannot be ignored. By turning cinema into contested memory, "The Bengal Files" ensures debates about history, politics, and identity will continue long after the credits roll.

Assam -Traditional wear
(Mekhla chaddar)

Model

Amrita Gogoi

Photography

Swapnaajit Borkakoti

Designer

Purabi N Saikia Mahanta

Mua

Kakali Hazarika



AURA PHOTOGRAPHY



THE SHIFTING LANDSCAPE

Transgender Sex Workers and the Evolution of Sexual Power in 2025
A Sociological Perspective

By **Vanessa Jacquelin D'cruz**
(Loani Chairperson, Singapore)

The conversation around sexual power has undergone a profound transformation in recent years, moving from simplistic narratives of exploitation toward a more nuanced understanding of agency, survival, and systemic marginalization.

At the intersection of these discussions are transgender sex workers, whose experiences reveal both the complexities of bodily autonomy and the urgent need for structural reform.

Theoretical Frameworks: Understanding Power and Marginalization

From a sociological lens, transgender sex workers occupy what Patricia Hill Collins termed the "matrix of domination"—experiencing interconnected systems of oppression based on gender identity, occupation, and often race and class. This intersectionality framework, pioneered by Kimberlé Crenshaw, is essential for understanding how multiple marginalizing identities compound to create unique vulnerabilities and forms of resistance.

Erving Goffman's concept of stigma is particularly relevant here. Transgender individuals face what Goffman identified as "tribal stigma" (group identity), while sex workers bear "moral stigma" (character-based). The intersection creates a double stigmatization that profoundly shapes social interactions, economic opportunities, and self-concept. This stigma operates through what sociologists call "symbolic violence"—the internalization of dominant cultural values that delegitimize one's

own existence.

Reframing Sexual Power: From Victimhood to Agency

In 2025, we're witnessing a critical reframing of what sexual power means. Historically, sex work discourse positioned all sellers as powerless victims, erasing the agency of those who actively choose this profession. This paternalistic view particularly harmed transgender individuals, whose decisions were often dismissed as symptoms of desperation rather than legitimate economic choices.

Michel Foucault's analysis of power proves illuminating here. Rather than viewing power as purely repressive and top-down, Foucault recognized power as productive and relational—operating through discourse, knowledge production, and the regulation of bodies. Transgender sex workers exercise what Foucault might call "biopower" over their own bodies, even while navigating systems that seek to control and regulate them.

Today's more sophisticated analysis acknowledges what sociologists call "constrained agency"—recognizing that while systemic oppression exists, so does individual decision-making within those constraints. Transgender sex workers are leading voices in demanding this recognition, embodying what James C. Scott described as "weapons of the weak"—everyday forms of resistance against domination.

Structural Violence and Economic Precarity

The reality for trans sex workers remains stark. Facing employment

discrimination rates exceeding 25% in many regions, limited access to healthcare, and housing instability, many transgender individuals turn to sex work not solely by choice, but because traditional employment paths remain systematically closed.

This reflects what sociologist Émile Durkheim analyzed as "anomie"—a breakdown in social bonds and norms that leaves cer-

tain groups structurally excluded. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital" further explains this exclusion: transgender individuals often lack access to the educational credentials, social networks, and cultural knowledge that facilitate entry into mainstream labor markets.

Without sufficient economic, social, and cultural capital, sex work becomes one of few viable



income-generating options.

Medical sociologist Paul Farmer's framework of "structural violence" is particularly apt—the systematic ways social structures harm people by preventing them from meeting basic needs.

For transgender individuals, this violence manifests through discriminatory hiring practices, denial of healthcare, and housing discrimination, creating what sociologists call "social death"—civic and social exclusion that precedes and enables physical vulnerability.

This isn't about glamorizing survival sex—it's about recognizing that criminalization and stigma create the very dangers that harm workers most. Here we see the "iatrogenic" effects that Ivan Illich identified: interventions meant to help actually cause harm, as criminalization ostensibly designed to protect vulnerable people instead increases their danger.

The Multifaceted Nature of Sexual Power

Sexual power, in this context, becomes multifaceted. Trans sex workers often navigate a marketplace that simultaneously fetishizes and devalues them—what sociologist Arlie Hochschild might analyze as "emotional labor" with additional layers of identity performance. They possess knowledge about desire, boundaries, and negotiation that challenges conventional assumptions about who holds power in sexual transactions.

Sociologist Raewyn Connell's concept of "hegemonic masculinity" helps explain the market

dynamics: transgender women often serve clients seeking alternatives to normative heterosexual encounters, yet this desire exists within patriarchal structures that ultimately devalue femininity and non-conforming gender expressions.

The "exchange value" of their bodies exists in tension with their "use value," to borrow from Marxist analysis—they're simultaneously desired and degraded.

Yet this interpersonal power exists within broader systems designed to deny them safety, legal protections, and social legitimacy.

This reflects what sociologists call the micro-macro link: individual interactions (micro) are shaped by and reproduce larger social structures (macro), creating what Anthony Giddens termed "structuration"—the recursive relationship between agency and structure.

The Decriminalization Movement: Structural Reform

The decriminalization movement has gained momentum globally, with transgender advocates at its forefront. Countries implementing full decriminalization report improved health outcomes and reduced violence against sex workers.

From a public health sociology perspective, this represents a shift from what medical anthropologist Arthur Kleinman called "category fallacy"—imposing inappropriate Western medical or moral frameworks onto complex social phenomena. Instead, the decriminalization model treats sex work as what Max Weber would recognize

as "value-rational action"—behavior oriented toward achieving specific outcomes within one's value system.

New Zealand's model, now over two decades old, demonstrates that treating sex work as legitimate labor doesn't increase trafficking—it empowers workers to report abuse and access services without fear. This aligns with harm reduction frameworks in public health sociology, which prioritize minimizing negative outcomes over enforcing moral absolutism.

Technology, Visibility, and New Vulnerabilities

In 2025, technology continues reshaping the landscape. Online platforms offer trans sex workers greater control over client screening and working conditions, yet digital spaces bring new vulnerabilities: deplatforming, algorithmic discrimination, and privacy breaches.

Sociologist Sherry Turkle's work on identity in digital spaces is relevant here: online platforms allow for what Goffman called "impression management"—strategic presentation of self—while simultaneously creating what David Lyon termed "surveillance capitalism," where visibility becomes both necessity and danger. The tension between visibility for survival and safety from exposure remains constant.

Manuel Castells' concept of the "network society" helps explain these dynamics: transgender sex workers exist in "spaces of flows" (digital networks) while remaining vulnerable in "spaces of places"

(physical locations), navigating what sociologist Zygmunt Bauman called "liquid modernity"—a condition of constant uncertainty and flux.

Narrative Transformation and Epistemic Justice

What's changing is the narrative itself. Transgender sex workers are increasingly recognized not as objects of pity or moral panic, but as experts on their own lives and powerful advocates for labor rights.

This represents what Miranda Fricker termed "epistemic justice"—correcting the historical wrong of "testimonial injustice," where marginalized groups' knowledge and testimony were systematically discredited. Organizations led by trans sex workers are influencing policy, providing peer support, and redefining what solidarity looks like—building what sociologist Robert Putnam called "bridging social capital" across marginalized communities.

Moving Beyond False Binaries

The path forward requires abandoning false binaries—victim versus empowered, exploited versus choosing. Most trans sex workers occupy complex positions along these spectrums, shaped by individual circumstances and structural constraints.

Sociologist Dorothy Smith's "standpoint theory" is crucial here: knowledge is socially situated, and those at the margins often possess insights invisible to those in dominant positions. Trans sex workers' standpoint reveals contradictions in how society

simultaneously criminalizes and consumes their labor, pathologizes and profits from their identities.

True progress means addressing root causes: employment discrimination, healthcare access, housing security, and violence. This requires what sociologist C. Wright Mills called using the "sociological imagination"—connecting personal troubles to public issues, recognizing that individual struggles reflect structural arrangements that can be changed.

It means listening to trans sex workers themselves about what they need, rather than imposing savior narratives—avoiding what Paulo Freire critiqued as false generosity, where the powerful maintain their position while appearing to help.

Toward Structural Transformation

Sexual power, ultimately, isn't just about transactions—it's about who gets to define themselves, make decisions about their own bodies, and live without violence.

Until transgender individuals have genuine economic alternatives and social acceptance, conversations about choice remain incomplete.

This connects to Nancy Fraser's three-dimensional theory of justice: redistribution (economic justice), recognition (cultural justice), and representation (political justice). Meaningful change requires addressing all three dimensions simultaneously.

The challenge for 2025 and beyond is building systems that protect without criminalizing,

support without stigmatizing, and recognize the full humanity of all people. This demands what sociologist Judith Butler might call expanding our conception of "grievable lives"—whose lives we collectively recognize as worthy of protection, mourning, and value.

From a sociological perspective, transgender sex workers challenge us to reimagine social organization itself—questioning whose labor we value, whose bodies we protect, and whose voices we center in defining justice. Their resistance and resilience illuminate not just individual survival, but the possibilities for collective transformation.



Aura Style

ELEGANCE WALKS
THE RAMP,
BEAUTY IN
EVERY STEP,
STUNNING WITH
EVERY GLANCE."



MY SOLACE

I have always felt close to you.
Whenever the world seems dark to me
You wrap me in your warmth.
I can speak to you without hesitation.
No fear of being snubbed.
Each sound made in the midst of your
heart is a beautiful piece of music.
A soothing balm to my distressed nerves.
When I am with you I find a sweet solace
Even in my painful defeat.
Yes you are Almighty's own creation.
You will be always there with your warmth
Even when I will be no more.
Cause you are Mother Nature.
A soothing warmth to your children.

- MONALI BHUYAN

AURA PHOTOGRAPHY



Photography
Kenneth Kisbye

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Age : 50yrs
Place : Denmark

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