

'CONSUMED: AT WHAT COST?'

Faculty's Note

We live in a fast paced digital world, where consumption is no longer limited to our needs. It is not merely necessity, it's a lifestyle. We consume goods, services, experiences, images and aspirations; with abundant choices and endless desires. "Consumed: At What Cost?" invites us to look beyond matter; explores the social, psychological and environmental cost of our choices. Our focus has shifted from fulfillment of needs to trend-chasing and hyper-consumerism intensified by culture industry. The mindless rat race of seeking novelty, social identity, status, emotional comfort and belongingness has cost us so dearly that it has derailed the purpose of life besides adding to social inequality, anxiety and self worth issues, relationship strain, environmental impact and cultural shift.

Since consumerism is intertwined with the sociological, economic, and psychological makeup of modern life, mindfulness of the forces that shape our choices, aspirations and thought can help us shift from impulsive decision making to intentional living. One needs to embrace the idea of consumption with balanced perspectives, engage with it wisely and sustainably and align it with ones genuine needs and values. Consumerism is not all bad, it drives economic growth, innovation and job creation. Therefore, a shift from status to utility consumption is need of the hour. The passive ones need to become intentional and strategic consumers to improve their quality of life.

As educators, our role is to help students build mindful habits in a consumer driven society, mentor them to deal with challenges and opportunities of fast-moving market. We need to show them the way to become a more conscious consumer. Financial and media literacy could play a key role to navigate the consumerist world with clarity, prudence and compassion.

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From The EB:



STAMBH
DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM

As we step into a new academic year, the September edition marks a new chapter for the Editorial Board. The Department of Journalism, Bharati College, revamps its identity as Stambh, Hindi for 'pillar', drawing from the media's role as the fourth pillar of democracy and its responsibility to amplify public discourse. In keeping with this change, Tarseel Vani takes forward its legacy as Lokswar, signifying the 'Voice of the People' and reflecting the stories and viewpoints that shape our world.

This month, we turn our attention to "Consumed: At What Cost?", looking beyond consumption as a daily habit to understand how capitalism and consumerism influence our choices, lifestyles and aspirations. Through different stories and perspectives, the edition explores their impact on individuals, society, culture and the environment, while questioning what often remains unseen behind what we consume.

This edition has also been a collaborative effort, with our new and first-year members bringing fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the Editorial Board. Their contributions have made this beginning all the more special. The Editorial Board for this semester comprises Nidhi as Editorial Head, Avantika as Editorial Co-Head, and Vatshala as Sub-Editor, alongside the wider team that brings this publication together. As we move ahead, we look forward to creating a space that remains curious, reflective and willing to ask the questions that matter.

Editor's Two Cents

The Anthropocene and the Price of Human Power

Nidhi
Editorial Head
3rd Year

"We have become an earth-system force or a planetary force." - Dipesh Chakrabarty

For most of our history, nature was considered to be the habitat in which history happened. The Anthropocene unsettles this position as human activity has now gained the capacity to intervene on earth systems. Though the very idea of the Anthropocene is currently in the scientific limbo, the reality it represents is a tangible one - that human activity has indeed started to affect the planet at a deep level.

The proof is already here, if we choose to look at the effects, which have started being observed. The IPCC report in 2013 suggested that human-induced climate change was already affecting temperature extremes across the world. The heatwaves in Asia are becoming more common, more severe. The deluges that characterize parts of the region are also intensifying. In August 2026, an ice-rock avalanche blocked a river in Nepal's Rasuwa district and caused a devastating flood in downstream areas. The complex hydrological environment and the mountainous terrain complicate the situation further, and the possible link to climate change can only be established by the experts who are yet to arrive on the scene. But the effect of such disasters is already felt in densely populated areas around the landslide site. Across the region, heatwaves, downpours, floods, landslides, glacial lake outbursts, and avalanches have the potential to interact with densely populated places, causing severe disruptions.

It is at the intersection of all these effects that the Anthropocene is truly felt. The industrialisation, the shift towards the fossil fuels-based economy, anthropogenic climate change, and various economic activities have tied the fortunes, the well-being, and the future of people to the global events on this planet. The carbon footprint from the factory is now part of the ecosystem that determines the temperatures and rainfall patterns on the other side of the world.

Yet, humanity does not act as a homogenous entity. Throughout history, industrialisation, colonial exploitation, fossil-fuel addiction, and consumerist lifestyle were unequally distributed, both within and between societies. It is also true for climate change, in that the countries that contribute to it the most are not the ones that will suffer its effects. There is a fundamental unfairness embedded into the very root of the climate change crisis. And it may well be the reason behind the current lack of action on the issue.

Our world has always been local - its political borders, economic relations, and political power structures have determined how the countries and their citizens interact with each other. The rise of capitalism has then put a heavy emphasis on local competition, and the value of individual achievements. However, the Anthropocene is the epoch when humanity has now gained the ability to make changes that have global impact. The effect human activity is now tangible on a planetary level - and the response should also be coordinated, thoughtful, not capitalistic.

Perhaps, it is this very realization that makes us wonder about the uniqueness of the Anthropocene as the epoch in the history of our planet. The question is not whether humans have changed it, but whether our local politics, economics, and imaginations have caught up with the planetary changes they have unwittingly initiated.

Corporate, Couture, Consumption

The modern professional does not simply go to work; they dress for it, accessorise it and often document it. Although corporate culture runs on hustle and bustle, the proletariat's productivity depends on an overpriced coffee that it has to queue for every morning. Largely a tea-drinking nation, India is constantly inclining towards finding luxury through café lifestyle. Somehow an Americano priced at ₹140 satisfies much more than the free cup from the coffee machine that saves a lot of time. As per the research by The India Watch, India has currently about 2650 coffee café outlets, and the business has been clocking revenue of ₹3000 crores annually. Is it the price-quality heuristic — the theory behind “if it's pricey, it must be good” — that is applicable here, or a certain purchase being an indicator of status is what contents one's heart?

The performance doesn't end there. A notification reads 'satin maxi dress for your next cocktail party', and a weekend getaway to Goa is already in production. The Internet likes to label this “self-gifting” custom as “womanhood” or simply, the joy of being a woman. The joy that is achieved from buying the same Stanley cup in 3 distinct colours, and pairing it with yet another kurti from Janpath, despite having bought several over the past two months. Reports by Ellen MacArthur Foundation, suggest that reusability of clothing has declined by 36%, since 2000. This consumerist habit thrives on manufactured desires that are packaged and marketed as essentials to trigger dopamine release. Happiness, after all, is now a valuable commodity.

It's easy to see why clothes occupy such a significant place in our purchasing decisions. Fashion has always spoken beyond what a person tries to convey. Has the return of old fashion trends ever crossed your mind? The flared bell bottoms, silk scarfs or the polka dots, also known as the Bobby print, popularised by Dimple Kapadia's debut character. Clothing that was once defined by seasons, is now majorly navigated by trends. In this millennium, why do they keep coming back in style? Somebody dons their mother's denim skirt to the office and suddenly everyone in the flock wants to participate. Designer Ridhi Mehra told the Free Press Journal, “when people recreate retro looks, they are connecting with eras that symbolise freedom, confidence and effortless cool.” In the process, nostalgia shifts from something we remember to something we consume.

The reason this has become a practice may lie in the quiet genius of consumerism: we buy not always because we need, but because someone else already has it. A Stanley cup on a colleague's desk, a dress that could make us stand out at dinner, even a beverage that somehow feels less satisfying because we did not overpay for it. In the corporate world, where there is always someone to keep up with, there is always something left to buy.

Avantika Guha
Editorial Co-Head
3rd Year



When did enough stop being enough? The normalisation of over consumption.

Vatshala
Sub-Editor
2nd Year

My mother owned 2 pairs of sandals a few years ago. Now she owns 9. Why is it so? What has changed? Is it that owning things has become cheaper? Or does it have something to do with the normalisation of overconsumption? While all these claims feel reasonable enough, none of them explain the exact reason why. It's because the normalisation of overconsumption has not happened due to a singular factor; several elements have caused it.

The first one is the way things are produced today .A report by McKinsey Global Institute found that clothing production doubled between 2000 and 2014, while the number of garments bought by the average consumer went up by 60%. By 2014, more than 100 billion garments were being produced every year, as falling costs, streamlined production and greater variety made it easier to produce and buy more. The report also found that shoppers responded to these lower prices and greater variety by buying more clothes. We can see a similar change in India too. Another MGI report from 2001 found that the share of ready-made clothing in India's western-style apparel market rose from 19% to 38% between 1990 and 2000, largely because of what it called a "dramatic price drop in ready-made clothing."

A 2022 review of 61 studies on consumer behaviour found that people often seek variety, switching between products, categories or brands even when what they already have still works. One reason is that repeating the same choice can simply become less satisfying over time. Another study, published in 2017 and based on five studies, found a connection between social comparison and the feeling that we have less than others, which was also linked to stronger materialistic values. And this is where things get interesting. What we see around us can slowly change what we consider enough. If having two bags was the norm in your circle, it might feel more than enough. But if you constantly see people around you with more, suddenly having two may feel less, even when you still only need two. So, maybe the problem is not just that we want more. But over time, we have also changed what we consider enough.

Social media has added another layer to this. A 2023 meta-analysis of 62 studies, involving more than 22,000 people, found that things like an influencer's credibility, trustworthiness and entertainment value were linked to consumer engagement and purchase intention. A 2024 study of 481 followers also found that trust in influencers and their branded posts was linked to a stronger urge to buy impulsively. And this is not limited to a particular part of the world. A 2025 study of 370 female social media users in India who followed self-care influencers, found that exposure to influencers was linked to the desire to mimic them and to unsustainable consumption. So, the more we see people buying, using and recommending new things, the more usual this kind of consumption starts to feel. Maybe the media is not just showing us what to buy. It is also changing what we think we should have.

All these points alone may not seem like they matter a lot, but when we take all of them into account together, they explain a lot about why owning nine pairs of sandals can feel like a bare minimum today and how overconsumption has slowly become normalised in our society. It is not simply that things have become cheaper or that people suddenly started wanting more. Production changed, variety increased, our choices differed, and social comparison and media exposure slowly changed our expectations.

It did not happen overnight, and as the studies suggest, it did not happen because of a single reason either. It gradually happened with time. It took time for production, our choices, and our idea of "enough" to change, and for seeing more to make us want more. It took its sweet time. And maybe that is exactly why we barely noticed when enough stopped being enough.



The Art of Making Greed Sound Like Progress

Pratibha Verma
2nd Year

Overconsumption, consumerism, these are the words we are using to describe the excess, the excess of having 10-minute delivery, the excess of having big sales on every festival, big discounts at every month-end and the last 9-digit trap.

But nowadays, consumerism is wrapped in a smarter way. For example, a Delhi University student whose needs can be fulfilled by a good Android phone. But, because a lot of students are using iPhones, it has created a want. Now, without knowing whether that student actually needs an iPhone to assist with their study or work, they choose to upgrade. Here, consumerism has taken the mask of upgradation.

Let's see another one. There's an employee in a company who got a promotion and now, he sees on billboards, newspapers, magazines and everywhere that every achievement deserves to be celebrated, and celebrated with an XYZ model car. Here, consumerism has taken the form of status and achievement.

Let's have a look at another instance of an advertisement. A hardworking mother and daughter-in-law managing home, family and work all alone. The ad showed that she needs rest. But instead of saying, share the household chores, it says, "reduce her burden by giving a mixer grinder". Here, consumerism has taken the form of convenience and progress.

Everyone is using online apps for shopping. When you select a product, the algorithm will suggest to you, "here are some more choices similar to your preference, which will give a premium look". In this race, some content creators will jump in. They'll add a relatable story to validate it and make it feel personal and desirable. Here, consumerism is wrapped as quality and a better lifestyle.

To get rid of this trap, just ask one simple question before purchasing. "Do I actually need it"? Or did the trend validate my wants, while the influencer's words and stories influenced my greed?

By all these above examples, we knew that we didn't need it. We just needed a reason to buy it. The stories and trends will normalise it, justify it. And we, as consumers, consume, justify and forget.



The Real Labor Behind Instant Deliveries

Vani
2nd Year

Amidst a silent room, a screen glows. A single thumb hovering above the illuminated option: Place Order. In that fraction of a second, buying or ordering something online feels completely effortless. No hassle, no waiting around, just a simple tap starts a 10-minute timer. While on one side of the screen this feels completely peaceful and less chaotic, the other side experiences a high-speed rush. Miles away, a phone gets notified, an engine revs, and the person responsible for delivery heads straight into heavy rain, scorching heat or city traffic and races against that 10 minute timer. The real world hassle has just disappeared from one side of the order placement process. It still exists for that one person working hard to get it delivered at your doorstep. Behind the quick commerce business is a massive, multi million-dollar-industry. Major apps like Blinkit, Zepto and Swiggy Instamart handle millions of orders daily, transforming the consumption patterns across India. This industry operates on a model known as q-commerce (quick commerce). It relies on hyper local networks of 'dark stores', meaning, a retail outlet or distribution centre that exists exclusively for online shopping. This model promises ultra fast delivery within minutes. Looking at the statistics, leading q-commerce platforms fulfilled over 48 lakh orders daily. On peak days, be it a festival or a holiday these numbers explode. On New Year's Eve 2025, Zomato and Blinkit together fulfilled a record of 75 lakh orders in a single day, serving over 63 lakh customers through more than 4.5 lakh delivery partners.

Looking at it all from the economic perspective brings us a sense of growth but have we ever stopped to think about those who made all this possible?

The intense pressure on delivery workers, in order to complete their respective tasks within the time limit, has attracted attention both locally and legally. What began as public debates has now forced the authorities to reconsider how platform labour is regulated under the Indian law.

To put an emphasis on this point, the Code on Social Security 2020, can serve as the best example. According to the Code on Social Security (which directly impacts delivery workers), the law formally recognizes gig and platform workers as a distinct category and requires aggregators to contribute to their (workers) social security funds. Under this framework, aggregators are mandated to contribute 1 - 2% of their annual turnovers (capped at 5% of total pay-outs to workers) to social security funds designed to cover health insurance, accident benefits and disability cover, which were not provided earlier.

Also, workers can register on the government's e-Shram portal, to receive Aadhaar-linked digital IDs, making their social security benefits portable across different delivery platforms. Before these policies and amendments, delivery workers endured relentless pressure and grueling schedules with zero safety nets. They were trapped in working 12-hour shifts and minimum wage guarantee. They had to silently follow the rules set by algorithms. They worked in immense pressure, completely indifferent to dangerous road hazards or physical exhaustion and then too they had no assurance as to when their account may be deactivated for a single late delivery.

Legislative changes may slowly forge a safer path forward, but policy alone cannot singlehandedly restore human dignity.

Real change requires us to look past our screens and come out of the illusion of effortless speed. Convenience is not an automated miracle, it is a burden carried on two wheels by a real person navigating through punishing heat, rain-soaked streets and endless traffic.

When your doorbell rings, remember it's a real person who made your delivery effortless (as one thinks of it) and not any algorithm. As you pick up the package, look past the timer on your phone and meet the eyes of the person standing on your threshold. A simple thank you, a glass of water or a little patience costs us nothing at all, yet it honours the quiet humanity keeping our worlds connected.



The Hidden Cost of Convenience

Akanksha
2nd Year

Convenience has quietly become a habit we rarely question. From food delivered to our doorstep in minutes, to online shopping, instant grocery services, and single-use packaging technology, everyday consumption has never been faster or easier. However, this convenience we enjoy often comes at a price that remains hidden. Everything we utilise in our daily lives harms the environment in one way or another. Quick deliveries can increase transportation carbon emissions, while excessive packaging adds to plastic and household waste.

According to Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC), USA, humans have created 8300 million metric tons of plastic in more than the last 60 years, and 19-23 million metric tons of plastic were estimated to have entered the aquatic environment in 2016. This is more than the combined weight of all blue whales on earth. In India, the situation is equally concerning. A milestone study cited by Down To Earth, an environmental news initiative, reported that India is the world's largest plastic polluter, generating around 9.3 million tons of plastic waste annually, nearly one-fifth of global plastic emissions. A case study from Kolkata shows how reusable solutions can make a difference: a study highlighted by GRAIN found that the city has around 80,000 street-food vendors, and if these vendors used reusable stainless-steel plates instead of disposable ones, the city's localised plastic waste could be reduced by more than 86%. However, the problem becomes more complicated when "alternatives" are discussed. Following India's federal single-use plastic ban, many roadside vendors shifted to cheap paper plates and trays, but these are often coated with a thin plastic film to make them leak-proof. As reported by 'Down To Earth' such composite materials are difficult to compost or recycle and can contaminate existing recycling streams. This further explains that simply replacing plastic with another disposable material is not enough; we need reusable, practical, and genuinely sustainable alternatives.

Plastic waste might be the obvious answer to environmental hazards, but there are many more damaging factors that haven't escaped our eyes, yet we simply choose to ignore them. Our reliance on easy transportation, deliveries, and fuel-powered services increases greenhouse gas emissions and contributes to climate change. According to a Nature Communications study of China's sector, transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions increased from 0.3 million tonnes Co2e in 2007 to 13.7 million tonnes in 2018, a 45-fold increase. More than 80% of these emissions were associated with online shopping deliveries. In India, CSE (Centre for Science and Environment) reports that India has seen a phenomenal increase in last-mile deliveries owing to the growth of E-commerce, food delivery, grocery delivery, and courier services. This increase has led to more traffic, congestion, and emissions of local pollutants and carbon. The Indian government has introduced several initiatives, such as the Plastic Waste Management Rules (2016), the Swachh Bharat Mission, and the E-Waste (Management) Rules (2022), to reduce environmental damage. But laws and policies alone cannot drive this change. Real impact occurs only when people choose to be responsible; willing to rethink their everyday habits.

The planet is not meant to pay the price for making our lives easier. The day we become more thoughtful with our choices, convenience and sustainability can go hand in hand.

THE FIRST TAKE

THE 99 TRAP

Nishtha
1st Year

I bet we've all seen it: ₹99 instead of ₹100, ₹499 instead of ₹500, and ₹999 instead of ₹1,000. Just a rupee less, and we feel like we are saving so much money. This is what the psychology of "Charm Pricing" is about. This is a strategy which makes us focus on the first digit and perceive a product as more affordable than it actually is.

A common example of this can be seen on e-commerce platforms, where products are often advertised at a "discounted" price. Sometimes, the original MRP on that same platform may actually be lesser than the listed "discounted" price at which the product is being sold. There may be no actual savings. It may just be that the word "SALE" makes the purchase look more attractive.

What makes these tiny pricing tricks effective is human psychology and marketing strategies. We tend to think that a ₹99 purchase is a lot cheaper than a ₹100 purchase. The fact that we don't realise how many times we spend just ₹99 is the issue. A snack here, a lip tint there, a delivery fee, a "limited-time" offer, and suddenly, you've drained a significant amount from your bank account.

Consumerism is therefore manipulative. It does not always convince us to buy expensive things. Sometimes it convinces us into thinking that little spending is harmless.

The "99" trap is therefore not really about a lesser rupee. It is about how easily one's perception can be influenced and manipulated. When every purchase starts to feel like a great deal, we stop asking ourselves the most important question:
Do we really need it?

The Disappearing Art of Repair

Kritika
2nd Year

A broken screen, a missing button on a shirt, shoes with the toes worn out. When was the last time you fixed any of these? It appears that in our culture throwing the item away has taken the place of mending.

Convenience has influenced our habits to the point where we feel obliged to replace things rather than repair them; it is more convenient to order a new pair of shoes online than to find someone who resoles them and an upgrade is always just a short distance away. Products of poor quality are designed to be thrown away, whereas repair shops and tailors are becoming things of the past.

The Global E-waste Monitor states that in 2022, 62 million tonnes of e-waste were produced around the world, with only 22.3% of it being formally collected and recycled. The impact would be felt globally if every person chose to discard their old laptop. We don't want what we waste. The way we discard products is having a negative impact both on the environment and on the economy.

Repairing is vanishing, together with the skills needed to carry out repairs. The craft of mending has been forgotten, along with the sentimental value it used to have. Rather than repairing a cherished watch, it is now placed in a drawer and a new one is purchased. Today's society no longer believes in being the grandpa who used to fix watches and resole shoes. Other than trying to work out how to reduce waste, perhaps we should consider asking if our culture is willing to discard memories?



I think, therefore, I consume

Riddhima
1st Year

An essay on hungry ghosts, tiger reserves, and Golden Tabby

The dawn of April 1st, 1973 marked the day India turned to protect its national animal, a bright orange, striped, apex predator hidden in the dense jungles. We pledged our love to the dying species with the announcement of the Project Tiger. Today, 3,682 tigers roam the wild (according to the 2023 consensus), out of which 148 rest in the wetlands of the Kaziranga National Park. Why then, one wonders, does the Assam government ask for a 90% reduction of the Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) surrounding the park?

The Golden Tiger, photographed at Kaziranga National Park, Assam, on January 24, 2024 | Photo Credit: Gaurav Ramnarayanan

Kaziranga is not just a wildlife park with a fixed boundary. It is land that links floodplains with the hills of Karbi Anglong, and the Dhansiri-Lungding forest reserve. An ESZ, also known as an Ecologically Fragile Area (EFA), is a buffer zone around national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, protected by law to prevent human damage, and human-animal conflict.

The 10 km radius around the Kaziranga National Park is home to hunting tigers, Indian one-horned rhinoceros, and elephants who love roaming the wild lands. News stories about elephants on farmlands, and tigers in villages, occur not because they forget their territories, but because we start encroaching on theirs. The buffer zone acts as a cushion, protecting the ecosystem inside the park from being affected by the ecological stress caused by human activities inside it.

The Assam government proposes to shrink this crucial zone, for the development of humans.

More development. After all, tigers are endangered because we are not developed enough to stop poaching. We need more development, — more food, more industries, more mines. All the human brain thinks of is consumption, of anything, and everything.

Where does it stop?

Does it stop before Kaziranga is littered with hungry ghosts seeking reasons and retribution? It should, before the ghosts are all that's left.

Buy Now, Pay Later: The Cost of Keeping Up

Mansi
1st Year

Scroll through social media for a few minutes and it may start to feel like everyone is living a better life, much more exciting than yours. You find influencers showing off brand new clothing, devices, skincare and cosmetics, exploring cafés and enjoying multiple trips a year. Even the simplest of activities can be made to look like something we need to experience. This repetitive display of luxury can create FOMO — the fear of missing out — and make us feel like we are falling behind if we don't own or live the same things.

This is where Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL), EMIs and credit cards come in. Instead of paying the entire amount at once, it allows us to break it up into smaller amounts, paid over a set time period. A product that seemed too expensive, suddenly feels affordable when we only have to think about the monthly instalment. For instance, purchasing a latest-model smartphone priced at ₹80,000 all at once can feel daunting. But splitting it into manageable monthly installments of ₹6,500 over a year makes the luxury feel immediately accessible. However, this can also make it easier to lose track of how much we actually end up spending.

Social media and influencer culture plays a crucial role in making this cycle even stronger. When an influencer positions a product as a “must-have,” it is easy to believe that possessing it will give us more satisfaction or help us fit into a particular lifestyle. More often than we need, it pushes us into buying things we never planned to, simply because they are trending or just everyone in our circle owns one.

The problem usually shows up later. One EMI may not seem like a big deal, but when several payments and credit bills start adding up, they can put pressure on our finances. The excitement of immediate possession can slowly turn into the stress of future payments. What started as one small purchase, may turn into a habit of spending first and worrying about the cost afterwards.

Still, BNPL and EMIs are not necessarily bad. They can be helpful when someone genuinely needs something at present and has a clear plan for paying up subsequently. They make it possible to afford valuable essential investments. Think of laptops for educational purposes, or home appliances for efficiency, without having to draw on one's savings or disturb their cash flow.

A question worth asking ourselves, is why we are making the purchase in the first place. In an economy of need, are our purchases being driven by the fear of feeling left out? Or the motivation to blend in with everyone around us? We live in a world that constantly urges us to buy more, experience more and keep up with the crowd. Perhaps, then, the most valuable choice we can make is simply knowing when to walk away.

The Price of Wanting More

Muskan
1st Year

Have you ever bought something you were so excited about, but after a few days it just became another thing lying in your room? That is the reality of consumerism.

Today, we are surrounded by ads, online sales, and social media trends that keep telling us to buy more. We often buy things not because we need them, but because everyone else seems to have them. We chase the happiness we think a product will give us, and soon we start looking for something newer and different. This is where the concept of marginal utility comes in. In economics, marginal utility refers to the additional satisfaction we receive from consuming one more unit of something. Generally, the more we consume or acquire, the less satisfaction we tend to get from each additional unit. We keep consuming more and more, hoping to feel the same happiness and satisfaction again.

Have you ever walked into a store just to buy one outfit from a trendy brand you recently discovered? The first purchase feels exciting; you can't wait to wear it. This initial excitement is linked to a psychological phenomenon called hedonic adaptation; the tendency of our minds to quickly adjust to positive experiences. After some time, the outfit no longer feels as special as it did at first and it simply becomes part of your regular wardrobe. You may then buy another outfit to recreate that original feeling of excitement. But as you continue purchasing, your mind adapts again, and each new outfit brings less satisfaction than the previous one. This is how hedonic adaptation connects with the economic idea of diminishing marginal utility: the more we acquire, the less emotional reward each additional purchase provides.

Social media makes this cycle even stronger. We constantly see influencers, friends, and celebrities showing new clothes, gadgets, and trends. Without realizing it, we begin to believe that buying something new will make us happier or help us fit in. We keep looking for the same excitement, even as it fades with each new purchase.

Consumerism makes us believe that happiness is always one purchase away. But that happiness is usually temporary. Soon, a new trend appears, and we start wanting something else, even though we may not actually need it.

The cost of consumerism is not just money. It also creates unnecessary waste, puts pressure on our pockets, and makes us compare our lives with others. We forget to value what we already own. Perhaps the real price of “more” is not what we pay for the next thing, but what we stop appreciating while constantly looking for it.



Guess What

- The modern shopping mall was originally envisioned by architect Victor Gruen as a community and civic centre with spaces for socialising, culture and public services, not simply as a giant place for shopping.
- In a 1999 supermarket experiment, playing French music made French wines outsell German wines, while German music produced the opposite effect, even though shoppers generally did not realise the music had influenced their choices.
- A 1993 supermarket study found that shoppers carrying written shopping lists spent significantly less money, while those shopping with children spent more time and money in the store.
- The word “consumerism” was first recorded in 1922 meaning “protection of the consumer’s interest,” rather than the excessive consumption we associate with it today.
- People can value something more simply because they assembled it themselves, the 2012 “IKEA effect” experiments found this even with IKEA boxes, LEGO and origami, as long as people successfully completed what they were making.

Fun
Fiesta



THE CONSUMERISM BINGO

BUY BUY CONSUMERISM

Bought something for the person you're trying to become	Added something unnecessary to escape the delivery fee	Suddenly felt your perfectly fine phone was "old"
Bought an organiser to organise things you never needed	Wanted something only after seeing someone else have it	Bought something because the packaging matched your aesthetics
Thought you were saving money because it was on sale	Bought something because you deserved a "little" treat	Forgot what you ordered until the package arrived

THINK YOU'RE IMMUNE?

CHECK. COUNT. CONFRONT.