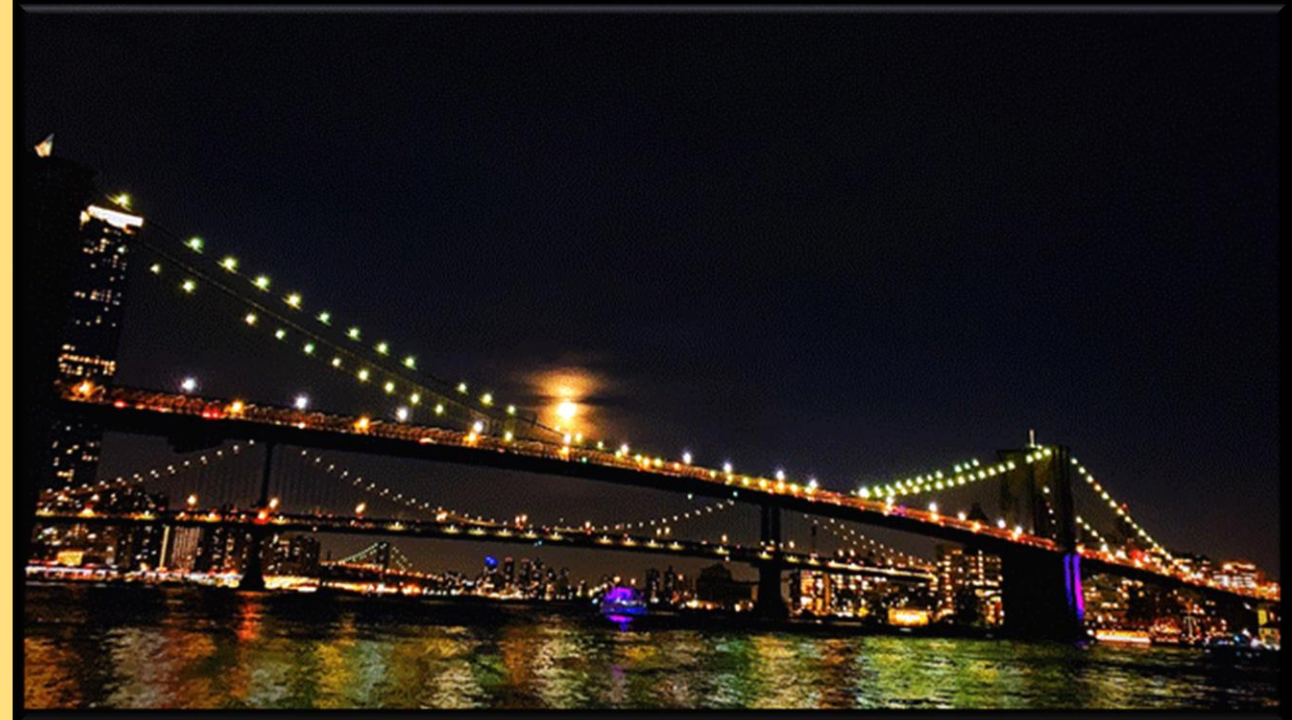
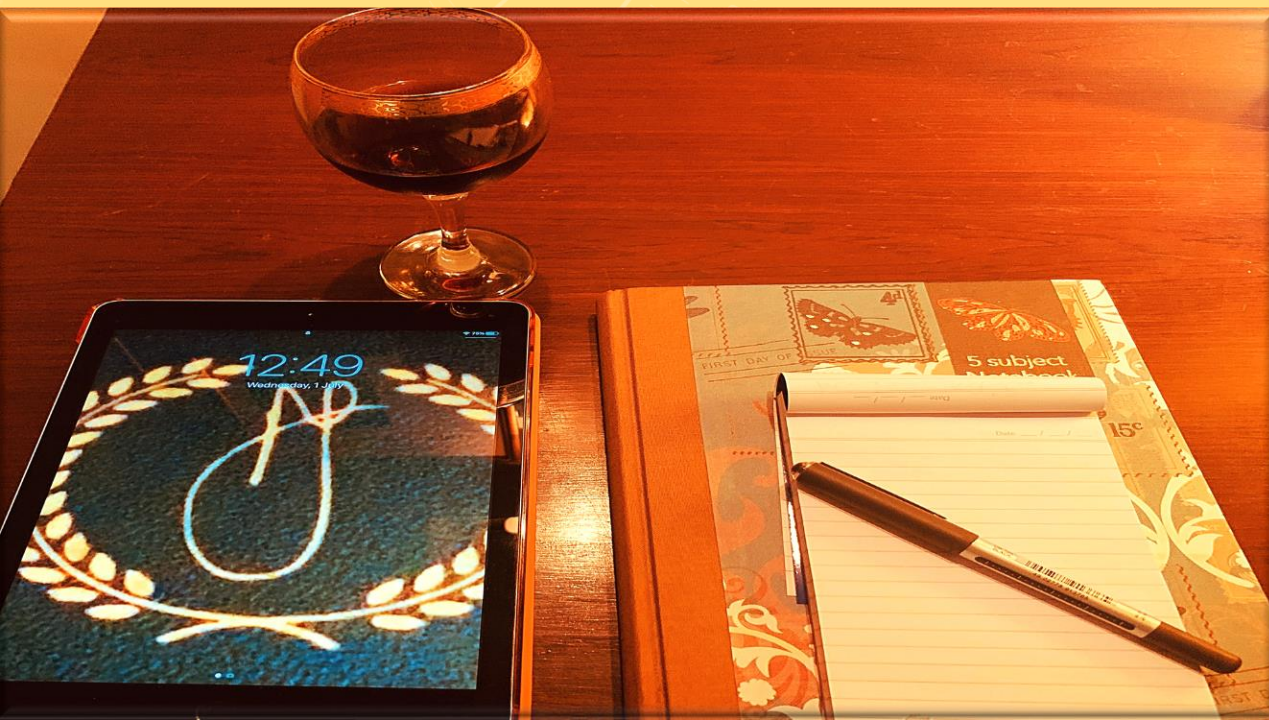


Between the Elites & The Academics



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Something changed in many of my WhatsApp groups in the run up to the India general elections. The lines got clearly drawn and expectations were to take a side.

I quickly alienated the BJP bhakts by pointing out the gradual decay in quality of life, whatever smart cities were meant to be and on the alarming lack of focus on education and healthcare capabilities.

I hurt the old time congress loyals by stating that since independence we created incompetent products that the world market just wouldn't buy and forced domestic consumers with no choices from the world market to protect inefficient Indian businessmen.

I lost both sides together when I argued that impact of Indian National Army and the world war on the Indian independence has historically been grossly understated while the current focus to project mythological age imaginary scientific achievements from India is funnily overstated.

I had one neighbor from a group asking me separately which side I am on. I just said I deeply worry about our opaque poll funding and politically controlled police system. He just repeated his question and still does whenever we meet.

So I shifted my conversations to our civic duties and our individual rights. I said this- that the day we stop honking while driving, start queuing up while walking around for things, stop manspreading while sitting and stop spitting around while driving, walking or sitting, we will become a super power. And that if we can start this from our different residential complexes that we live in. I spoke on individual rights and that it should supercede any prevailing religious, social or political cultures

Further what I choose to wear, what I choose to read and view, what I choose to eat, my sexual preference, whom I choose to live with should be only and only left to me.

But strangely my social profile was only going more downhill.

Since then I go in occasional long hibernation, but even more strangely again say something as if on impulse, forgetting my own life rule to only pick up battles that I want to fight and can win.

Couple of evenings back, I listened in our PM speech set for his 2nd innings. Two things stood out for me. His vision to balance national ambitions with regional aspirations and his emphasis to kill the VIP culture.

That morning newspaper carried two other very interesting news. That a panel set up by the government suggests a reduction of import tariffs and another on a plan to combat the looming water scarcity.

This should go a long way to take care of what in my view are two of the four looming national emergencies of unemployment and water crisis. The other two being pollution and climate change with all four needing immediate interconnected steps.

I felt very encouraged with both the updates to think that big reforms on lowering our cost of doing business, improving contract compliance and privatizations might just be round the corner too.

But I opted not to share my exuberance in my WhatsApp groups and this is the crux of this post.

I have started to understand that most wouldn't care. Only posts on the religious identities matter right now.

It seems a pressure valve has been released. As if it is an end of a long wait to take over the space entrenched for decades by few academics professing culture of entitlement and appeasement in the name of secularism while leaving no room for divergent point of views. The counter reactions now seem natural.

Many of my group members comprises of successful businessmen, lives in elite societies, pretty decently educated and world traveled on vacations. Unemployment, water scarcity, pollution and climate change- none impacts them, atleast not yet. Surely they didn't need a gas connection or a toilet. Yet it seems that the rich and the masses have finally come together.

In between I have landed in a no man's land between the elites and academics in my WhatsApp groups. I have a feel though that I am not alone in that land.

Yet I hope to be retained back in the groups, occasionally enjoy the funny memes that floats around, listen in to different views and sporadically venture in to put forth mine to further the discussion. Life then moves on. Just that I am still figuring out an answer when I meet my neighbor again and he asks which side I am in.

A word about

the Author

Arindam Dutta is ex Global head, Finance Operations, CFO Poland lead, Credit Suisse. He is ex Global head, BPS Analytics, Asia Pac BPS Hewlett Packard. He has 20+ years in GBS/BPS/ Banking- driving change and transformation. Worked in multiple locations/countries, led senior level and large scale teams across multiple countries and worked with internal and external CXO level stakeholders.

"Award for Excellence & Leadership in Outsourcing" from World HRD Congress (2013), Selected as Asia G6 Visionary by client community votes & panel speaker in SSON week in Singapore (2013 2012)& India I6 in 2013, Selected by buyer community as a sourcing superstar in SSON (2013)

Interviewed & quoted in multiple publications like Information week, Computer World, Dataquest, Global Services (2013, 2012), ,Invited in the speaking panel in NASSCOM, New Delhi (2013), keynote speaker in Dataquest summit, Gurgaon (2013), speaker and presenter in Deloitte Annual Shared Service conference , France (2012) , Joint interview with one of my client by the CFO Magazine on the Analytics success story (2012) Published multiple papers - "Making sense of big data in Finance & Accounting", "Wealth of data and shortage of resources", "From reporting the past to predicting the future: Analytics in Finance & Accounting", "Business Insights to F&A", "Compliance & Risk Analytics", "3As of Business Growth" (2014, 2013, 2012), " The lost pride - A tale of our cities" in the special edition of Consultant review magazine (2018) Multiple blogs in Times Of India (2018 onwards)

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