



It Happens In Bharat Only



What Makes Bharat So Uniquely Bharat



A Note From Dr. Sandeep Goyal

*We don't have quirks. We have features.
And we will not be fixing them.*

There are two countries in this country.

One is India. India writes SOPs. India has a queue.
India says, "Please wait; your call is important to us".

The other is Bharat.

Bharat does not have a queue. Bharat has a crowd
that looks like a queue if you squint from far.
Bharat does not wait. Bharat negotiates with waiting.

India says, "This is the rule."

Bharat says, "The rule is there, but we can surely adjust a bit."

This report is about Bharat. Largely observational.
And born through hundreds of chats and conversations with
those who live in Bharat – the real Bharat.

Badaun, Bathinda, Bikaner ...

Not the Bharat of government schemes and
economic survey charts. The Bharat of behaviour.
The peculiar, unapologetic, absolutely illogical behaviour that
makes us who we are – and that no management book from
Harvard can ever decode.





Dr. Sandeep Goyal
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A FEW TRAILERS FROM BHARAT



It happens in Bharat only

A man will spend 3 hours bargaining to reduce the price of a shirt by ₹50, then spend ₹200 on chai and samosas for the shopkeeper, his friend, and the bargaining advisor he brought along.

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We press both lift buttons –
up and down – even when we want to go only up.
Because pressing both set of buttons ‘doubles your chances’.
This is our version of quantum physics.

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Although a wedding invitation says “7 pm onwards” and everyone knows it means 9:30 pm, and the groom’s family still arrives at 11 pm – and they are proud of it.



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We keep the plastic cover on our new car seat for **2 years**, the sofa cover for **5 years**, and the mobile screen guard that is already cracked for **1 year** – because newness must be ‘preserved’, not enjoyed.

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We will not eat from a stranger’s tiffin, but we will eat from a stranger’s prasad with full faith, from the same hand.

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A mother will feed her 28-year-old son curd and sugar before his job interview, and the 28-year-old, who has an MBA from an IIM, will eat it obediently because the curd has a better placement record than the IIM.

It happens in Bharat only

We touch the book if it falls, because Ma Saraswati will be angry, but we will throw garbage on the road where Goddess Lakshmi actually walks.

These are not bugs. These are not backwardness. These are operating systems. Very old, very stable, and very, very unapologetic.





Why Are We Like This? And Why Do We Love Being Like This?



Three reasons. And if you understand these,
you will understand Bharat better.

1} WE ARE NOT INDIVIDUALS. WE ARE FAMILY EXTENSIONS.

In the West, a person is a person. In Bharat, a person is **someone's son, someone's daughter, someone's father, or someone's Sharma ji ka beta.**

So, behaviour is never personal; it is relational. You don't stand in the queue because you are disciplined. You stand behind your uncle, who is already in the queue, and you say, "**Uncle is standing, so I am standing.**" The queue is not of people, it is of families.

That is why we don't say, "**I am busy**". We say, "**At home, a function is there**". Because "**I**" is not a good enough excuse. Family is.

We are not unprofessional. We are just pro-family, more than pro-process.





2}

WE HAVE JUGAAD BECAUSE WE HAVE ALWAYS HAD SCARCITY.

For **70 years** we had less of everything – **less phone lines, less seats in colleges, less berths in trains.** So, we invented a way to make less feel more.

Double-booking a train berth is not cheating in Bharat. It is optimisation. **Pressing both lift buttons** is not stupidity. It is increasing probability. Keeping the **sofa cover is not kanjoosi.** It is extending the asset's life in a country where assets were once a luxury.

Jugaad is not a hack. It is our memory of scarcity, still living in our muscle, even when scarcity is gone. We are rich now, but our fingers still bargain out of habit. It is nostalgia.

3} WE ARE DEEPLY, SHAMELESSLY, UNAPOLOGETIC ABOUT PLEASURE.

This is my favourite.

Bharat loves to revel. We don't eat quietly. We smack our lips and say, "**Mazaa aaya**". We don't just get married. We dance on the road and stop traffic for **2 hours**, and the traffic says, "**Let them; it's marriage**". We don't just watch cricket. We scream at the TV and tell Kohli what to do, as if he can hear.

We are not embarrassed to be happy loudly. And we are not embarrassed to be contradictory.

We will go to a mall, try **20 shirts**, click photos, buy nothing, and the shopkeeper will still say, "**Phir aana**".

No anger. Because trying is also shopping in Bharat.

We will bargain with the auto driver for **₹20** and then tip him **₹50** because he drove so well in the rain.

We will keep our Ganesh idol with full devotion for **10 days** and then immerse it with a DJ who plays "**Munni Badnaam**".

Logic? No... Joy? Yes.

And we choose joy over logic every single time. Unapologetically.





This report is not to fix Bharat. It is to frame Bharat.

For years, we have been told – Be like the West. Be punctual.
Be professional. Be private.

And for years, Bharat asked – 'Okay, but... can we do it our way?'

So, this report – ***It Happens In Bharat Only*** – is our small attempt to capture those “our ways” before we lose them to SOPs and apps.

Every sub-section of this report is one **Bharat behaviour**, one at a time. Why we do it. What it really means. What business can learn from it. And why we should never, ever be apologetic about it.

Covered in this Bharat Lab report: **The Muhurat Tax. The Badaam Effect. The Jamai Premium. The Tiffin Test. The Kitty Economy. The Shagun Pricing. The Sharma Ji Ka Beta Index. The Plastic Cover Economy.**

Some will make you laugh. Some will make you say, “**Arre, this is my house**”. Some will make you a better marketer, manager... perhaps.





But all will surely make you say one thing at the end:
“It happens in Bharat only. And thank god it does”.

Because if we all behaved the same,
the world would be efficient.

But it would be very, very boring.
And Bharat was never made to be efficient.

Bharat was made to be unforgettable.

Welcome to this Bharat.

Keep your shoes outside, keep your phone on silent,
and keep your logic at home.

You won't need it here.



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**Listing all your academic degrees is also very Bharat!*





BHARAT SPECIALS WE UNIQUELY OWN



1} The Jamai Premium vs the Bahu Discount

In Eastern India, a son-in-law will never be asked to pay but will always be overserved. A daughter-in-law will always be asked to adjust but will always be under-spent on. **Why? Jamai is a guest; Bahu is family.** Businesses that treat customers like Jamai (over-deliver once) vs Bahu (take for granted forever) – who wins?

Hint: Look at why JioMart treats new users like Jamai and old users like Bahu!



2} The Shagun Pricing Effect

Why is everything in India is ₹101, ₹501, ₹1100 - never ₹100, ₹500, ₹1000. The extra ₹1 is not money; it's a blessing. You can't return shagun. That's why ₹101 feels 'nicer' than ₹100, even though it's more.



Amazon doesn't understand this. Your local jeweller does. How Titan perfected it with ₹5,001 for a baby's first earring is marketing folklore.

3} The Kitty Party Economy – India's Original Influencer Network

Before Instagram, there was a **12-woman circle** that met every Tuesday with **₹2,000** each and ate samosas. That kitty was **₹24,000** of monthly disposable income that no ad could reach. It was peer-to-peer lending, D2C sampling, and social proof, all in one.



Today, that same economy is on WhatsApp – **67%** of Tier 2 women buy after a kitty recommendation. Why are **Nykaa**, **Tupperware** and **LIC's** most powerful channel is still an aunty with a diary.



4} The Muhurat Tax

Indians don't buy when they need it. They buy when the stars say. **40%** of annual auto sales happen in **22 days** of **Dussehra-Dhanteras**. **30%** of gold in **3 days**. Some call it seasonality. It is actually astrology as economics.

The brands that win are not those with the the best offer, but those who have inventory on the right Tuesday. How to build a Muhurat Calendar for your business? Let's talk.

5} The Bhai Discount

"Bhaiya, apne liye laga do." Every Indian man has asked for a brother discount. It's not about ₹50. It's about converting a transaction into a relationship. The moment he calls you Bhai; he can't cheat you.



That's why D2C brands fail when they sound like companies. The ones that win – **Zerodha, Boat, Mamaearth** – sound like a Bhai. How to engineer Bhai-ness in the copy. That's the magic.

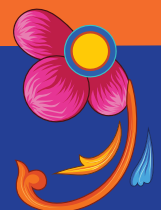


6} The Tiffin Box Test

No product in India is tested more by the consumer. It is tested by his mother, wife, or office colleague who opens his tiffin. If the dabba comes back empty, the product wins. If it comes back half, the product loses – even if ads say it's healthy.



That is why **The Whole Truth, Yogabar, and open kitchens** win. They are not selling protein. They are selling - "What will Mehta ji in the office say about my dabba?" The most powerful media in India is a stainless- steel lunch box.



7} The Laddu Tax / Prasad Economics



Why do we happily pay ₹500 for a small box of **Tirupati laddu** that costs ₹30 to make, but will not pay ₹50 extra for packaging? Because one is prasad, one is product. Prasad has no price, only shraddha.

Apple has understood this – its unboxing is prasad. Same with **Starbucks** writing your name. How to turn your product from product to prasad? And why free prasad creates more loyalty than paid discount – tales for another day.



8} The Pehli Pagaar or First Salary Syndrome

Every Indian family remembers what was bought with the **first salary** - usually a saree for mother, a watch for father. The amount doesn't matter. The story does. That first salary product becomes sacred forever.

That is why **Titan**, **Bata**, and now **iPhone** fight so hard to be the first salary gift. You don't get a customer. You get a place in the family album for **30 years**.





9}

The Sharma Ji Ka Beta Effect - FOMO as a Family System

We think **FOMO** is Instagram. In India, FOMO is **1,000 years old** and lives next door. Sharma ji ka beta bought a **BYD**, joined **IIT coaching**, and invested in mutual funds. Your mother forwards that **news at 7am**. No ad can create more anxiety or action than Sharma ji ka beta.

How brands can become the good Sharma ji ka beta - "Your friend has already invested in gold" - and why **CRED's** genius was turning payment into a neighbourhood competition - that's true cultural marketing.



10}

The Badaam Effect - The Visible Sacrifice

Indian mothers don't say "**I love you**". They soak **5 almonds** overnight and give them to you in the morning. It is love made visible through small sacrifice. Brands that show visible sacrifice win.

Why does Amul write "Made from **3.2%** real milk" - small detail, big sacrifice. Why a handwritten note from the founder works more than a printed thank you. In a world of AI perfection, imperfect, visible effort is trust.





11} The Sasural Suitcase Rule

Every girl who gets married gets a new suitcase and fills it with things for her new house – bedsheets, pressure cooker, mixie. That suitcase is worth ₹60,000-1 lakh, bought in 15 days.



No one advertises it at this moment, but it is India's biggest unorganised registry. It's why Godrej, Prestige, and Duroflex should not advertise features. They should advertise "sasural ready". The same strokes apply to Karva Chauth, – but still most brands expend advertising dollars on Valentine's which has really little

12} The Panda Discount

In **Puri**, pandas don't ask for donations. They demand it as their right. "**You have come to Jagannath; you must give**". You pay not because you want to, but because not paying feels like sin. That's the opposite of Western fundraising.



Many Indian businesses run on Panda logic – school admission "donation". How to ethically use Panda Power - making payment feel like participation, not purchase. Market savvy: Temple's that smartly state "Your name will be chanted 108 times" vs "Donate ₹101".





The Bharat Nuances Outsiders Don't Understand



The Art of Non-Verbal Communication



The Bharat Head Wobble:

This is neither a clear “yes” nor a strict “no”. It is a fluid, rhythmic tilt of the head from side to side. Depending on the speed and context, it can mean “Okay”, “I understand”, “Good”, or “Sure, why not?”



The “Kya Hai?” Hand Gesture:

Bringing the fingers of one hand together, pointing upward, and shaking the wrist slightly. It instantly translates to “What do you want?” or “What’s happening?” without uttering a single word.



Quirky Superstitions & Good Luck Charms



The Lemon-Chilli Shield (Nimbu-Mirchi):

You will find strings of **fresh green chillies** and a **lemon** hanging outside shops, cars, and homes. It is a traditional charm used to ward off the **buri nazar (evil eye)**.

The Mandatory Sugar and Curd (Dahi-Cheeni):

Before a student heads out for an exam, or anyone leaves for an important job interview, they are fed a spoonful of **curd mixed with sugar** for good luck.



The Reversal of Compliments:

If someone compliments a beautiful baby, the family elders quickly follow it up by making a small black dot (**nazar ka teeka**) behind the ear or spitting mockingly ("**thoo thoo**") to protect the child from getting affected by excessive praise.

Everyday Household Rituals



The Plastic Remote Armour:

Even years after buying a TV or AC, the remote control often stays tightly wrapped in its **original plastic packaging** – or is encased in a custom plastic cover – to keep it looking brand new forever.



The Multi-Generational Biscuit Dip:

Dipping a **Parle-G** or **Marie** biscuit into hot chai is a high-stakes sport. It requires precise timing; leave it in for a microsecond too long, and the biscuit structurally collapses into the bottom of the cup.



The Ultimate Storage Hacks:

Royal Dansk butter cookie tins never contain cookies – they hold sewing kits. Similarly, empty ice cream tubs in the freezer almost always store **leftover dal** or **frozen peas**.



On the Move & Social Quirks

The Public “Uncle” and “Auntie” Adoption:

In India, age-appropriate strangers are rarely addressed as “sir” or “madam” in casual settings. The vegetable vendor, the auto driver, or the person sitting next to you on a bus automatically becomes **Uncle, Auntie, Bhaiya (brother), or Didi (sister)**. Few object.



The Side-Saddle Scooter Ride:

Due to traditional clothing like sarees or salwar suits, it is incredibly common to see women riding pillion on motorcycles or scooters sitting completely sideways, balancing flawlessly at high speeds.



Quirky culinary habits

When it comes to food, India does not just eat – it experiences, customises, and occasionally defies culinary logic. From ancestral dining wisdom to modern-day street food madness, here are some of the most **peculiar, genius, and uniquely desi culinary habits**.

The Physics and Etiquette of Eating



The Five-Finger Palette:

Eating with your hands is an art form rooted in Ayurveda, where fingertips are believed to stimulate digestion.

The desi quirk lies in the technique: a true pro uses only the tips of the fingers of the right hand to mix curry and rice, ensuring the food never crosses the second knuckle.



The “Water Waterfall” (Gat-Gat):

Sharing water bottles without letting your lips touch the rim is a survival skill taught from childhood. To avoid “jootha” (saliva contamination), Indians tilt their heads back and pour a perfect stream of water straight down their throats without spilling a drop.



The Leaf-Folding Exit:

Eating on a glossy green banana leaf is common across the South.

However, how you fold the leaf after eating is a silent message to the host. Folding it inward towards you means you loved the meal and plan to return. Folding it away from you is usually reserved for funerals or implies you did not enjoy the experience.

Quirky Flavour Fixations



Adding Sweetness to Everything:

In states like Gujarat, a tiny pinch of jaggery or sugar goes into almost every savoury dish, including dal and vegetable curries.

Conversely, in the **North** and **West**, a slice of raw onion and a squeeze of lime are mandatory additions to reset the palate between bites of heavy food.

Chaat Masala on Fresh Fruit:

While the world eats fruit raw or with cream, Indians instantly sprinkle a heavy dusting of salty, tangy, pungent **chaat masala** or **black salt** onto fresh watermelon, papaya, and guavas to create a sweet-and-sour profile.



The Post-Meal

"Oral Refreshment" Process:

Leaving a restaurant requires pausing at the counter to grab a spoonful of **mukhwas** – usually candy-coated fennel seeds (**saunf**) and rock sugar (**mishri**) – to aid digestion and sweeten the breath.



Utensil and Serving Hacks



The "Katori" Symphony:

A traditional Indian thali meal features a large steel plate ringed with multiple small metal bowls called **katoris**. No matter how liquid the curry or lentil is, a seasoned diner can perfectly navigate mixing them onto the central pile of rice or flatbread without letting the different gravies bleed into each other clumsily.



The Inverted Pressure Cooker Weight:

Every Indian household relies heavily on the whistle of the pressure cooker. If the steam valve starts leaking or sputtering too early, a standard desi hack is to **flip a heavy steel spoon or small cup** over the weight to force it to behave.



The Biscuit "Parachute" Rescue:

As mentioned before, dipping biscuits in tea is essential, but the culinary habit has a secondary rule. If your **Parle-G** breaks and sinks to the bottom of the cup, you immediately deploy a second biscuit as a structural shovel to **"scoop out"** the sunken piece before it dissolves completely.





BHARAT JAISA KOI NAHI

Delightful, uniquely desi idiosyncrasies make living in or visiting Bharat an absolute joy.

Board a long-distance train, and within twenty minutes, the stranger sitting across from you will know your name, your salary, your marital status, and why you haven't bought a house yet. By Hour 3, they will be sharing their homemade theplas or paranthas with you.

If a bill comes to ₹103, a desi shopper will hand over a ₹100 note with a confident smile, and the shopkeeper will accept it without a word. That ₹3 discount is a badge of absolute honour.

These tiny, everyday quirks are exactly what make Bharat so deeply endearing.





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THE BHARAT LAB

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