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An initiative by Arunkanth V.





Be an Artist !





'Art Knowledge' Magazine is published to strengthen & celebrate upcoming Indian talents by spotlighting their work and also awaken them with thought provoking articles.

Filmmakers, Artists & Art lovers, Love it !

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We welcome your inputs and we reply to them. If you like this magazine, Wish to contribute content, Share Ideas & Views, Advertise on this magazine, Join our Freelancer Team or anything else? Feel free to reach us.

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Freelancing - Voice Over Artist !

When contemplating the path to becoming a voice actor, one may overlook the myriad possibilities. Consider the diverse fields that engage the services of voice actors:

Films & Narrative Stories Foreign language films Animation shorts or films TV programs Commercials Radio or Audio dramas Video games Audiobooks Documentaries IVR phone systems Voice of God at live events TV and Radio promos Training / e-learning Podcasts





A Voice is the most powerful instrument on Any Audio

The Voice Over Career, In Detail . . .

Numerous opportunities await those aspiring to become voice actors, and within this domain, certain aspects require specialized skills. For instance, mastering character voices and entering the animation field can pose greater challenges compared to voiceovers for commercials.

Embarking on a career in voice acting is both thrilling and diverse. This profession enables individuals to earn income through their vocal talents, traverse different locations, and actively participate in a burgeoning industry. While it sounds appealing, the crucial question remains: do you possess the requisite skills?

The landscape of the voice-over industry is expanding rapidly. From the voice behind Google to advertisements, explainer ads, radio commercials, and corporate training materialsvoice acting permeates various sectors. Consider audiobooks; they captivate millions of listeners, all necessitating the skills of voice actors. The shift to a digital world has further intensified the demand for proficient voice talent.

As a voice actor, your daily routine may involve working on a TV advertisement, followed by a radio commercial, and then transitioning to a cartoon the next day. The dynamic nature of each day underscores the suitability of a voice acting career for those seeking variety. Technological advancements have revolutionized the profession, with many voice actors now equipped with personal mini-studios to record projects from the comfort of their homes.

While the prospect might seem straightforward, the reality is that voice acting entails more complexities. Despite the prevailing assumption, delving into the world of voiceovers or initiating the journey can prove challenging for most individuals. Often, people scour the internet for guidance through YouTube videos and voice-over blogs, but this information tends to be disjointed and challenging to comprehend.

It's crucial to acknowledge that significant learning and preparation are prerequisites before landing your initial paid voice acting assignment. Although the eagerness to audition is palpable, obtaining proper training, securing the necessary equipment, gathering essential resources, and tapping into innate talent are essential prerequisites. The positive aspect is that despite the competitive nature of the voice-over industry, a plethora of opportunities exists for everyone.

Before taking any steps, it's imperative to introspect and determine why you aspire to become a voice actor. Establishing clear goals, understanding expectations, and identifying motivations are crucial for success. Setting realistic, attainable objectives with defined deadlines ensures that you remain focused, whether you intend voice acting as a hobby or a fulltime profession.



Art.Knowledge

What if there was a manual for Movie Watching ?

A Movie is what the film-maker wishes to show on screen about HIS taste & imagination. Not yours.

If you don't like a movie, then try another movie, as simple as that Buddy ! If you want the film-maker to make perfect movies, then you must also watch them perfectly

Generally, A Movie is made for a big screen. Selfies are made for mobiles.

A Movie cannot be tailor made. Get that straight !

Arunkanth Talks Tough !



A to Z, Process of Film Making !

Everything starts with an idea, which you believe is extraordinary.

Write a script, define your characters and their goals clearly, let the characters push their limits to achieve their goals. A good opening, intermission and a good climax will always be remembered and cherished. Embed contrast in all aspects.

Remember your movie is not just a video. Audio / sound is an equal 50% of your movie. Rope in your sound designer in the script stage to guide you on a sound consultation. Find an editor you can trust and trust his decisions always as long as your vision is being worked on.

Title your script and make a script that justifies the title. A right casting for the characters solve most of your issues. A good casting makes a movie watchable. Seriously. Try to avoid casting your friends and neighbours unless you find them perfect for the role. While doing the above it is a must to keep a candid check on the budget you might require.

Find ways to fund your project. Know your market before you invest.

Make sure you rope in a producer who believes your vision, encourages your efforts, stand with you no matter what, respects artists, pay them promptly, commit to release the project on time and be a friend with you forever. Flip side, you must be true and committed to your producer. 'Honesty' ! All the members must have equal Team Spirit & co-operate to make the project a success and a memory to cherish. Recruit such members only. A good team lives long ! Get the right crew and technicians who understand your vision. Design your own workflows. Be Original. Quit Cliches.

Scout locations that are unique as much as your script is unique. Plan shoot dates well.

A quality make-up artist should be your best buddy. Just trust me blindly on this.

Go ahead and do all you can to shoot the script with clear sound, get the best performances out of your cast and unleash the creativity of all technicians. Have a blast ! Shoot like an editor. Shoot what you only need, maybe a little bit more. Allow your cinematographer to shoot some montages that you may or may not require. Life Saver !

Don't forget to enjoy your work every single day and cherish your moments. Never forget to capture the "making of your movie".

Backup and secure the footage. Life saver again. Once your production is over, take a break and then get into the post production mode. Forget the shooting episode. Now the screen and your ear is what shapes your movie.

Edit your footage. Editing is storytelling. Edit while keeping the sound in mind. Now the editor is your hero. Let him be the hero. You did your best. Let him do his best. Make a single cut the final cut. Do not hesitate to cut something that hinders your storytelling. Take bold decisions and believe it. Once you are happy. Lock it. Of course, be ready to unlock it if the need arises. Your Mind keeps swinging around !

Contd.,

Bring your actors to the studio to capture/dub their voices, synced to the performances, if you have not captured the live / Sync sound during the shoot with the Sound Professionals.

Time for some music. Go ahead and spot the right places to add music. Remember music is like a doctor's consultation. If you do not know the job, let the musicians do some magic. Be with them and enjoy the background score. Learn the process of music making for better knowledge for your next project. Get the individual tracks. You might want to re-edit occasionally to suit the music. Watch your movie with the music and you might come up with some great ideas to adjust your edit to elevate your story telling.

Now comes the world of sound. Remember music and sound design are different. Sounds need to be added by your sound engineers who recreate the location sounds, sounds for the actions performed by your actors(foley), additional sound FX and more. Sound makes an equal 50% of your movie. Be patient and work with critical care. Mixing is the process of bringing the dialogues, music and sound tracks to the appropriate levels so that your movie is enjoyable. A bad video can sometimes be tolerated but never a bad sound. Never mix the sound to compete the loudness war. Let the background score be on the background and not on the foreground. Mix the foley sounds to a level that can just be heard if you concentrate. That's the beauty of foley. Mix in surround format. Soft sounds must be soft and loud sounds must be loud and the dynamic range between them must be maintained to have an enjoyable experience. Always keep in touch with all the sound technicians, invite them for your preview. Do not forget them.

Go ahead and meet a colourist who can colour your picture to suit the projection standards and also to make the footage visually right. Finish off Vfx additions if needed & embed the same with sound, on the master project. Add title credits to all the people who have helped you. Give appropriate credits to your technicians & actors. Build the right title animation that suits your story. Watch your movie with your technicians to look critically for any technical glitches and correct them immediately. Sit back, relax and enjoy your movie yourself once all alone. Feel elevated and proud that you are a filmmaker. Your film must satisfy you First. Get a graphic designer to make a poster that pulls the audience to watch the movie. Cut out a Teaser and a Trailer that best markets your movie. Now watch your movie again with your producer. Take his feedback. Implement it if it is meaningful to you else convince him softly that your decisions are better. Call your well wishers to watch your movie privately. You will start to hear the other side of the world. Keep yourself cool. Take a break. If you find a sensible / convincing feedback, implement it if you can. You are the judge now. Be strong and make right decisions. Trust your gut feeling. Never sell your vision. Finally, deliver the master file to your producer with all additional versions and sound tracks, to sell the movie to different parts of the world. Thank your producer, market and bring out the movie as a team.

You did the best you could in the available resource, time & budget. You learnt. Most importantly, You enjoyed your work. Life is a learning curve. Keep learning and keep doing what you love. Take a break and build your next great idea !

Remember, only when you do you learn. Only when you learn you earn. Quality grows over time and its a mirage.



An Article by Arunkanth

The Dark Side of OTT Platforms !

~ Packaging multiple movies on Apps destroyed the Creator Economy ~



The Music Industry has faced a downfall in this decade. Now Music is almost a freebie. With the Advent of OTT Platforms and digital home & Mobile entertainment, to attract mass population to start using the platform, most of the contents was required almost for free. Biggies earn on Indies sacrifices.

Many organisations sourced content at a **Big cost from Big Production Companies** and adjusted the expense by sourcing content from small producers under the revenue share model promising revenue based on every human watch. Thus the small players were attracted to give their content for free to these platforms. These platforms advertised that they have a huge library, (of which most are on revenue share), sold their App subscription packages to watch multiple content & titles. But what they did was, they made the small providers advertise at their own expense saying their content is available on these platforms thereby the platforms gained a free promotion for their Apps & websites. But when people start using them, these platforms advertised the content they bought outright only. They just din't care for the creators who were on revenue share.

They made a system in such a way that it shows only the Big Stars upfront and made it difficult to find newly added content from small providers under each category / genre. Thus small content providers kept advertising continuously and got tired as people land on the Platform to watch the content from big stars. This is the Dark Side of OTTs.

For small and Indie Artists, the revenue slowly became peanuts. If the viewership of these movies decline, new content would be replaced and the old ones removed.

More over, these platforms have created a habit with the audience that Art can be watched for a rock-bottom price. Example, an OTT platform charges a user 1000 rupees per year and give them a music app, a movie app, free delivery of goods via online shopping, all unlimited. This make a cost of movie watch, a stooped down tipsy penny, much lesser than a chocolate or a single Tea. It is as good as free for the public. The Big stars survive as they get upfront payment and the small one take the beating, whilst the platform advertises they have a huge library and make merry. Platforms must Respect Art, Save Indie Artists, Pay them individually, so they can survive !

An Article by Arunkanth

A Single Tea Rs.10/- A Chocolate Rs.3/- A Movie Almost Free ! If you expect Art for Cheap Prices, in future you will get Cheap Quality Art

Why I Started my own OTT Platform 'AK Online' ?

An Inspirational Story, Arunkanth V.

As an Independent Music Composer, I had to go to a lot of radio stations to showcase my song for playback. None of the radio stations even listen to indie music and they reject right away when approached or they don't reply. Unfortunately here, they need a video or a film to be made to play an audio on the radio. Sounds absurd ! When did the ears start seeing ? This was the inspiration to make my first indie feature film Goko Mako, which transformed me from a music composer to an Indie Filmmaker. Later when i approached the radio stations again after making a movie and the video songs, even with a reputed record label, like ZEE Music who bought my music outright at a good price as they were unique, these radio stations wouldn't play my songs. Now they need "star-cast" ! or "Star Composers". How does an audio heard on the radio via ears receive the star cast info ? -Sounds Absurd again.

That's when I realised that I need to start my own Internet radio to play my own songs and songs of other Indie Music Composers who face such a situation. The same is the issue with TV channels, no encouragement for indie content. So I started my own Live TV Channel to play indie content. I also realised that even on Independence day none of them play independent content.

After making feature films also, without star-cast nobody supports our content in any of the Cinema Theatres or OTT platforms to get space. No matter how good they are, here the players are least interested to view them. So Instead of cribbing, I went ahead and published my own official website www.arunkanth.in with my own LIVE TV, Internet Radio, Magazine, and I also sold my movies tickets 3 months prior to release at zero rupees online booking convenience fee and proved to Cinema Theatres that I can bring in Box Office Numbers. I also get my customer database which is a bigger asset that would help me bring down my promotion cost for my next venture. My initiatives and efforts were appreciated by PVR and they became my multiplex partner and gave me prime shows. This made a lot of other upcoming Indie Filmmakers and artists get hope that they can also bring Indie Films to Cinema Theatres. The same was with Zee Music, who was also a great support to my indie ventures.

The OTT platforms are no Different from Cinema Theatres except for the size of the screen and sound quality. Most OTT platforms expect the same star-cast and most of them don't even care for viewing the full movie before judging the content. I do like some mainstream films, but what about other offbeat content and new upcoming talents and indie film makers? That's the topic here. Sometimes Netflix could be excused and exempted from this scenario as they give a slightly better thought process in professionally acquiring off beat innovative content when compared to other players. But I can't take that as a thumb rule and make content for Netflix. Suddenly Hungama recognised my indie film out of the blue. But can it happen to all indie film makers?

As an entrepreneur, more of a Solopreneur, I would always have a thought process of creating a self-sustaining system. Even a mixie-grinder seller acquires his customer database and when he launches a new model he sends notifications & offers. For decades, the movie industry is running without a customer database, that is the reason why crores of money is being wasted in the name of promotions and this process is repeated for every single movie from ground zero.



It's time to have our own platforms. I gave a loud and clear voice through my awareness videos and a huge call for producers coming up with their own Pay and Watch Platforms, during the early 2020. These videos went viral among the mainstream filmmaker / producer community here. Some woke up and got into the action and built their own platforms which people witness during the mid 2020. I then created "AK Online" - an exclusive OTT platform for Indie content creators. A revolutionary one ! I strongly felt the following features would kickstart a change in the current system and change the way the business happens for indie content. Oh, was there a business before ??? No worries. From now there is a source of revenue for the Indie.



Top Features of AK Online OTT for Content Owners / Independent Filmmakers

۲

Non Exclusive World Wide View Retain your rights. Stream Non-Exclusive. Freedom to withdraw content



No Ads - Only HD

with just a 15 Day notice.

Stream your HD content uninterrupted as we do not host ads on our AK Online TVOD / PPV OTT Platform.

Content Metadata & Description

Write your own description, include all your metadata, inducing your social media links to enhance your visibility.

Flexible Watch-Price & Validity

Freedom to Set your own prices & validity for your content as and when you wish. Users pay the price you set.

Instant Realtime Sales Tracking

Get an instant real-time sales tracking of your transactions & revenue as and when it happens, live.



No Run Time Limitation

We accept content with any duration, be it a feature length or a short film. We stream content of any runtime.

5

Free Promos on our Streaming TV

We promote your content Trailers & Sneak Peeks on our Streaming TV for Free. We support #IndieContentCreators



70% Revenue & Weekly Payments We share 70% revenue to content

owners and you get your payments every week upon raising invoices.



Its between You & the Audience

We do the QC of your pitch only to meet our policy guide & we do not judge your story. We leave it to the viewer.

AK Online - OTT for Independent Films - An initiative by Arunkanth

Finally, An OTT Platform for Independent Films

For Filmmakers

- ~ Freedom to Fix Watch Price & Validity
- ~ Real-Time Sales Tracking
- ~ Weekly Payments
- ~ Non-Exclusive Streaming

For Users

- ~ Pay Per Movie
- ~ No Subscriptions
- ~ No irritating Ads
- ~ No Harmful Content





#SupportIndieFilm #AKonline



Santhana Bharathi & Chaams in

Written & Directed by Arunkanth





Vinodhini

Chaams

HERO4

A Feature Film completely shot on GoPro Written & Directed by Arunkanth







Creating a Self Sustaining Ecosystem For Indie Creators

Arunkanth V. Coimbatore, India Entrepreneur, Indie Filmmaker & Music Composer

Official Websites :

www.arunkanth.in | www.infopluto.com | www.akonline.app www.artknowledge.in | www.indiema.in



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Achivements

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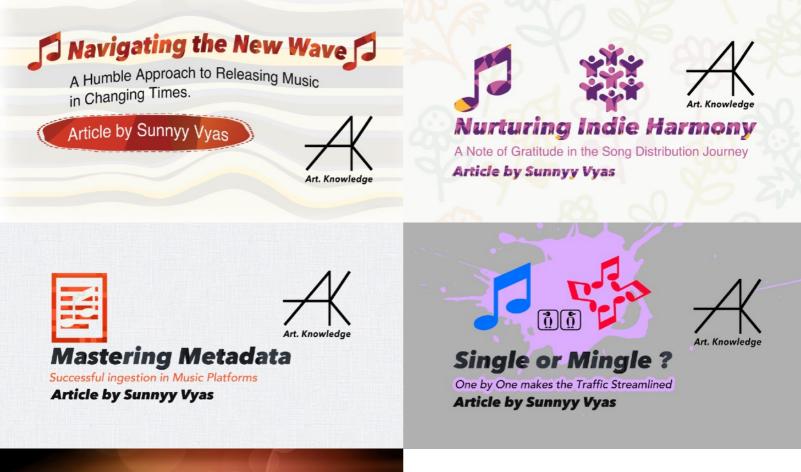
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 Image: Comparison of the system
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Dear Indie Music Artists, Here are some awareness articles to support you in your music journey & Music Distribution.

Articles by Sunnyy Vyas



Your Music is an end product by itself !

Should you Shoot?

An Article by Sunnyy Vyas



Scan to Read the Articles

Awareness Articles for Filmmakers on Art.Knowledge



Dear Indie Filmmakers, It is very important to know the workflows & the business model of Movie Distribution before you invest.

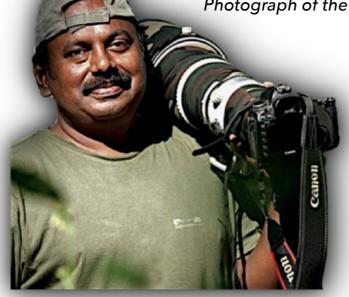
Articles by Arunkanth V.





Scan to Read the Articles

Prakash Ramakrishnan, The first person to have captured a Photograph of the Black Panther & a Common Leopard together



Career on Wild Life Photography :

In his 10 years of experience, he says, he has seen many enthusiasts, purchase equipments in a hurry, quit their existing professions and enter wild life photography. Soon they become tour operators and few years later go back to their original jobs as they realise it's not profitable. Lack of proper understanding of the Jungle & wild life will lead to short lived interests to pursue the art. Most people, take a picture of a bird and only then they realise they don't even know it's name. Most enthusiasts have not even been into the jungle even for a nature walk and have no clue on animal behaviour or life in the jungle at large. The Professionals spend most of the time in the wild and less on social media. Others do the opposite. A bitter urban truth. A tremendous amount of patience, practice and passion goes into becoming a true wild life photographer / filmmaker. The man behind the camera, his skill and some knowledge of the Jungle is more important than the equipment. Apart from winning few competitions and a bit of prize money, he says, "I have still not cracked the code to make it a profitable career. Only a very few people have made it to the top. A strong passion, love for the nature and this art keeps me at the wild, most part of my life", he concludes on a positive note. :)



Prakash Ramakrishnan, Wildlife Photographer was interviewed by Arunkanth for Art Knowledge



Prakash Ramakrishnan Winner of the 3rd prize in the Royal Bank of Scotland-Sanctuary Asia Wildlife Photography Award

Follow Prakash Ramakrishnan on facebook.com/prakash.ramakrishnan.12 instagram.com/prakash_sara

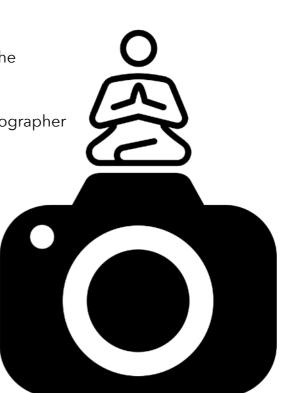


Save Nature | Save Wildlife

20 Statements / Questions Every Pro Photographer hates to hear !

- Can you edit my selfie I shot with a phone?
- Is it possible for you to share the unprocessed image files with me?
- Your camera makes taking every photo seem effortless.
- Your pricing seems high; all you do is press a button.
- Could you enhance my appearance to look slimmer in the photos?
- I'd love for you to attend my wedding, but hiring a photographer is beyond my budget.
- Why is the background so blurred in all the pictures?
- I only need a single photo; would that be less expensive?
- Can I take a look at the display on your camera?
- Should I go for Sony or Canon in my camera purchase decision?
- Can you adjust the temperature to make it warmer with a touch more blue?
- I get offended when I am photographed.
- How do you occupy your time during the rest of the week?
- You don't have to edit them; I'm fine with the raw images.
- Can I also have access to the rejected photos? No need to edit them, it's okay.
- Your lens doesn't seem to have sufficient zoom capability.
- Without a degree, you're not exactly a professional, right?
- If you shoot for free, I'll help promote your work.
- May I take a look at the display on your camera?
- The use of tripods is prohibited in this location.

It is a humble request to think twice before you ask these questions.





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Web Hosting is inexpensive ! Don't get scammed !

Public Space - Public Views - Public Surveys

Movie Watching Preferences / Views of people at Coimbatore & Chennai

At Cinema Theatres :

- 73% say that they are willing to watch a movie in theatres if they believe there is unique content and not cliches
- 82% say that they are willing to watch a movie of a newcomer / upcoming talents if the trailer is impressive
- 89% say that 7 PM is the appropriate time for an evening show at cinema theatres during week days considering heavy road traffic.
- 93% say that the morning show is not their preference at all.
- 68% say that they prefer online ticket purchase.
- 94% says that the online convenience fee for ticket booking must be per transaction and not per ticket.
- 84% say that top actors must consider working with young and new directors and must move away from "Star-Glorification" scripts and focus on content and script.
- 68% say they prefer multiplexes over single screen theatres
- 67% say that the movie ticket price must be under Rs.120/-
- 88% say that they are satisfied with 4 out of 10 movies they have watched in cinema theatres.

Some Additional Interesting Results :

- 93% say they do not believe in the award ceremony results showcased on Televisions.
- 43% say that Newspaper reviews are the deciding factor & 48% say that online reviews are the deciding factor, to choose a movie
- 86% say that they do not prefer to watch a movie at cinema theatres due to lack of choices in content variety.

The survey is always ON. To take part in our survey and post your views / comments visit **www.arunkanth.in**





14 common mistakes you can avoid - Heads up !

Crafting an Ineffective Narrative & Characters:

An ineffective storyline leaves an actor without direction in a film. When movie characters lack well-defined goals, the film becomes tedious, and audiences are disinterested in watching a dull narrative.

Implementing Subpar Sound:

Picture a film where characters move, yet there's absolute silence. This occurs when sound quality is poor, resulting in an irksome cinematic experience.

Flawed Casting Decisions:

The casting decisions made significantly influence a movie's success. Novice filmmakers often select inappropriate actors for specific roles. Assigning roles without careful consideration can jeopardize the entire film.

Deficient Shot Composition:

Within shot composition, the existence of dead spaces—areas devoid of activity—detracts from the scene's quality. Excessive dead space results in shots lacking depth and balance.

Overreliance on Clichés:

Employing clichés, such as characters waking up at the beginning of a scene, is an ill-advised move for amateur filmmakers.

Inadequate Lighting:

Poor lighting hinders visibility, making it challenging for viewers to discern on-screen events and diminishing the overall viewing experience.

Excessive Use of Insert Shots:

While insert shots, like zooming or cutting to emphasize a moment, can enhance a film, their overuse can detract from its quality.

Time Wasting:

Protracted scenes with characters engaging in irrelevant, unimportant actions constitute a form of time wasting that undermines the movie's impact.

Prolonged Pauses:

Frequent pauses in scenes, a common feature in amateur films, can be effective in drawing in the audience. However, when overused, they become a nuisance.

Lack of Dynamic Movement:

A lack of motion within a scene results in boredom, especially when characters remain static for extended periods. This diminishes the film's appeal.

Excessive Dialogue:

An abundance of unnecessary dialogue can detract from the overall cinematic experience.

Inappropriate Music Selection:

Mismatched music disrupts the cinematic experience. This is a common mistake made by many amateur filmmakers.

Monotonous Settings:

Filming against white walls throughout the movie, a tendency among amateurs, detracts from visual interest and removes vibrancy from the film.

Incorrect Delivery Formats/Color:

Rushing into project export without verifying formats and color calibration can lead to unexpected playback quality variations across different media platforms.





Art.Knowledge Movie Recommendations

How many times have you decided to take a break to watch a movie, but wasted a lot of time deciding on what to watch ?

Here is a List of few English movies Art.Knowledge recommends for you to watch. We guarantee these movies engage and entertain you completely !

American Outlaw

Deep Water Horizon

The Wall

Money Monster

Shaolin Soccer

Under Siege

Flight

Paul Blart Mall Cop

The Terminal

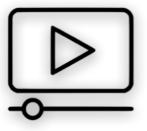
Bounty Hunter

Click

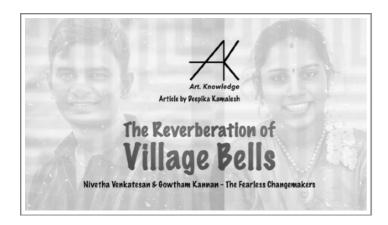
Yes Man

Death at a Funeral

Chasing Liberty



There is always a Space for Selfless People on Art.Knowledge Magazine



The Reverberation of Village Bells !

Village Bells - an NGO for a noteworthy cause founded by Nivetha Venkatesan and Gowtham Kannan - took shape after an epiphany jolted Gowtham awake from his half-asleep state in the middle of the night

Nivetha Venkatesan (29) and Gowtham Kannan (39) belong to Ayakudi - a panchayat town in the Dindigul district in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. To best describe Nivetha and Gowtham's inspiring journey, I'm borrowing one of my favourite dialogues from one of my favourite television shows, 'This Is Us': they took the sourest lemons that life had to offer and turned it into something resembling lemonade.

"My life in the past hadn't been the easiest - from academic failure to depression to being diagnosed with a brain tumour, I have experienced several life-altering difficulties. In each of these challenging times, my friends from college were an invaluable source of strength, encouragement, and support for me. One night, while recalling how the selfless acts of my friends had enabled me to persevere and prevail over life's obstacles each time, it occurred to me that there could be several necessitous individuals in our country who are also earnestly in need of genuine aid and assistance for living a life with human dignity. It was this realization that made 'Village Bells' come into existence. My wife Nivetha and I established 'Village Bells' to help the underprivileged communities; it was, in a manner, our way of paying forward the kindness and generosity we were showered with during our difficult times," Gowtham expressed

The first initiative 'Village Bells' undertook was to address the pressing issue of food insecurity that, unfortunately, forces the poverty-stricken to live with hunger as their constant companion. Using only quality ingredients, Nivetha would single-handedly cook large portions of wholesome traditional food that the two would distribute for free to one hundred disadvantaged individuals in their town three days a week. This philanthropic initiative hit a break when COVID, uninvitedly, devoured everyone's routine life. However, they continued providing groceries for free to many daily-wage workers affected by the pandemic who knew of the couple's work and would come by their home in need of a helping hand

The duo mentioned that amidst all this, a news segment came to their attention about a tribal community called 'Kutti Karudu' in the Dindigul district that survived only on tea for seven whole days owing to the pandemic and the lockdown. The philanthropists stated, "After thorough contemplation, knowing that the government and other local organizations will undoubtedly assist the underprivileged in the city, we decided to offer help to the indigenous people who might not be on the priority list of many of those extending aid to the needy." The 'Village Bells' founders shared with me how on their first visit to the 'Kutti Karudu' tribal land, they were dumbfounded to discover people living life without a solid roof over their heads or proper clothes to cover their bodies and without electricity or nourishing food and water, despite the advancements of the present time.

Contd.,

The founders added that upon first meeting the tribe, each tribe member moved far away from them as fast as possible. Only after a long day of proper acquaintance did Gowtham and Nivetha learn the reason for that behaviour - - it was fear! Fear of people who weren't part of their clan. The fear that got instilled in them after being treated as untouchables, being made to feel inferior, being discriminated against and forced to walk shirtless (only boys/men) and barefoot when entering city limits, being pelted stones at, and being ruthlessly treated like mountain animals by those perceived as "superior" by the society. Having been marginalized by society for belonging to the tribal community, also considered lower caste, the men, women, and children of the 'Kutti Karudu' tribe were repeatedly subjected to such ill-treatment.

It was well understood by Nivetha and Gowtham that this kind of victimization was not restricted to this particular group; indigenous communities in India have been facing social, economic, and geographic exclusion for centuries. Overwhelmed by the plight of the tribal communities, the two decided to shift the focus of their NGO to the socio-economic empowerment of tribals (also known as Adivasis in India). They said they knew they had to approach this work with cultural sensitivity and a long-term commitment to make a meaningful impact.

They later explained how they addressed the issue. Nivetha said, "The core of the problem was apparent to us - the lack of education among the indigenous members led to a lack of awareness of their rights.

We knew only through education could we equip these individuals to question the systemic oppression they have been at the receiving end of. But here was the challenge - how do we convince someone who literally runs away from us to trust us to help them rise above their difficulties?

Our aim - after identifying all the Adivasi villages in the Dindugal district, learning about their lifestyle, understanding how each clan would react to us, and preparing ourselves accordingly - was to win their trust. Fortunately, through our frequent interaction and the aid we provided them with during the lockdown, we succeeded in our sincere efforts to form a strong bond with the members of several villages." With the help of competent officials from the anti-naxalite, police, and forest departments, the couple to date supports 56 villages out of 83 tribal villages in the district - enrolling 120 students in schools, 30 students in colleges, building several homes, providing basic amenities and medical assistance, and creating employment opportunities, amongst other things. The steady flow of information from the anti-naxalite officer Mr.Jai Ganesh, constant monetary assistance from Gowtham's friends from his college via the Village Bells Fund, occasional yet efficient work by empathetic volunteers, and steadfast support from good samaritans bolster the couple's commitment to tribal empowerment.

Nivetha and Gowtham communicated that while they distributed free groceries/food to several tribal villages during the pandemic, they were also mindful to stop the constant supply of essentials once the COVID restrictions ended in order not to encourage the communities to adopt laziness and stop working to earn their living. They stated, "We, now, apart from our routine visits, offer them aid only when required. The anti-naxalite officer Mr.Jai Ganesh updates us daily on each village's activities, well-being, and concerns, and we plan our efforts accordingly. We travel to a different village every day as a new problem arises daily that demands our immediate attention." They then spoke about a time when they pawned their gold jewellery to gather funds to help a woman on the verge of ending her life as she couldn't repay the unattainable money she owed to a powerful moneylender.

Contd.,

Many times, the couple spends several days staying with the tribal communities persuading honor students, burdened by various factors, to return to their college/employment training each time they come home during breaks. In another instance, they welcomed an honor student to stay at their home and hired a tutor to help her study well for the impending final exam that, if done well, would secure her a wellpaying job immediately after.

About the funds for their extensive philanthropic efforts - even after using all their income and donations for this worthy cause, the duo often incurs a shortage of money. "Several companies have contacted me to offer financial support as part of their CSR activity. Once that happens, things will be easier. Until then, we'll have to make do with things as we have been until now," Gowtham highlighted. Despite facing challenging situations regularly, Nivetha and Gowtham remain undeterred from their purpose. The powerful pair further added, "We are well aware that our work only scratches the surface in improving all their lives. The Tamil Nadu government extends comprehensive support for the welfare of the Adivasi community. However, what they need is safe facilities located closer to the villages. People here often refuse to study as they'll need to journey through long, life-threatening paths to reach the institutions.

This, along with the fear of being discriminated against and fear for their safety in hostels while studying/working, only worsens things. Many lives are also lost due to insufficient medical facilities nearby." They continued, "Humanity in people outside of these communities is also the need of the hour. We know of a tribal village where the members hide inside self-made burrows in the mud and maintain pin-drop silence at the slightest suspicion of human intrusion into their vicinity; they do this out of fear of the torture they might have to endure at the hands of the non-tribals. Many women still get sexually exploited by upper-caste men. A recent trend here is getting young educated tribal girls wedded to old, upper-caste unmarried men who want to maintain their image in society. You have matchmakers brainwashing these girls to quit their studies and accept these marriage proposals by tempting them with false hopes of a dignified life. It is obvious how these men will treat these tribal girls after marriage; therefore, we are now figuring out ways to end this gross charade."

When a teary-eyed me concluded this moving interview by asking what they thought was the solution to all this and what they intended to do next, Nivetha and Gowtham, together, compellingly replied: "Education! Equipping these marginalized groups with quality education and empowering them to hold positions of authority in various departments is crucial for positive change. We are now committed to educating as many children and young adults as possible. A humane approach and policy-based actions are also imperative to promote tribal development."

Gowtham Kannan and Nivetha Venkatesan also advocate eating traditional foods made from organic, local products to lead a healthy, ailmentfree life. After Gowtham cured his brain tumour with food alone and Nivetha healed her arthritis the same way - by eliminating modern foods like bread, chips, refined oil, and more and consuming only traditional, organic, locallysourced items, they are now helping others by educating about the health benefits of this type of diet.

More Power to the Dynamic Duo !

Article by Deepika Kamalesh Art.Knowledge







1 : Who inspired you to start a career in Art ?

I have been practising art since I was a young child, and when my parents realised how much I enjoyed it, they enrolled me in Pancha Chitra, an art school run by artist Parudhi Gnanam. I then carried on refining my abilities in this field. 2 : How many days / Months it took for you to draw a first face ?

Despite spending several hours to complete my first attempt at drawing a face, I was still able to find errors in it. I eventually spent years practicing art before I could complete a portrait in ten to fifteen minutes. I made a goal to draw a portrait every day starting in 2022.

3 : What other kinds of artwork you do?

I am proficient in a variety of artistic medium. I includes pencil shading, water colouring, acrylic, oil, and digital painting. I am pleased to say that I am very good at acrylic painting.

4 : What are the basic skills required for someone to start learning this art ?

Learning this art requires a great deal of dedication, practice & Passion. As an art teacher, I've seen students who expect to draw flawlessly from the start, but instead of giving up, they must take small steps towards mastery.

5 : Is this career profitable ?

Yes. Once we find our niche in the market. As a final-year B.Arch student, I pay my expenses with the money I make from art. I teach art to self sustain and this make me to be a happy freelancer.

6 : What do you think is your best achievement in this career till date ?

I teach art classes on my own. For the past three years, I have been teaching art classes. I see it as a success. I am able maintain it whilst pursuing my academic goals simultaneously.

7 : Mention some unforgettable moments or people you came across in your career ?

I do on-stage live painting performances. I painted Kamala Haasan's face appearing on his movie 'Vikram'. Luckily, I was given an appointment to present him the painting. **8 : What are the challenges you faced in this**

career ?

As a college student, I must maintain a balance between my architectural career and my artistic passion. There are moments when I find it difficult to fit in my artistic activity. Maintaining balance in my education & art is a challenge.

9 : What are your future goals ?

Building my own successful architectural firm is my ultimate goal whilst pursuing my art simultaneously.

10 : What kind of support you think you need to achieve your goals better and faster ?

I would be very grateful if you could put me in touch with people who need my artistic or architectural services. It could be the greatest support I have ever had.

 Art.Knowledge Interviews ~
 N.S. Prathyugh, Freelance Artist, Coimbatore Contact No : +91 93845 85735



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