



Hashtag: The Symbol That Changed Social Media

bserved on August 23, International Hashtag Day marks the anniversary of the first use of the hashtag symbol (#) on Twitter in 2007. What began as a simple way to group conversations has now become a global digital tool that drives trends, movements, and real-time engagement across platforms. From #ThrowbackThursday to #BlackLivesMatter, hashtags have transformed how we communicate, advocate, and connect online. International Hashtag Day celebrates this symbol's cultural impact, highlighting its role in shaping modern discourse, amplifying voices, and bringing communities together in the ever-evolving world of social media.

#FAMILY BONDS

A Modern Crisis

A quick "How are you?" via text does not carry the same warmth or presence as a face-to-face talk.



In today's rapidly changing world, one of the most profound yet often overlooked shifts is the weakening of family bonds. The family, once the cornerstone of emotional, moral, and social support, is facing a slow but steady erosion. Modern life, characterized by busyness, mobility, and digital engagement, has redefined the ways people connect, often leaving traditional family relationships neglected or fractured.

In the past, families lived closely, sometimes even in multigenerational households. Grandparents, parents, and children shared everyday life, supporting each other through every stage of growth and aging. Family ties were not just emotional but practical, with shared responsibilities and mutual reliance. Today, this model has been replaced by more fragmented living. Parents and children may live in different cities or countries, often connected only by occasional phone calls or holiday visits.

One of the biggest contributors to this shift is urban migration and the pursuit of individual success. Young people leave their hometowns in search of education or job opportunities, often settling far from their families. As life becomes busier and more career-focused, time for family interactions shrinks. Even when family members live under the same roof, quality time together is often sacrificed to work demands, social commitments, or screen time.

Technology, while offering tools to stay connected, has paradoxically deepened emotional distances. Text messages, social media, and video calls have replaced long, meaningful conversations. These forms of communication, though instant, can

lack depth. A quick "How are you?" via text does not carry the same warmth or presence as a face-to-face talk. Over time, relationships maintained primarily through screens can become shallow and mechanical.

Cultural shifts and generational differences further strain family relationships. In many cultures, the idea of family obligation is seen as less important than personal freedom and self-expression. Older generations may feel neglected or misunderstood, while younger people often feel judged or restricted by traditional expectations. These misunderstandings create a quiet but growing emotional divide.

The consequences of vanishing family bonds are significant. Elderly parents may experience loneliness and abandonment. Younger individuals, though seemingly connected to the world, may lack emotional support, guidance, and a true sense of belonging. Without strong family roots, people can feel untethered, drifting through life without a deep sense of identity or purpose.

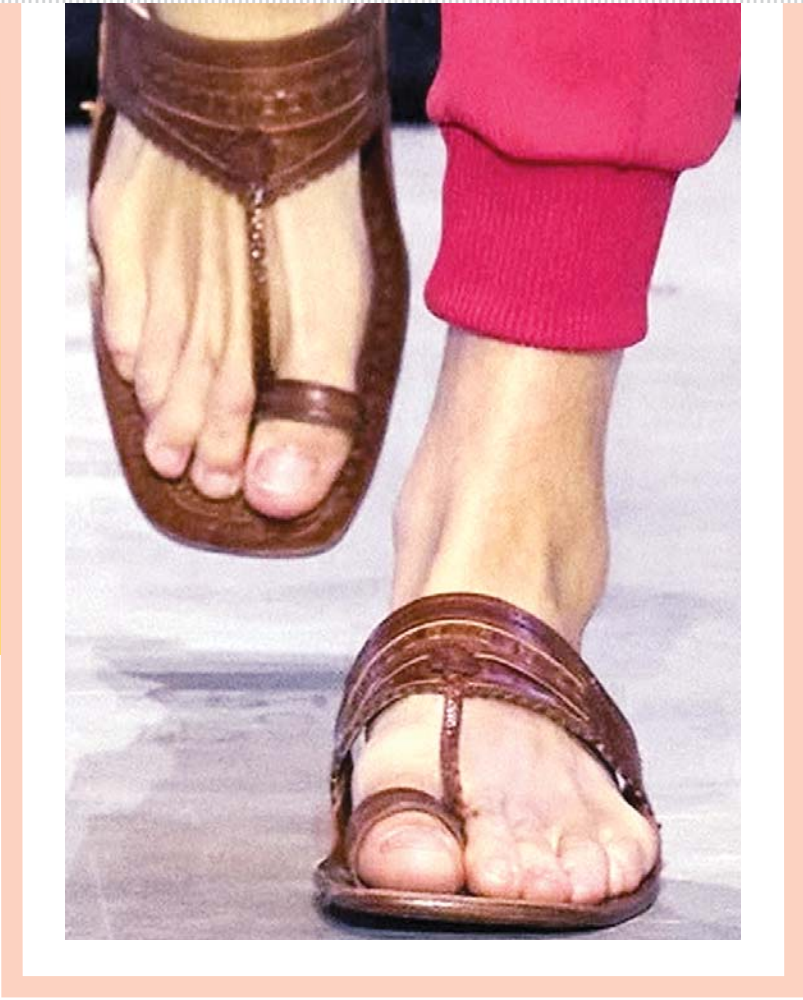
Yet, all is not lost. Rebuilding family bonds requires intention, time, and empathy. Simple efforts, like regular visits, shared meals, storytelling, or celebrating traditions, can go a long way in nurturing connection. Listening without judgment and seeking to understand one another's perspectives can bridge generational gaps.

In a world that often celebrates independence and convenience, choosing family may seem like a challenge. But strong family ties offer something irreplaceable: a sense of unconditional love, history, and belonging. Reclaiming these bonds can bring stability, joy, and meaning in an otherwise disconnected age.

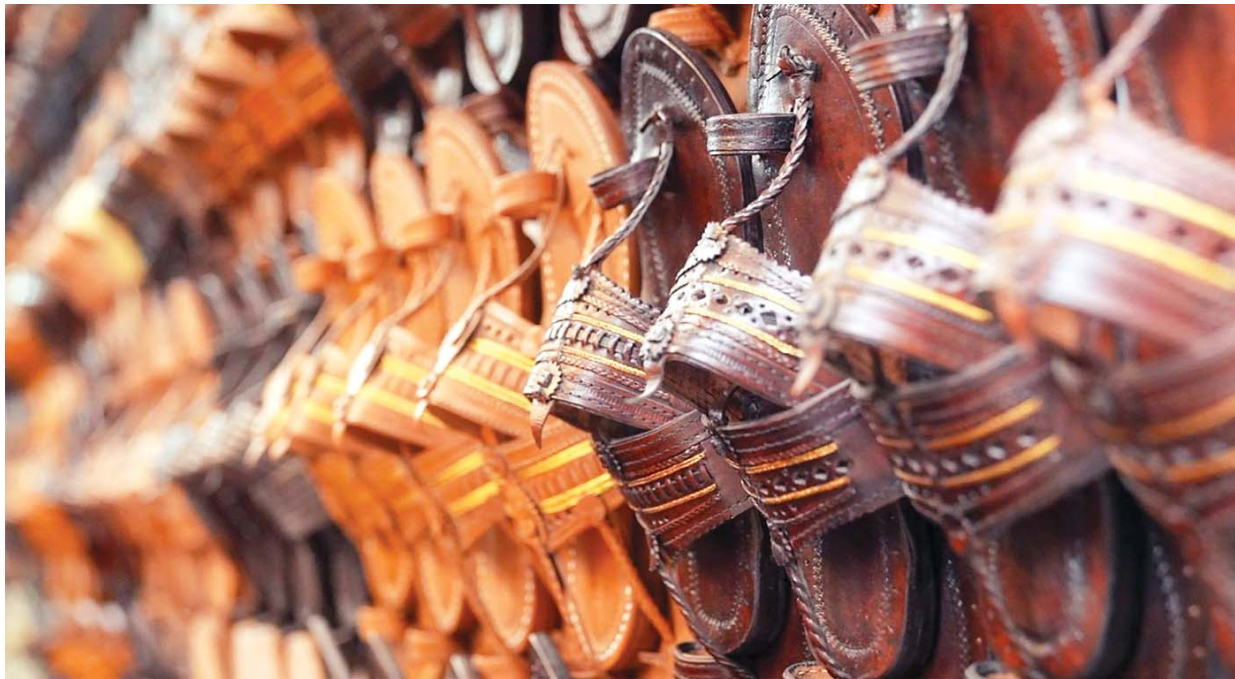


In the highly competitive landscape of fashion, some argue that brands also don't get enough time to think through the cultural ramifications of their choices. But critics point out that any borrowing needs to be underpinned by respect and acknowledgement, especially when these ideas are repurposed by powerful global brands to be sold at incredibly high prices.

Why Prada-and other luxury brands-keep getting India wrong



#ACKNOWLEDGE



them on a global scale. In the highly competitive landscape of fashion, some argue that brands also don't get enough time to think through the cultural ramifications of their choices. But critics point out that any borrowing needs to be underpinned by respect and acknowledgement, especially when these ideas are repurposed by powerful global brands to be sold at incredibly high prices.

"Giving due credit is a part of design responsibility. It's taught to you in design school and brands need to educate themselves about it," says Shefalee Vasudev, the editor-in-chief of Voice of Fashion. Not doing so, she adds, is "cultural neglect towards a part of the world which brands claim to love."

Estimates vary about the size of India's luxury market, but the region is widely seen as a big growth opportunity. Analysts from Boston Consulting Group say that the luxury retail market in India is expected to nearly double to \$14bn by 2032. Powered by an expanding and affluent middle class, global luxury brands are increasingly eyeing India as a key market as they hope

Prada has been a great starting point to demand better accountability from brands and designers who, until now, have largely remained unchallenged. It is an opportunity for India, too, to reflect on the ways it can support its own heritage and uplift it.

to make up for weaker demand elsewhere. But not everyone shares the optimism.

Arvind Singhal, Chairman of consultancy firm Technopak, says a big reason for the seeming indifference is that most brands still don't consider India a significant market for high-end luxury fashion. In recent years, many high-end malls with flagship luxury stores have opened up in big cities, but they rarely see significant footfall.

"Names like Prada still mean nothing to a majority of Indians. There is some demand among the

super-rich, but hardly any first-time customers," Mr. Singhal says. "And this is simply not enough to build a business, making it easy to neglect the region altogether."

Anand Bhushan, a fashion designer from Delhi, agrees. He says that traditionally, India has always been a production hub rather than a potential market, with some of the most expensive brands in Paris and Milan employing Indian artisans to make or embroider their garments. "But that still does not mean you can just blatantly lift a culture without understanding the history and context and brand it for millions of dollars," he adds. The frustration, he says, is not focused on any one label but has been building for years.

The most memorable misstep, according to him, took place during the Karl Lagerfeld 'Paris-Bombay' Métiers d'Art collection, showcased in 2011. The collection featured sari-draped dresses, Nehru-collared jackets and ornate headpieces. Many called it a fine example of cultural collaboration, but others argued it relied heavily on clichéd

imagery and lacked authentic representation of India. Others, however, say no brand can afford to write off India as insignificant.

"We might not be the fastest-growing luxury market like China, but a younger and more sophisticated generation of Indians with different tastes and aspirations is reshaping the landscape of luxury," says Nonita Kalra, editor-in-chief of online luxury store Tata CliQ Luxury. In the case of Prada, she says the brand seemed to have made a "genuine oversight," evident from the lengths to which it has gone to rectify its mistake.

For Ms. Kalra, the problem is a broader one, where brands based in the west and run by a homogenous group of people, end up viewing consumers in other parts of the world through a foreign lens. "The lack of diversity is the biggest blind spot of the fashion industry, and brands need to hire people from different parts of the world to change that," she says.

"But their love and respect for Indian heritage is genuine." The question of cultural appropriation is complex, and the debates it sparks online can seem both overblown and eye-opening. And while there are no simple answers, many feel that the outrage around Prada has been a great starting point to demand better accountability from brands and designers who, until now, have largely remained unchallenged. It is an opportunity

for India, too, to reflect on the ways it can support its own heritage and uplift it.

Weavers toil for weeks or months to finish one masterpiece, but they often work in precarious conditions without adequate remuneration and with no protection for their work under international intellectual property laws.

"We don't take enough pride and credit our own artisans, allowing others to walk all over it," Ms. Vasudev says.

"The trouble also is that in India, we have simply too much. There are hundreds of different craft techniques and traditions, each with its constantly evolving motif directory going back centuries," says Laila Tyabji, Chairperson of Dastkar, which promotes crafts and craftspeople.

"We bargain and bicker over a pair of fully embroidered juthis (shoes) but have no issues over buying a pair of Nike trainers at 10 times the price, even though the latter has come off an assembly line while each juthi has been painstakingly and uniquely crafted by hand," she says. And while that continues, she says, foreign designers and merchandisers will do the same. Real change can only happen, she says, "when we ourselves respect and appreciate them, and have the tools to combat their exploitation."

rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com



The iconic Kolhapuri sandals drew attention after Prada was accused of replicating the design.

#MEDICINE

Concussion In Children Can Go On



Lightheadedness, dizziness, problems with balance and vision, difficulty performing a tandem gait test, where participants are instructed to walk heel-to-toe, indicate concussion.

A brief, standardized physical exam for sport-related concussive brain injuries in children and adolescents can identify who's at risk for persistent post-concussion symptoms. The Buffalo Concussion Physical Examination's Risk of Delayed Recovery (RDR) score is the first decision rule to help clinicians, who aren't concussion specialists, quickly identify which children are at risk for persistent post-concussion symptoms (PPCS) within 10 days of injury and should be referred to a specialist for focused treatment.

A decision rule is an evidence-based tool that helps clinicians make diagnostic and therapeutic decisions. As reported in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, the decision rule proved to be highly accurate, correctly identifying who would go on to develop PPCS in 85% of cases.

"The Buffalo Concussion Physical Exam takes less than



10 minutes to do and uses physician exam techniques that every clinician already has," says first author M. Nadir Haider, assistant director of research in the Concussion Management Clinic in the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at University at Buffalo and UBMD Orthopedics and Sports Medicine.

PRIMARY SIGNS OF DELAYED CONCUSSION RECOVERY

The new decision rule is based on an observational study conducted from 2016 to 19 on 270 children and adolescents with sport-related concussions, who were seen within 14 days of injury at UBMD Orthopedics and Sports Medicine clinics in Western New York. (Physicians in UBMD Physicians' Group are faculty members at the Jacobs School.)

"The purpose was to identify what is predictive of delayed recovery in children and adolescents with concussion," says Haider. "We wanted to develop something very straightforward that any provider, from a school nurse to a medical resident to a primary care provider, could easily do," says Haider.

The researchers found that the primary signs that indicate that a child or adolescent with a concussion will have delayed recovery were:

- Lightheadedness and dizziness on standing up from a supine position.
- Problems with balance and vision that indicate issues with the vestibular ocular reflex, the reflex that allows us to maintain stability in vision while moving.
- Difficulty performing a tandem gait test, where participants are instructed to walk heel-to-toe.

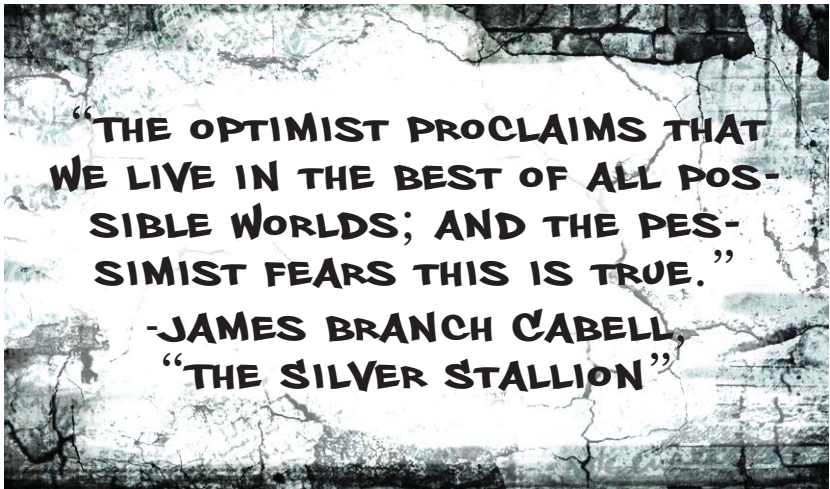
The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke and the National Center for Advancing Translational Science, both of the National Institutes of Health, funded the work.

standard of practice is to see which children do not recover, and this leads to unnecessary delays," says Haider. "This scoring system may circumvent the waiting period for those children at higher risk, expediting the treatment they need for a full recovery."

So, the current



THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman