

## #PLANTATION

### How Pesticides Threaten Our Daily Cup Of Coffee

If we want to enjoy our morning coffee in the future, we'll need to stop producing it like there is no tomorrow.



A comprehensive review of research looks at ways to protect coffee plants from pests without the overuse of pesticides.

Globally, people drink nearly three billion cups of coffee each day. When grown as a monoculture crop, coffee plants face a barrage of attacks by insects, bacteria and fungi. Climate change may also exacerbate these attacks. On larger coffee plantations in particular, this has led to the increased use of pesticides, the primary weapons that farmers use to combat unwanted guests.

In Brazil, the world's largest coffee producer and pesticide consumer, chemical pesticide use increased by 190% in a single decade. Estimates show that roughly 38 million kilograms of pesticides are used annually in Brazilian coffee production.

And since 2019, 475 new pesticides have been approved in Brazil. More than a third of these are not approved in the European Union due to their toxicity.

"The problem is that there are more and more reports of pesticide contamination in groundwater and ecosystems, and harmful symptoms and disorders among animals and humans in areas where coffee is grown from skin disorders, respiratory problems, to high blood pressure, organ damage, cancer, and cardiovascular disease. All of this seems to be linked to the use of pesticides in coffee production," says Athina Koutouleas, a newly graduated PhD fellow at the University of Copenhagen's department of geosciences and natural resource management.

Koutouleas is the lead author of a meta-study published in the journal Plant Pathology that reviews research regarding alternative plant protection strategies for coffee.

"If we want to enjoy our morning coffee in the future, we'll need to stop producing it like there is no tomorrow. Pesticides are effective against pests and plant diseases and can provide coffee farmers with a high yield in the short term. But in the long run you shoot yourself in the foot by destroying ecosystems and health at large," says Koutouleas.

The researchers point to a variety of strategies as sustainable alternatives to traditional chemicals. One of them is agroforestry—the cultivation of crops and trees on the same land. This method would return coffee growing back to

the coffee plant's "roots." "The coffee plant originated thousands of years ago in an environment shaded by a rich array of plants, shrubs, and trees in southwestern Ethiopia. This is the traditional way Ethiopian farmers grow coffee. It often has the advantages of minimizing pests and diseases while strengthening plant health, biodiversity, and ecosystems," says Koutouleas.

"Furthermore, agroforestry diversifies a farmer's income revenues as profits can be earned on both the coffee beans and secondary farm products such as wood, livestock feed, or fodder and other tropical cash crops such as vanilla or cinnamon.

"The challenge may be that some pests and diseases will tend to thrive in such a system. So, deciding on which combination of plants and trees offers the most value for the farmer and must be carefully planned. For example, should fast-growing banana trees be planted or hardwoods that can be harvested for timber?" Thus, the cultivation method must be adapted to local needs. It is no magic bullet, but in my view, it's the most sensible one," says Koutouleas.

The researchers also point to expanding the use of biological control where, instead of chemical pesticides, farmers introduce bacteria, fungi, and insects to serve as natural enemies for pathogenic organisms.

The third possible strategy highlighted by the researchers is a new genomic technique called RNA interference. Here, RNA molecules are sprayed onto a crop, which then turn off vital genes in the target organism that threatens the coffee plant. One of the primary advantages of the technique is that the substance only affects the targeted pest and is quick to degrade in the environment. This technique has been tested on a number of crops, but not yet on coffee.

Small-scale farmers cultivate 70 to 85% of the world's coffee on plots of land that are typically less than five hectares (approximately 12 acres). The vast majority of them do not use pesticides and already engage in agroforestry to one degree or another. The remaining are large-scale farmers, generally located in Brazil and Vietnam, who account for a disproportionate share of global production.

Koutouleas claims that the cultivation of coffee by these farmers pose the major problem.

And yes, Megha is almost never seen without the smudged kohl eye make up in the movie. While Nandita Das' ethnic take on modern clothes may not have made headlines in fashion magazines of its time, it did reflect (and resonate with) the style culture of real women in the early 2000s. And I have a feeling that it, in some or the other, rubbed off on director Shoojit Sirkar's mood board when he was first sat down to conceptualise Piku and how his heroine would look.



Piku's casual wears - like a loose shirt over a tee - were something regular people could very closely relate to.

No one can forget Deepika Padukone's natural doe eyes looking even more stellar with the very Bengali smeared kajal look.

## Was There A Bengali Girl Without Kajol? (...2)



Shreya Biswas  
Multimedia Journalist and editor

There are many more minute details in Piku that keeps bringing Podokhhep back to my mind. Like Bhaskor's hearing aid, which is often used to draw attention to Piku's stress when he is literally and figuratively not listening to her - it reminded me of Shashanka's constant complaints to his doctor about a hearing issue (which the physician never takes seriously). Then, there is the short fuse that both Megha and Piku come with, which not only define the strain and anxiety that comes with having aging parents but also the fierce defence mode that kids will jump into if anyone approaches to attack their folks.

Neither of the households seem to be able to function without the crutch of a full-time house help. The beauty of Podokhhep is that Shobita Mashi (played by Savitri Chatterjee) is very much a family member who makes vital decisions and has her own monopoly in the house that no one oversteps. She is not one to be undermined but is another elder to respect and take care of in Megha's eyes.

Speaking of hat tips, it is also hard to ignore the similarity of colour tones in both the movies, which seem to be lingering around the shades of red, brown, yellow, terracotta, etc. a lot - all colours that are generally reminiscent of traditional Bengal and/or give off the old school 'Calcutta' vibe.

And these colours are most pronounced in the two female leads' clothing. We all know the style impact that Piku aka Deepika Padukone's gorgeous ethnic modern office wears had on fashion around the time the movie came out in 2015.

Paring palazzos with long kurtis or a stole with a pair of jeans were not really a ground-breaking new revelations in the world of fashion at this point in time, but Piku's wardrobe did add a flair to this common practice and inspired many women to give this style another 'go' - especially on their way to work. At the same time, Piku's casual wears -



The presence of long and dangling jhumkas on both their ears are hard to miss as well.

### #MOVIE

But in Piku, Budhan exists in a space of constant disrespect. While clearly older than her in age, Piku not only addresses him by name and as 'tu', but is also quite rude in everything she has to say to him. Truth be told, I don't remember meeting any Bengali Kid ever who would get away with speaking to an older person this way and that includes someone who helps around the house.

I will never know if it was intentional or not, but in my mind, Piku tips its hat to Podokhhep when in a scene an inebriated Bhaskor Banerjee dances to Soumitra Chatterjee's famous song Jibone Ki Pabo Na from the 1969 movie, Teen Bhubaner Pare.

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And yes, Megha is almost never seen without the smudged kohl eye make up in the movie. While Nandita Das' ethnic take on modern clothes may not have made headlines in fashion magazines of its time, it did reflect (and resonate with) the style culture of real women in the early 2000s. And I have a feeling that it, in some or the other, rubbed off on director Shoojit Sirkar's mood board when

he was first sat down to conceptualise Piku and how his heroine would look. While the daughters are similar in more ways than one - both in terms of their outward style and personalities as well as their inner demons - the two fathers are of Piku and Podokhhep can barely be clubbed as birds of a feather. Apart from the broad parenting style difference we have already spoken about, they are also quite different in personality. Amitabh Bachchan's Bhaskor Banerjee is a loud and domineering person, with an extra helping of hypochondria and attention-seeking shenanigans - something that, I believe, was intentionally written into the character to bring in some comic relief in the movie.

Soumitra Chatterjee's Shashanka Palit, on the other hand, is an opinionated but a much more reversed person. He introspects and thinks, something that we do not see Mr Banerjee doing a lot. This side of him does start getting on your nerve when you see his passive-aggressive side rear its ugly head during his fights with his daughter. Honestly, I do appreciate Bhaskor Banerjee's fighting style more - at least he puts all his card on the table

like a loose shirt over a tee - were something regular people could very closely relate to (we all have done that at some point or the other). And no one can forget Deepika Padukone's natural doe eyes looking even more stellar with the very Bengali smeared kajal look.

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Both the films have had a resonating impact on its audiences, especially with daughters who share a deep bond with their fathers. And perhaps that is why I have approached both the movies with a dry and clinical eye, because I cannot emotionally relate to them. In more of a The Whale or an Udaan kind of girl when it comes to relating to the message of paternal love (or lack thereof).

Concluded



While Deepika Padukone can be seen sporting the smeared kajal look only once in Piku, Nandita Das' Megha is almost never seen without the smudged kohl eye make up in the movie Podokhhep.

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## World Industrial Design Day



Industrial designers envision products that fill homes, offices, hospitals, and schools. These visionaries serve diverse working environments and create innovations to help serve the leaders of the global economy. They work tirelessly and out of sight to give people the best tools of the trade. World Industrial Design Day is a day dedicated to the industrial designers that create the vision of the future. This day is for teaching people about the history of industrial design and potentially getting people interested in the profession.

## #UNCONVENTIONAL

### Transcending Boundaries with Music

Skand's 'Neo Electoro' represents a unique music offering that combines art, technology, and music to present a transformative experience. Through his mesmerizing sounds, Skand invites listeners to embrace reality, fostering awareness and connection with their surroundings. This groundbreaking album sets a new standard for artistic expression, pushing the boundaries of what can be achieved through the synergy of different art forms.



ing the inherent immersion found within his work.

Multi-dimensional Experience

What sets Skand apart is his debut album, 'Neo Electoro', in a manner that defies convention and immerses listeners in an extraordinary experience. This one-of-its-kind music event combines art, technology, and music to create an immersive journey into an alternate world.

Skand embarked on the creative journey of 'Neo Electoro' in November 2019, during a time of social and political unrest in India, as protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) were at their pinnacle. In the midst of these chaotic times, Skand began crafting his musical masterpiece, channelling his emotions into a collection of songs that would resonate deeply with listeners.

The recording process coincided with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown. Skand's determination and resilience allowed him to navigate the challenges posed by the unprecedented circumstances. In an atmosphere of unpredictability and chaos, he found solace in dedicating almost a year to writing, recording, and producing the album.

An Immersive Experience

Skand's fascination with synth sounds is at the core of 'Neo Electoro'. He explores the concept of creating unique sounds from a single constant electrical signal, allowing for infinite possibilities of modulation. The result is an atmospheric, ambient, and meditative music experience that envelops the listener, inducing a sense of immersion akin to the initial discomfort that leads to a meditative state. Skand himself explains, "We are always immersed," emphasizing

installations, all designed to transport the audience into a realm beyond their imagination. By incorporating various media forms, Skand defies the limitations of a singular medium, demonstrating the potential for artistic expression to transcend boundaries and engage with audiences in innovative ways.

"To showcase the album in this extraordinary manner, the selection of the venue played a pivotal role. The experiential exhibition is currently being held at the Orality Research Lab Foundation, located in Raja Park. This unique space serves as a hub for researching and exploring orality as an alternative medium to social media, while also critically examining the complex nature of exhibitions in contemporary arts. Within the foundation, visitors can enjoy a free reading room, featuring an extensive collection of books, and a screening room that showcases curated films by international curators. This choice of venue adds another layer of artistic depth to Skand's Neo Electoro, immersing attendees in a thought-provoking experience.

Fostering Awareness of Reality

The album serves as a profound commentary on the emotions and struggles experienced during the pandemic. Skand expertly captures the feelings of loneliness, strangeness, and the breakdown of everyday life. As the world grappled with political turmoil, soaring COVID-19 deaths, and a lack of certainty, Skand delves into themes of depression, anxiety, and the collapse of safety and security. The album's tracks also tackle a range of other concerns, from the refugee crisis to redefining masculinity, the implications of nationality, all within the broader context of feeling alienated and disconnected. Through his music, he invites listeners to confront their realities and engage with their environment, fostering awareness rather than escape.

It is apt to conclude with a few lines from one of his songs: "Towards the end Everything is sweeter Towards the end As long as you know that time can bend"

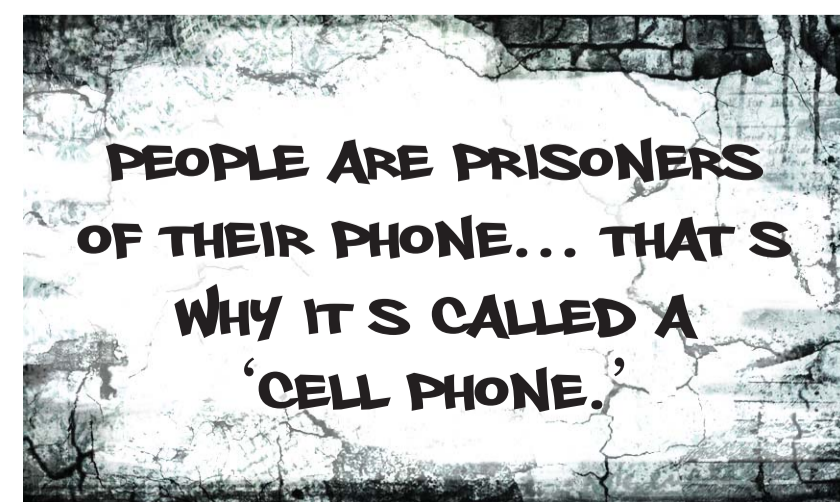
Towards the end Everyone is silent Towards the end They just nod their head and they all pretend"

Note: The exhibition is on till 13 July. To attend the exhibition, it is mandatory to RSVP on 737115976

Towards the end Everything is sweeter Towards the end As long as you know that time can bend

Towards the end Everyone is silent Towards the end They just nod their head and they all pretend"

## THE WALL



## BABY BLUES



## ZITS



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman