

A past overtaken by a fast moving world

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These days newspapers often have stories about the global recession, an increase in unemployment, gross domestic product, growth rates, crude oil prices or falling gold prices, but I sincerely doubt this makes any sense to the common man.

Generation after generation we hear older people saying "in our day" or "in those days" - and I have started saying the same. Is it just that we are aging, or has it been always the way the world has progressed? Let me rewind to a time when I was comfortable carrying a BD20 note in my wallet and would be unable to spend the whole amount in a week. What has changed?

Well, to start with, the need for communications has increased. Earlier, the justification was that businesses needed to always be connected. Now, it's the same even for individuals. So the once non-existent cost of mobile phones, mobile Internet, home Internet, Internet dongles and WiFi charges have come into play.

Secondly, super malls have cropped up everywhere. Simple purchases of groceries, milk and yoghurt do not happen anymore. You take a shopping cart, start browsing through the stalls, pick up anything and everything (often required items and mostly non-essential items on offer or sale). Now the shopping experience is all the more different and of course, all the more expensive.

Thirdly, the food joints offering the world's cuisine all within driving distance have turned us into food explorers. If it's a one-time venture, fine! But it doesn't stop there.

You then have to introduce your friends to the newly-discovered restaurant.

"That particular cheese item, what was it, ah well, that was very authentic."

"You must try this..."

I'm not sure whether we can really figure out whether the Italian or Mexican dishes on offer are authentic or not.

How good are we at judging the authenticity of a particular cuisine? Nevertheless, every trip costs you something - an unplanned and non-essential expense.

Four, there is the ever-growing need for home electronic gadgets. It's amazing. Remember the simple Yashica, with 36 photos a film roll? You had to wait until you finished the entire roll and then rush to the photo studio - and then wait till the guy developed it in a dark room. The expressions on your face to see a few of your photos that were overexposed or underexposed. Forget about the excitement and thrill of seeing the photos, it wasn't expensive then!

Now you have flashy digital cameras, camcorders and mobile phone cameras. Terabytes of storage are required to store the photos. Will you ever find that "one day" to sort the photos, delete the bad ones and retain the good ones? Maybe take a few for printing? Nope!

What used to be considered a small business is now available in most modern homes. And you keep buying these expensive portable hard disks to store those precious moments, which you are never going to view again! At least not frequently! The habit of showing your photo albums to guests is no longer to be seen.

Five, don't forget the days when we used to play merrily and return home by dusk. Inexpensive, eh? Now modern children are tuned to PlayStation and Xbox. If you can afford the capital expense of buying the consoles, what about the games? BD15 or BD20 for a game? Come on! That used to be my weekly expense before the dawn of this new era! What has changed? Everything around except the people of my generation and, of course, most of you readers in sync with what I have written.

Now, is it time to go shopping? It seems there is some special offer on digital cameras!

~Mohan Krishnamurthy

<http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/Print.aspx?storyid=358869>