

SELAH - PAUSE AND REFLECT

THE SLEEP DEFICIT

In the ever-expanding cities of India, where neon-lit offices glow well past midnight and screens flicker endlessly in the dark, a silent epidemic is taking hold – sleep deprivation. It is not just about feeling tired, it is about a society systematically undervaluing rest, glorifying exhaustion, and equating busyness with success. Indian households have long been built around discipline, responsibility, and the unspoken rule that productivity is paramount. The roots of hustle culture are deep, whether it's students burning the midnight oil, employees responding to work emails at ungodly hours, or homemakers starting their day before sunrise. In this framework, sleep becomes an afterthought, a dispensable luxury rather than a necessity. But this wasn't always the case. Traditionally, many smaller Indian towns and villages understood the body's natural rhythm; afternoon naps were not signs of laziness but a means of sustaining energy. Compare this with urban India today, where people pop melatonin supplements, track their sleep through smartwatches, and still wake up unrested. The idea of self-care has been distorted – what was once an organic, body-attuned practice has now become another checkbox in a productivity-driven lifestyle.

The phenomenon of "revenge sleep procrastination" has crept into urban India, especially among overworked professionals. It is the practice of delaying sleep to reclaim personal time after a long day of work. Scrolling endlessly through Instagram, binge-watching shows, or simply lying awake in rebellion against a tightly packed schedule, are quiet acts of resistance against a life dictated by deadlines.



But the price is high. Chronic sleep deprivation affects everything from memory retention to emotional regulation, leading to brain fog, irritability, and decision fatigue. A sleep-deprived brain does not merely experience fatigue, it undergoes a cognitive decline. The ability to concentrate weakens, recall falters, and even simple decision-making becomes a burden. Studies show that lack of sleep impacts the prefrontal cortex, the region responsible for logic and impulse control, making individuals more prone to anxiety, frustration, and, in extreme cases, depressive symptoms. The glorification of sleeplessness is not just about work; it extends to how we consume entertainment, socialize, and escape discomfort. Midnight is no longer a time for silence but a peak hour for scrolling, chatting, and binge-watching, fueling a cycle of artificial stimulation. The body protests, but we suppress its signals with stimulants, only to crash later. This disconnection from natural rhythms has numbed our ability to recognize what true rest feels like. Yet, in India, where mental health conversations are still emerging, this link between sleep and emotional well-being remains largely ignored.

Sleep deprivation is not just a personal issue; it is a systemic one. Work-from-home culture blurred the boundaries between professional and personal life, making sleep an even lesser priority. The Indian corporate landscape, with its expectations of being perpetually available, breeds an unhealthy cycle of early morning shifts, late-night deadlines, and minimal downtime eventually a 70-90 hour work week so to say. And when exhaustion catches up, the solution isn't rest – it's caffeine, energy drinks, or, in extreme cases, stimulant medications. While metropolitan India fights fatigue with quick fixes, rural India still honors the rest in its way. Many agrarian households rise with the sun and wind down as the day naturally slows. Afternoon breaks are still common in smaller towns, not because people are unproductive but because they recognize the body's need to reset.



Meanwhile, in big cities, rest is either stolen in short bursts or turned into a wellness industry, be it through meditation apps, expensive sleep therapies, or high-end mattresses promising deep sleep, all while ignoring the fundamental issue: a culture that does not value rest as essential. In a world that equates exhaustion with dedication, prioritizing sleep is a radical act. True self-care is not found in a supplement bottle or a 5-minute mindfulness routine squeezed between meetings, it is in the decision to honor the body's need for rest. Perhaps the core issue is that sleep requires surrender, a moment of letting go, something deeply uncomfortable in a culture wired for control and hyper-productivity. The no pain- no gain concept seems motivational on the surface level although it disrupts the importance of rest. The hustle culture which is widely promoted nowadays seems like - a never-ending marathon. A marathon where we are constantly running to achieve, to succeed, and sometimes even compete. The idea of slowing down and catching our breath seems unrealistic. The long work hours accompanied by unrealistic expectations lead to burnout, and inadequate rest severely impacts the ability to concentrate, lowers resilience and makes one feel physically fatigued.

The inability to rest is not just a logistical failure but a psychological one, a refusal to acknowledge our limits. In a society where every moment must be accounted for, sleep stands as a quiet rebellion. If we are to reclaim our cognitive sharpness, emotional stability, and overall well-being, sleep cannot remain an afterthought. India's silent epidemic of sleep deprivation will not be solved by better technology or quick fixes. It demands a shift, a cultural acknowledgment that rest is not the enemy of success but the foundation of it.

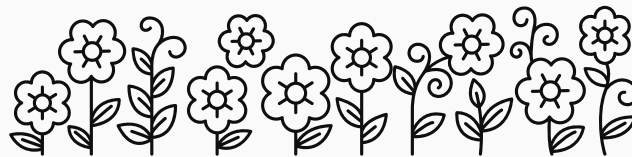


Things happening at Room:

- **Siyappa – an engaging lecture series by Room and Guftagu Therapy.** This collaborative initiative features 12 thought-provoking lectures by diverse speakers, each exploring unique themes related to mental health. Siyappa aims to spark lively discussions, foster critical thinking, and provide enriching learning experiences for all participants. With its dynamic format and focus on open dialogue, Siyappa invites you to join this journey of shared knowledge and a deeper understanding of the complexities of mental health in today's world.
- **Training and Supervision in Humanistic Psychotherapy –** Discover the foundational principles of Carl Rogers' person-centred approach with our 6-Month Training and Supervision Program in Humanistic Psychotherapy, designed specifically for beginner therapists. This program offers a supportive space to develop essential skills in empathy, active listening, and unconditional positive regard—hallmarks of the Rogerian approach. Through engaging lectures, experiential and reflective exercises, and collaborative peer supervision, participants will build confidence and competence in creating therapeutic relationships that empower clients toward growth and self-actualisation. Ideal for those new to humanistic therapy, this program provides a nurturing environment to explore and refine your practice while connecting with like-minded peers.
- **Training and Supervision in Existential Psychotherapy –** an immersive experience designed for professionals eager to deepen their understanding of existential therapy



This program explores core themes like freedom, meaning, responsibility, and death, blending theoretical insights with practical application through seminars, case discussions, and individualised supervision. Guided by seasoned experts, participants will enhance their therapeutic skills and cultivate greater authenticity in their practice. Whether you're experienced or new to existential approaches, this program offers a transformative space to reflect, grow, and better support clients in navigating life's fundamental questions.



Monthly Takeaway

"When you are resting because you are worn out, you need to remember that you are not doing nothing. You are doing exactly what you need to do. You are recovering. You are healing. You are growing."

– Matt Haig, The Comfort Book

