



POTENTIAL DISCUSSION TOPICS

NRI-Natter will feature talented Indian non-elitist middle-class/salaried-class people with the following ‘assets’:

- Positive energy and a sharp mind full of ideas and enthusiasm
- Ability (or willingness to learn) to articulate views clearly, fearlessly, cordially
- Global mindset (~~not insular, regressive thinking~~)
- Cooperative, can-do spirit; win-win outlook (~~not pessimism, negativity, cynicism and one-upmanship~~)
- Social-mindedness (able and willing to mingle)
- Activist attitude (fire in the belly)
- Entrepreneurial instinct
- Determination to actualize full potential, realize dreams and contribute (give back) to society

Our members are part of citizenry living in India as well as the Indian diaspora (NRIs, PIOs and OCIs); they hail from different walks of life and span generations.

So, topics will be not only timely but strategic, and relevant to the audience – an Indian situation, scenario or issue that needs to be revisited afresh for a global perspective.

The larger goal is to gain new insights and share them with the community, thereby building public opinion; and then, explore or develop, through collective efforts, sensible solutions.

Such solutions will likely be in the form of feasible ventures that can produce relevant products, services or content/knowledge.

Topics should either strengthen the **NRI-Natter** platform itself or help find great venture ideas.

Here’s a sneak preview of the topics short-list:

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1) God’s own country or a nation of Mammon-minded middle-class marionettes?

Cyclones. Torrential rains. Floods. Earthquakes. Landslides. Tsunamis. Droughts. Mishaps ... Age-old problems. Predictable consequences. Are loss of life and destruction of property inevitable? Or, are the devastation and havoc avoidable?

Here’s the typical pattern: Calamity or catastrophe > Widespread damage > Media circus > SOS messages for rescue > Outpouring of grief, sympathy, donations, fund-raisers > Scramble for relief funds > Politics > Blame-game > End of story, until the next one.

In between, when crucial, life-saving lessons must be learned, deliberated and acted upon, life goes on, marked instead by ignorance, apathy, focus on short-term self-oriented considerations.

Some progress has been made in forecasting, disaster/crisis management, relief and rehabilitation. At the society/community level, however, very little conscious thought and effort go into long-term research, planning and preventive measures.

Can global Indians make a difference by doing two things? 1. Refuse to react in a knee-jerk, familiar manner to the next catastrophe. 2. Bring about focus on prevention and avoidable loss of life and property through public opinion, awareness and, maybe, direct role in related products, services, knowledge creation.

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2) Can Gen X (1965-80s), Millennials (1980-2000) and Gen Z (2000 onward) cooperate and collaborate in this digital age?

These Indian middle-class cohorts (groups/generations) with different mindsets, attitudes, values, aspirations, dreams and expectations are based across the planet. Can they understand each other and collaborate globally in the digital age, to make worthy contributions that can make the world a better place?

What can they learn from each other? How does each cohort view the other two cohorts? Are there better ways of relating to each other for productive interactions and concerted, coordinated action?

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3) The Technology Juggernaut: Are the Indian middle class allowing themselves to be enslaved by technology without questioning the onslaught?

Or, can we figure if there are better ways of making technology a good servant, rather than a bad master? Is technology creating a divide between the Gen X on one side and the Millennials and Gen Z on the other? Can these three cohorts cooperate and collaborate to come up with better ways of making technology serve the real needs/priorities of the society?

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4) Are the Indian middle class unaware that for all of our society's problems and ills, the solution, perhaps the panacea, lies right in their palm, in the form of unexploited scope for entrepreneurship?

We believe the full solution to current problems is *not* in the reform of politicians, governments, bureaucracy, or wayward youth. Could it be that part of the solution also lies in the reform of the world of business, to reorient it to the real needs and priorities of the society, and make it sustainable and more environmentally friendly?

Can an enlightened, proactive middle class enter the world of business through collective social enterprises (a new form of cooperative startups or ventures), unleash their creative energies, actualize their full potential and honour their spiritual obligation to the society and the planet? Can the middle class play a problem-solving role in society, and *complement* the efforts of governments and existing institutions, mechanisms and systems?

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5) Holistic education, environment protection and public health system -- which of the three is most important to India?

Can the Indian middle class transform these three fields themselves by coming together and launching a new form of cooperative or group entrepreneurial ventures?

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6) Can big data and artificial intelligence be used creatively and sensibly to make life really simpler and more productive for the vast Indian middle class?

Why do the salaried-class need to file I-Tax returns every year – can't existing technology and data at the level of employers, banks and I-Tax Department be connected and integrated, so that billions of man-hours can be used for more productive purposes?

Similarly, why can't voter ID card, passport, PAN card, Aadhar card, etc, be integrated, saving a lot of bother?

In fact, why can't governments use secure channels to connect their citizen databases and digitalize visa process, global travel and cross-border personal banking?

By using big data and AI, can farmer suicides be averted and agriculture/farming made a fashionable, lucrative career, thereby reversing the impact of urbanization?

(Theoretically, when you develop precise metrics to determine food consumption locations globally, logistics can be developed to ensure precise supplies to meet local needs, using the same amount of food produced. For this, you need to reduce food wastage at restaurants, hotels, office canteens, eateries and events. This will broad-base demand/markets, creating steady revenue for farmers, and sustainable agriculture. The middle class can explore and exploit business opportunities in this potential field – that is, apply technology to solve real-life problems, and secure your own future as well as honour your spiritual obligation.

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You are most welcome to contribute ideas (topics in the format above) for future discussion. We shall consider your suggestions.

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