

## **Governance of Sleep: Story of Sleeping Bodies and Networks of Discourse**

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**Abstract:** *This essay engages with the “government” of sleep that is constituted by discursive regularities as well as normative procedures. Sleep is not only regulated by the state but by different modes that involve the social as well as economic conditions. The essay uses a Foucauldian lens to look at the discourse around sleep and the technological interventions that mediate between human subjects and objects. It is in this context of neo-liberalism that this essay examines the governance of sleeper’s bodies imbricated within the nexus of power relations. With the coming of age of techno-social interaction, not only is sleep commodified but the universal necessity of it, is packaged within the 24/7 global productivity. Drawing from Michel Foucault’s concept of power and discipline, Bruno Latour’s idea of mediation via objects producing hybrids, and Simon J. William’s formulation of sleep, I argue for the kind of mediation that makes sleep a hybrid concept in itself. The essay constitutes the general conditions and problems of the “government of sleep” consisting of a more discursive and transcendental orientation to constitute the overall analytic of sleep as a field of control, mobilisation and suppression within modern capitalism. The essay lays out the specific technologies of the governance/ government of sleep that the grid of power in societies determined by conditions of capitalist production and extraction forge.*

**Keywords:** Sleep, everyday life, Neoliberalism, power, vagrant.

### ***Introduction***

‘How strange’, said Jinny, ‘that people should sleep, that people should put out the lights and go upstairs. They have taken off their dresses, they have put on white nightgowns. There are no lights in any of these houses. There

is a line of chimney-pots against the sky; and a street lamp or two burning, as lamps burn when nobody needs them. The only people in the streets are poor people hurrying. There is no one coming or going in this street; the day is over.' (Woolf 1931: 58)

The act of sleeping even in its nascent state is not just limited to the physiological domain, to be dealt with only as a fixed and stable state with no possible alterity. Sleeping, as posed by Brian Taylor (1993) and Simon J. Williams (2005), is social, cultural and political despite the seemingly static facet that is represented. With the onset of industrialization and ongoing fast capitalism, sleep patterns have changed over time, due to the demand from the labour force and the need for "productivity". Jonathan Crary (2013) puts forward, the economic acceleration that accompanies social changes, as something that promotes the significance of "wakefulness". To look at the regulations around sleep, the film *Cities of Sleep*, will be analysed and drawn from to articulate the myriad ways in which the questions formulated by Brian Taylor, are discussed.<sup>1</sup> This is a sociological investigation, that will dive into the socio-cultural dimension of sleep and the forms of mediations that constitute the sleepers' bodies.

Sociology has undergone an interesting theoretical and methodological turn. There has been a paradigmatic shift and mass surveys have been replaced by in-depth, interpretative and qualitative procedures. According to Piotr Sztompka (2008), the focus of Sociology has shifted from the abstract level to the level of everyday life, placing significance on trivial and everyday experiences. Among the simple and most typical human experiences like anxiety, risk, fashion, shopping, intimacy, love, sex and many more, "sleep" as an area of sociological study, has been ignored for a very long time. In the discipline of sociology, sleep has only recently come into prominence. Sleep has been long ignored not just within the discipline of sociology and anthropology but also within other disciplines. With few exceptions, the shift in the focus from something as "taken-for-granted" and mundane as sleep, is only something that has been observed in the twenty-first century (Marinache 2015). This does not mean that the idea of sleep did not exist or the concept, because we see the association of sleep with death, pain, pleasure, and more among poets from the sixteenth century like Shakespeare, to Keats and Coleridge, and even Plato.<sup>2</sup> However, sleep has never been a subject of rigorous investigation, despite its universal significance and cultural variation.

The "doing of sleep" is not limited to the physiological basis but rather has social implications as well. Sleep has its institutions, with a complex field of

regulation, hence evidently bio-political. Among many other ways of examining sleep, I am concerned with the regulatory aspect of the sleeping body in this era of neoliberalism. This regulation however is through varied mechanisms and has embedded cultural connotations. The shift in the sleeping pattern and its institutionalization is similar to Foucault's genealogical tracing of shifts in power by examining modes of punishment. Sleep then occurs within networks of mediated quasi-subjects and objects, that constitute the paraphernalia associated with it.

### ***Building Wall to Sleep***

A. Roger Ekirch (2001) looks at Pre-Industrial Britain and argues how sleep was segmented, non-restorative and disruptive. He focuses on bi-phasic sleep, that is after a period of waking from the first sleep, followed by a second sleep. The traditional mode of repose, he argues is vibrant and enormous with dreams, bedtime rituals, and the differences within the social strata (Ekirch 2001). The pre-industrial period often observed public sleeping, thereby sharing spaces to sleep. Not only was sleeping in open and public spaces evident, sleeping during daytime but was also common. Following industrialization, enclosures led to private spaces with locked doors and isolated sleeping. Private spaces were segregated, that is different rooms were allotted to allow, "better" sleep. This was accompanied by changes in the meanings associated with the paraphernalia of sleep, like the bed, pillow, sheets, blankets and more.<sup>3</sup> He thus argues, how sleep becomes consolidated into a singular form, and the engagement with dreams, and stories loses their vivacity. The way we sleep and when we sleep gradually is pushed towards normative standards, with the gradual erasure of segmented sleep and privatization of it. This however is specific to the context of Britain, and even though more enclosed spaces have come about to allow sleep to be private and "improved", public sleeping has not completely been erased. Rather, the enclosing of spaces of sleep has only clearly laid out the division, of who gets to sleep within these gated and enclosed spaces and who doesn't. In India, people are often seen sleeping outside, on rikshaws, on vans, on roads, on dividers, and bridges. But it is not just the homeless who sleep outside, or those whose occupation is tied to it, but is also visible otherwise as well. People often sleep outside on cots, despite having a roof over their heads. The irony however is how, sleeping outside is also romanticized, and associated with being "free", is very visible in popular culture. *Zindagi na Milegi Dobara*, a Bollywood film, has a scene where Katrina Kaif and Hrithik Roshan, lie on the ground

gazing at the sky and stars, and Katrina talks about how freedom is supposed to feel. Gazing into the stars and the night sky like the older times, is a narrative often represented vividly. People travel miles to sleep under the open sky, trying to get away from the urban bustle and outside of large buildings and apartment complexes, to be amidst “nature”.

Disciplining of bodies is not new, but Foucault provides the historical shift in the methods that continue the disciplinary regime. Not only were bodies capitalised on, but even time was organized to provide maximum efficiency (Foucault 1991). This is also evident in Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (2005) where wasting time for Protestants was considered a sin and against the calling that they were to serve for. This led to a culture of hard work, fewer holidays, and bodily ascetic practices, that rendered social interactions a luxury and “time became money” of which sleep was a part. However, as Williams points out, sleep not only works within the economy of time but is rather bound with ‘suppression and control of bodily needs and desires’ (2011: 30).<sup>4</sup> What this indicates is, how sleep is in itself a bodily desire that needs to be repressed to allow the body for more “productive” work, as sleep is considered laziness. This kind of disciplining occurs through the creation of norms, that construe sleep as not just non-productive, but rather anti-productive, something that derails the standard of being able to put in hours of labour.

### ***Tracking Sleeping Bodies***

Latour and Foucault both bring in the conversation of mediation around the body- technological or otherwise, to argue how the everyday is being governed by the “bio-industry”. Latour brings in both the subject and object together (yet separated), focusing on the “affective” as well as the technical, to counter the bio-power that produces mechanical bodies (Latour 2004). By focusing on the subjectivity of objects and not just their passive consumption by humans, he portrays their effect within networks like medical tests, travelling in a car, delivering food and more. How human and material or subject and object then intersect in various networks, humans become highly-decentred and thereby mediators (Latour 1993). Co-agency of the network of gun citizenship can be an example of intentionality - a person’s intention or the gun’s fault? - posed by Latour. Human senses, for instance, are interconnected to produce a sensed environment of objects. The way they are hierarchized; certain kinds of senses, like sight being hegemonic-

the achievement of the “eye”. Be it the eye of the camera or the human, they both mediate in controlling and establishing power relations.

Sleep, too is mediated not just by sociocultural norms, but also by technology which is part of the economy that sleep also partakes in. The commodification of sleep has introduced a whole new nexus that sleep is associated with. Not only are objects like beds, mattresses, pillows, and blankets, re-envisioned, by re-making their purposes and remodelling the objects, but also digital medium has provided a hyper-extension of ourselves. The constant engagement with phones or rather social media platforms, in itself, produces the relation of quasi-subject and quasi-object as Latour posits.

There are numerous websites, that provide us ways of healthy and sound sleep. The moment I “Googled” “how to sleep”, the dropdown included, instantly, in 5-minutes, 10 seconds! There seems to be no difference between instant noodles and instant sleeping. Healthline.com provides numerous tips like reverse psychology, visualization, acupressure etc.<sup>5</sup> Spending a lot of time trying to fall asleep is counter-productive, as it minimizes the amount of sleep (but it also portrays the disorders associated with sleep). The website provides tips not just for instant sleep, but in precise amounts of time - ten, sixty, one-twenty seconds - to choose from. Going back to Foucault, this is a reminder of discourse production that not only governs time but rather contours it to the bare minimum. The methods involve military methods, breathing methods, image distractions and more. All of this information surrounds the association of health which is of great importance. Not only do we find websites containing articles around sleep like the one mentioned, but they also appear in magazines that preach a “healthy lifestyle”.

We will often find news reports on sleep deprivation in India, “the second most sleep-deprived country” or “93% Indians are sleep deprived”, and these continue to argue for eight hours of sleep at night, for a healthy life.<sup>6</sup> We do see the burnout caused by healthcare professionals themselves, due to lack of sleep and the multiple tasks that pertain to their social position (Saha 2022). The labouring body thus often lacks the necessary sleep, and also this lack is predominantly gendered. What however becomes interesting, is this deprivation or lack being constructed as an individual issue rather than a system one. Sleepiness especially daytime or excessive sleepiness, is also simultaneously a problem that is raised, which requires social and individual attention. This conundrum then, again seems to be slippery, as both sleep and lack of it have become a concern. The discursive practices of sleep are decontextualized and delocalized, coalescing into the

dissemination of knowledge. Foucault argues that the body is an important site for the exercise of knowledge and power, but for this very practice, there is a production of docile bodies. The production of these docile bodies serves the purpose of normalized institutional coercion. Kroll-Smith and Gunter (2005) argue that discourses do not move or attach themselves only to institutions but rather have myriad mediums of operation. In the neo-liberal economy, digital mediums have been added to print and other electronic sources, further diffusing the modes of governance. From written blogs to visual illustrations, the discursive field of sleep has expanded with expansion in the interaction with multiple digital interfaces.

This is not just limited to magazines and websites but also extends to apps and objects. Sleep aids or objects have become a booming industry that sells the idea of sound sleep. NBC News published an article in 2017 stating the expenditure by Americans on sleeping aids and remedies amounted up to \$41 billion and expected that to rise to \$52 billion by this year.<sup>7</sup> The “smart” products range from curtains to bulbs, temperature-regulating sheets, sleep-tracking watches, glasses, and even a coaching app. Sleep trackers for instance allow us to maintain a record of sleeping hours, and allows us to regulate them. These objects mediate sleep for millions around the world engrossed in consumerist culture. Neo-liberalist culture not only mediates between nature and culture but often blurs the line between subject and object. The proliferation of gadgets that promote sleep, become part of the network that produces hybrids. The gadgets control senses not only of sight, but also smell (use of essential oils), touch (what we sleep in, and sleep on), auditory (noise cancelling headphones or relaxing music) and even focus on what we eat.<sup>8</sup> The importance of sleep gains a resurgence, transcending from it being a luxury to being critical for the brain. Another shift is then observed, a shift from sleep laboratories to the techno-social dimension of sleep within our everyday (2011: 43). Sleep is to be managed by us, on an everyday basis, as we are responsible for the lack or abundance of it.

The narrative created then is that of problematizing the condition of sleep itself, though not addressing the systemic and institutional issues of sleep, that lead to the lack of it, but rather focusing on self-disciplining to control the sleeping bodies. So, what the discourse around sleep does is not display, how sleep disorders, or lack of sleep, might be entrenched in issues of work, gender, class and more, but rather puts the onus on individuals to train themselves. What this means is that lack of sleep often occurs through the gendered nature of labour or role, of where one sleeps and with whom,

and all of these are linked to normative social standards that are created and expected to abide by. The problem discussed, isn't what the lack of sleep means for the body, for its association with mental health, but its implications on being productive. Rather than addressing issues that are rooted in lack of sleep, which has been created by the capitalist economy itself, by creating the extensive demand for labour and denouncing sleepiness, the discourse around sleep engages with creating more objects and more methods to induce sleep efficiently. Sleep clinics, labs and thereby the medical arena target the bodies that identify the problem of sleep, and tease it out to the extent that the knowledge around it remains limited to experts. Foucault points this out, as a process in the formation of docile bodies, that rely on experts to treat conditions, which in themselves are constructed socially, or politically. Kroll-Smith and Gunter argue how popular media and non-profit organizations bank on established medical knowledge to create a narrative that poses a problem. The capitalist system creates the problems in the first place to gain profit from these. The industry around sleep has also emerged similarly, by trying to profit from the creation of the problem itself. Denouncing sleep is the first step to creating conditions, that increase demand in labour, and continue to create the condition of lack of sleep and sleep deprivation. These are then added on by several working social conditions, that allow the industry to emerge and grow to offer targeted "sleep solutions". So, if you can't sleep well, just change your mattress, pillow, lights, and the smell around, and that is supposed to help with sleep. I do not discuss sleep disorders here, but they make up a huge part of the profit-making industry around sleep.

First then arises the question of why is there a need to regulate our sleep through devices. The answer this field provides is that of leading healthy lives. However, the very definition of healthy lives becomes an issue. Who are the ones who use these devices? Whose health are we then concerned about? There are then different forms of governing sleep or sleepiness, and this occurs at different levels, through different mediums. A later section of this essay looks at a different mode of governance, which is quite direct and bereft of this kind of medium.

### *Sleeping in Shifting Sheets*

With the global 24/7 market that is constantly engaged in production and consumption, there has been also a requirement of a constant workforce that meets the demands of the global economy. The rise of night shifts

especially in the corporate sectors, and not just industries elucidate the dominance of neo-liberal imperatives, that not only govern alert bodies but delve into the domain of the unconscious as well. The eyes of the neo-liberal world are the eyes of surveillance cameras, that regulate the 'I's' or individuals. The biopolitical governance allows masses to be controlled in totality through individual bodies. But even in this scenario, sleeping has tended to pose a precarity. The precariousness lies in its ability to resist the constant humdrum of consumerist culture. Sleep has been rendered unproductive, useless and banal, even a threat to the demands of the economy, thus the need to do away with it. There was thus depoliticization of sleep, for it to be ignored, and rendered insignificant. However, it remained a universal necessity and thereby relegated to the realm of darkness, to be in sync with the anxieties that night came with.<sup>9</sup>

This is where the modern governance of bodies or sleeper bodies becomes important. It became important to govern, not just bodies that were awake and alert, but also those that were sleepy. Sleep is a reminder of our corporeality, our physiological being that is breathing and living and not just labouring. But it is also a state that allows the body to "regain" energy to continue working. The sacrifice of sleep was lionized and appreciated. Williams points out the contested nature of sleep in this context. What might seem opposing in nature, is rather packaged through bourgeoisie capitalist ideology.

He explains, this conundrum between positive and negative sleep (Williams 2011), where he argues that the capitalist mode of production needs efficiency throughout the day and night, considering sleep as useless and to be done with. However, as Jonathan Crary also puts it, positive sleep is a mode of resistance to the constant demand of movement and labour that captures even the "night", that was meant to be outside the purview. The conundrum as Williams points out is how a capitalist economy needs the employees to remain efficient, and sleep, only to maximize efficiency. The whole idea is to sleep less, but even the sleep needs to be efficient, thereby translating sleep itself to work. However, the luxury of sleep is also only handed to a minuscule fraction of people. This minuscule fraction is that which uses mind or intellect and not body, thereby reinstating dichotomies of labour. The rise in "napping" in the workplace, like *inemuri* in Japan, is considered a "diligent act" (Rousseau 2016), but Williams would argue is, it is two sides of the same coin. The attention to "healthy sleep", is not counter to the logic of the 24/7 market, rather, reaffirms the same logic of efficiency of labour, therefore prescribing the role of sleep.

A whole new scientific discourse, knowledge and techniques are produced to support healthy and good sleep. This is exemplified through multiple articles, apps, and videos that are circulated via the internet that “inform” us how to sleep, when to sleep and even how long to sleep.

“Early to bed and early to rise” is still in circulation, except, even when few sleep at night, the market continues to be run. It is in this respect, that sleeping becomes a political concern that encompasses both private and public life. It becomes a “duty” of the people to govern their sleep, through the discourse construed. As Foucault argued, disciplining bodies moves from external to internal viewing, the normalized standard continues through self-governance and control through performative actions. The sacrifice of sleep that was valorised, turns out to be critiqued if not condemned, as sleep-deprived bodies will rather be more unproductive and even risky in occupations like medicine. The series *Greys Anatomy* which portrays the lives of surgeons and interns, illustrates this sleep shift. The initial seasons of the series, show how the interns had to be active 24/7 with a forty-eight-hour shift. This deprived them of sleep, as the job entailed constant vigilance and observation of patients. The attending surgeons however took pride in their “heydays” of internships where they worked constantly. However, a few years later, the work time was reduced and allowed time to repose. This was done to improve their performance as doctors, who needed to be effective both with their mind and body, to be able to think as well as perform surgeries. It became important that interns and residents were well-rested. The corporate and corporeal needs were realigned together. It became imperative to micro-manage sleep and this is carried out through “experts” in the field. Institutions prescribe a calculated amount of sleep to produce profitable bodies. However, it is not to be ignored that some vulnerabilities and risks are associated with the social identity of the bodies, like women, queer, and migrant labourers, who are more often than not, lying at the periphery of getting sleep. The nurses in the series (*Greys Anatomy*), are not the ones with reduced shifts, rather are more burdened with the absence of so many. This is despite the equal form of labour that goes into maintaining hospitals. Shaunak Sen in his short film, *Cities of Sleep* (2015), explores the dimension of sleep that is governed as well as created among a population of homeless.

### ***Observing Sleeping Cities: A Conversation with the Film Cities of Sleep***

This documentary illustrates the geography, politics and economy of sleep in Delhi. Shaunak Sen, the director of the film, chases the pursuit of a night's rest across two parallel worlds within the capital's netherworld. It unveils the world of those, who can't sleep at will, not as a condition like insomnia, but rather due to structural constraints. Finding a spot or a cot to sleep on, comes with a price. This is in contrast to how people have made arrangements, in Loha Pul, where more than two hundred people sleep. This space provides them "air-conditioning" effect, and people in return maintain this space. This story is different from those who work their night shifts in air-conditioned offices. Either way, both of them stem from systemic conditions, that have constructed such contrasting lives.

The film raises important questions mostly about city space and its relation to sleep. It portrays a few moving images of still roads with lights, completely set in a black-and-white mode that disallows the comprehension of the colour of light. It depicts the dividers, the rare speeding cars and the wind, all of which tie up to be significant in the stories of sleep. The film continues with changing scenes with changing weather, from chilling cold to sudden rains and the shifting arrangements along with it. The story is about why people often sleep on the dividers and largely the choice of where one sleeps is not a random factor but rather based on the socio-economic and environmental factors. The gushing wind from the moving automobile or the location of the river is helpful on summer nights in Delhi, which is extremely hot, and also from mosquitoes. The lives of the working-class population of men that the film portrays are based on decisions like these, and not on fancy pillows, beds, light or sound. And we are going to see in a bit that the regulations around light and noise often are not as much deciding factors of good sleep, at least not for all. Different forms of sleeping arrangements are observed in every city, the most common ones being pavement or side-walk, under the flyover, outside shops, and many more. The film portrays two specific sleeping arrangements, which do not fall under government night shelters, but rather, are a completely different mode of shelter operation. 'To figure out the extent of someone's power, observe the way they sleep'. Shaunak Sen, inspired by Jacques Ranciere's *Nights of Labour*, comments on the power relation through this film. The film revolves around who gets to sleep, who does not as well as where one gets to sleep, and this remains to be a constant struggle. Sleep is dependent on so many contributing factors, from material to political.

The film starts with a news telecast bidding goodnight, and almost declaring the start of a time that is marked by the act of sleep. There are many legal regulations with regards to what can and cannot happen at night. The nighttime period is also defined in the Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000, as the period between 10 pm to 6 am, which is not based on the pre-modern era of sunrise and sunset. Here, loud music in public space (which is also defined), like in a wedding or any other cultural or religious festivity, is disallowed after 10 at night.<sup>10</sup> Often in apartment complexes neighbours complain when their sleep is interrupted by loud noise. So, the loud sound production is liable to penalty, on any complaints or violations. With this respect, Business Standard 2017 published an article on “light pollution” and how India was losing its “night” causing severe health risks (Bahri 2017). This article emphasises the consequences of bright light at night and somehow affirms the fear that Jonathan Crary argues in his work. Crary argues in lines with Roger Ekirch, how the growing implantation of artificial light, might actually erase night altogether and therefore sleep. Sleep however is not always embedded within the logic of day and night, therefore the erasure of sleep, seems a little far-fetched. This stems from the fact that despite the growing nighttime working population, in India, and all of its cities, with more waking eyes in the technology and service sector, sleep is also simultaneously shaped differently and negotiated individually or as a collective. In the chapter on care work and sleep, we will see how caregivers negotiate their sleep schedules and patterns with the demands of their labour. Sleep is also not just commodified but packaged as a good that increases productivity and allows efficient labour performance. This does not lie true for all kinds of work though, but the fact that sleep has already been commodified, also implies that sleep will not be completely eradicated but rather will be moulded and condensed.

The space one sleeps in is not always necessarily a private and enclosed one, like a bedroom but can also be in public spaces, like benches, pavements, on vehicles, under flyovers or as in the case of Delhi an arrangement like one in Meena Bazaar. Among many other places where people sleep below the flyover, Gariahat is one such spot. Right below the flyover where vehicles are parked, men, women and children have their blankets and bedsheets spread to lie on and sleep. They also have their meals there and inhabit the space, as it infrastructurally provides a form of shelter, somewhat a roof over their head. A similar type of inhabitation is visible in the Park Circus area, where the families put tents on the pavement and cook and sleep there. These spaces are for some what we imagine as home, just that it is very different from the middle-class imagination of home. These

arrangements are not quite borne out of choice, but rather the lack of it. Their choice lies in setting up arrangements for a space where they engage in labour as well as rest. *Cities of Sleep* provides with two depictions of sleeping arrangements, one in Meena Bazaar and the other at Loha Pul, both in Delhi.

The first setting revolves around the character of Shakeel, who is a homeless person trying to get a spot to sleep in the sleeping arrangement regulated by Jamal Bhai. Jamal Bhai is the person who fixes the prices of cots and regulates the entire arrangement by overlooking who gets to sleep and who doesn't. The prices of these cots increase as per the demand, especially in the bone-chilling winters. One has to arrive early to get a spot as well as be able to pay the money even in case of an increase in prices. This is how the entire area functions. Shakeel is an interesting character who is intentionally chosen by the director, because of his contradictory words and conflicting personality.<sup>11</sup> Shakeel is a migrant labourer from Assam who lives in Delhi. His work is never shown in the film, but as a character, he narrates about the night shelters and the bazaars of Delhi. He is also a person who cannot be sympathised with, because of how he speaks of violence, or in particular, hitting his wife. He roams around throughout and is not quite liked by anyone, despite what he believes. So, at times, he acts like a victim and sometimes acts as if he is the one who runs the place. This character is messy, and inconsistent and seems to represent the darkness of the sleeping world at night, quite artfully.

One of the opening scenes in the film involves a narration, 'Only the man who sleeps and wakes when he chooses is free in the truest sense of the word'. This particular statement stirred a lot of questions, even before the film truly began. It makes us wonder if any of us are free. Can any of us choose when we sleep? Even when we consciously choose to sleep ignoring everything else that holds us, how free are we? We are tied to some or the other form of labour that is scheduled and the choice of sleep somehow seems to be available only to men belonging to a particular class. To escape the shackles of the capitalist demand for labour is a lot trickier and more complex. Because when women can choose when to sleep and when to wake up, would mean, that the social structures must also have had some form of changes. This does not mean, women do not have control over their sleep, but it means, that only some women can make this choice when there is outsourcing of labour. In the case of care work, we saw how care is outsourced, to nurses, or nannies or *Ayas*, domestic help, who allow women the choice to negotiate with their social roles and expectations. It is

always at the expense of someone that others can enjoy what they can and how little they can, and this trickles down to those who need to work around the clock, just to be able to feed their family (Bhattacharya 2017). This is where the importance of community comes into play, where children are taken care of by the elders and neighbours. Caregivers are not always the mothers, but involve so many women from a community or area, who take turns, to ensure the well-being of others. Children here were hardly raised by just their mothers, but by grandparents and neighbours who used to help whenever needed. This has now transformed into paid childcare, which allows some form of valuation to the work that has been done by women, free of cost for so long. Even then, the work remains to be undervalued and underpaid and marked as something that women should “naturally” perform. But as Sylvia Federici (1975) argues, it is better to perform paid work than to be completely invisible.

Shakeel talks about how he needs to “book” a place in the night shelter to be “safe”, but he hates them. But Jamal Bhai is also a person who is moody and might not give him a cot. Jamal Bhai, on the other hand, sells tea and organises this business of sleep. He increases the rate of the cots when he sees fit, and gives them to those who can provide him the money. But there is some form of negotiation because people also have a debt of hundreds of rupees, which is called sleep debt. This debt is not the one that is globally recognised as the continued lack of sleep, but rather, based on the money one owes because one slept on a particular night. The night shelters and the bazaar are filled with rows of sleeping bodies, either on the floor or on cots, as per their ability to make arrangements. He was the first one to recognise the “economic might of sleep”. The incapability of the night shelters to accommodate such a vast population of homeless allowed Jamal Bhai to see the desperation that the need to sleep after a day’s labour brings in. The business that he made out of people needing a place to sleep, is just a microcosm of the larger business around sleep that is practised.

“Sleep will come once it has chosen to arrive.” This line reminds me of Jean-Luc-Nancy’s concept of “falling of sleep”. Nancy argues how sleep inevitably falls and thereby the absence of phenomenology of the very act because the very act occurs in the state of “disappearance”. (Nancy 2009: 13). The claim that the arrival of sleep is inevitable and cannot be interfered with is arguable. If that were the case, as Shakeel said, all of us would be free, because then, whenever sleep arrived, we could sleep. Shakeel is seen to constantly move and never sleep, till the very end, when he finally

sits and sleeps. He almost feels like a somnambulant, sleepwalking and sleep-talking, waiting for his turn to fall asleep. Sleep might arrive at any time but sleeping is a choice that needs to be made based on circumstances. Whether to sleep during night shift work in hospitals or not or during the day at work or not, is borne out of the specific kind of work as well as situations. That does not mean we do not doze off, but that always carries with it a sense of fear or worry. There is the fear of getting caught or the guilt of the amount of work left. The security guard is supposed to be vigilant watching over a building/institution, area or ATM, and a certain form of vigilance is also observed in the sleeping collective with rented cots.

This entire business run by Jamal Bhai, is illegal but he considers it a service to the people who can sleep because of him. Now, every city has nooks and corners where something illegal is visibly practised with no fear, and this mostly stems from the negotiations made with local police. Even though the police never speak to him disrespectfully, we see the area being vacated at the end and nobody is allowed to sleep on pavements. This is how these relationships are contingent. Jamal Bhai is feared, as the area has supposedly under him since 1984, and he has a definite form of relationship established with the police, and yet police do attack and clear out the space. The power relation indicated here is teased out to allow us a look at how it really works and can change things completely overnight. One moment, you are asleep on the pavement, the next you can be dragged by the police, just because you chose to sleep in a certain space. With the decision in 2011 Justices B S Chauhan and Swatanter Kumar, in the Ramlila Maidan incident vs Home Secretary Ors., the right to sleep was included as fundamental right, thereby expanding the gamut of fundamental human rights (Yadav 2020).<sup>12</sup> Sleep as the judges dictated, is essential to human existence and stability, thereby declaring it a fundamental human right that everyone should possess, as it also maintains the quality of life. An interesting thing in this regard is how many sleep violence cases are dismissed because of the understanding that sleep is a passive activity with no control over the body.<sup>13</sup> Sleep in its very understanding is supposed to be a basic necessity, the bare minimum of it required to continue in the waking world. It is the time humans are the most vulnerable and prone to violence, due to the inability to act and have immediate control over the body. Despite sleep being declared a fundamental human right, how inaccessible does it continue to be? Or how in their legal definition does it improve the quality of life for those who are constantly disrupted in the middle of their sleep, or for those who walk around like Shakeel?

The material conditions that one has access to, because of the inaccessibility of other conditions that would offer them refuge, is what ties this section together. Our sleep is not often governed directly, but these modes of surveillance work in complex ways through imbrication in networks of power. Some rely on clocks, some on people singing in harmonium, some on their technical gadgets that track sleep, some on the call of azan from a masjid, or some from the night terrors. Whether one sleeps in public spaces, bedrooms, or in the workplace, there continues this interaction of subject and object or rather quasi-subject and quasi-object. Shakeel's sleep is dependent on the camera that follows him because that is what assures that at the end of the night, he has an assured spot to sleep. As Shaunak Sen visits the place every night to shoot the bazaar, people especially Shakeel (who is paid for this as well), ensure that Shakeel has a place to sleep every night in the shelter. This is what makes Shakeel an interesting character because despite the assured place to sleep, and wage, his narrative often contradicts the situation.

### ***Conclusion***

The construction of sleep does not deny the corporeal universality of sleep and even the associated vulnerability of the sleeping body. The vulnerability is also quite often about the material assets attached, thus the locked doors and walled gates. However, sleep is not just a private act confined to the bedroom. Where one sleeps, as we saw previously becomes important in the conversation around the sociality of sleep. Public napping is still quite common. We see people taking a quick nap on trains, buses, metros, and even in classrooms and offices (something that Japan has legitimised). We also see working-class men sleep anywhere and everywhere, from pavements to embankments, from dividers to the side of bridges. An interesting aspect is the sleeping bodies within "total institutions" (Goffman 1968) that have a fixed schedule for every action, repeated every day, and that includes the fixity of sleeping space and time as well. Not just public sleeping, but segmented sleep is even today prevalent, despite industrialization. The Western sleep pattern has observed changes and so has non-Western societies. Yet even in the fast capitalist culture, places in India continue to observe bi-phasic sleep. The culture of sleeping in the afternoon and at night continues to exist, where public spaces seem quieter at noon.

The construction of modern sleep is not without the remnants of the past. The protestant ethic of bodily asceticism continues in a form that has been secularised. The myth of modernity constantly tries to disidentify itself with matters of myths, magic, and religion as primordial past, having no place anymore (Asad 2003). This is also evident in the secular readings of dreams and opposition to the “mystical politics” of dreaming (Williams 2011: 88).

The governing of bodies through biopolitics and emergent bio-industry has not evaded the space of sleep. The essay looks at the way the closed eyes are seen through eyes that often escape us, that is the constant gaze of surveillance. The socio-cultural-political act of sleep is embodied through performative actions, that enable vigilance. In ways similar to Foucault’s analysis, shifts in power relations in modern societies, sleep has had shifts in the way it has been enacted. The implication of this has been evident within the neo-liberal market that made sleep redundant but later offered the same as a commodified object. The humdrum of the accelerating economy is yet if not disrupted, intervened with varied forms of sleeping as seen in the performance pieces. Moreover, the interventions, rather than an extension of technology to ourselves, have challenged the myth of modernity that separated nature from culture (Latour 1993). The clear demarcation between nature and culture, created by modernity becomes fuzzy, when technology becomes an extension of human life itself. The bio-medical or biotechnological enhancements have even within sciences, challenged anything as “given” or “natural”. The proliferation of hybrids integrates elements of nature and culture and not modernity’s claim of separation. According to Crary the non-stop logic of late capitalist culture has instilled the anxiety of missing out and paved the way to constant engagement and interaction through digital mediums. The resolution offered by him is that of bringing back the passivity of sleep, the body that interrupts time, and this is how performance artists have used the concept. The transient interlude that sleep provides remains to be considered as “resisting”, due to the possibilities that it also comes with. The most interesting possibility is that of the communal experience that sleep provides, as seen cross-culturally, or in the performances that have been and will be discussed. What this essay does, is to set the field within which sleep interacts with, state, institutions, technology and material conditions, to further look at the specific ramifications of this interaction. The ways of governing sleep, which occurs at different levels, and through different forms, were laid out to grasp how intrinsic this aspect, that is of sleep as important to investigate as the waking part of our lives.

*Notes*

1. He argues how we sleep, where we sleep and when and with whom we sleep, are social, thereby requiring a sociological investigation of sleep.
2. Sleep or the act of sleeping on stage is something, that has been very common in Shakespeare's plays. In Macbeth, Hamlet the concept of sleep gains predominance. John Keats's poem 'To Sleep' (1821) and 'Sleep and Poetry' (1817) illustrates the beauty of night and sleep. See Coleridge's 'The Pain of Sleep'. All these works go on to reflect the presence of sleep as literary thought in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
3. For more on the history see Ekrich, *Sleep We Have Lost: Pre-Industrial Slumber in the British Isles*, 2001.
4. He draws this by looking at the various early rise movements that happened across countries like Japan, India, and Europe, that tried to cultivate bodily norms of healthy activities and denounce laziness.
5. <https://www.healthline.com/health/healthy-sleep/fall-asleep-fast>. This was the first website that Google results showed. The following examination is based on numerous other articles that I have come across regularly, similar to this.
6. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health-news/india-is-the-second-most-sleep-deprived-country-what-we-can-do-to-fix-our-sleep-habits/articleshow/98728738.cms>.  
<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/blink/cover/india-is-sleep-deprived/article30941668.ece>.
7. <https://www.nbcnews.com/better/lifestyle/14-smart-products-help-you-fall-asleep-faster-ncna765111>.
8. <https://www.sciencefocus.com/future-technology/best-sleep-technology-gadgets/> exemplifies the kind of gadgets that are manufactured to aid sleep.
9. But night could also be creative through "insomniac geniuses". There have been various representations, and stories, of how creative minds flourish at night and how the insomniac is often considered a genius. The story of this has not been discussed here.

10. The Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000 states, 'A loudspeaker or a public address system shall not be used at night (between 10.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m.) except in closed premises for communication within, e.g. auditoria, conference rooms, conference rooms, community halls and banquet halls.'

"Public place" means any place to which the public has access, whether as of right or not and includes auditoriums, hotels, public waiting rooms, convention centres, public offices, shopping malls, cinema halls, educational institutions, libraries, open grounds and the like which are visited by the general public.

11. It is this inconsistency in Shakeel's narrative that appeals to Shaunak Sen to choose him as the character that would be played in the film. Shakeel changes his name, he complains, he asks questions, and so in all his complexity, Shakeel becomes integral to the story of Meena Bazaar. In an interview (Sen, *Cities of Sleep* with Shounak Sen 2017) with Bhaskar Sarkar, he says how Shakeel even disappeared, which is what led him to the case of Loha Pul, which is the second part of the film.
12. This was based on the incident where Ramdev Baba was protesting against corruption, and the police attacked at night, arresting Ramdev, while they were asleep. The court mandated this as an act of brutality since a person cannot commit a crime when asleep.
13. Ekirch and Shneerson (2011), elucidate sleep violence cases in nineteenth-century Britain, through a 2002 example of a university student who assaulted 10 female students and attempted rape on two, while sleepwalking and was therefore acquitted. He explains how this was difficult earlier with no medical evidence, or rather when the history of somnambulism as a medical condition was not sufficiently known.

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