Abstract

This paper attempts to show how the practice of Jugaad[1] in developing countries like India is uncompromisingly harmonizing the ethics and politics of design and its use context. For reaching a postphenomenological understanding of Jugaad, I discuss two important phases in the philosophy of design. Firstly, in the environment where there is design processing sans user participation, which is a blow to creativity and thus alienates humans of his/her authentic existence (Heidegger, 1977, Jasper, 1957). Secondly, in the milieu where the designer, the artifact and the user are simultaneously involved in the process of designing: the quintessence of mediation theory (Verbeek 2005, 2012). Examples mirroring the characteristics of the second phase primarily thrive on principles like resilience, frugality, adaptability, simplicity, inclusivity, empathy, and passion (Radjou, Prabhu, & Ahuja, 2012). It has brought a pyramidal shift in design from *Top to Bottom* to *Bottom to Top* in developing countries. This means that the lower social strata can reap the dividend of growth and design by virtue of being the producer, designer and consumer, which hitherto was an exclusive domain of the designer and the upper-end consumers (Robert, 2016). This concept of user participation at the production and the consumption level finds its spirit in the mediation theory (Verbeek, 2012).

The paper has three sections. In section I, I discuss the prevalent ideologies and examples in design ethics which focus only on the role of the designer in the designing process. One major drawback of the earlier phase in designing artifacts is the problem of technocracy which had limited the role of the user (Verbeek, 2005). Section II will explore the Postphenomenological elements used by Verbeek such as moral imagination, augmenting constructive technology assessment, scenario, and simulations to improve the human-technology relation (Verbeek, 2006, 2011). In Section III, the focus is on the applicability question, where the case of Renault-Nissan Technology and its emphasis on frugal innovation is taken up (Kanaka, 2013). The paper will show how these examples embody design practice consistent with the mediation theory. Jugaad innovation has paved the way for the replacement of the black-boxed market innovations. It encourages common users to come up with creative ideas and promote deliberation before their execution. The prime motto of Jugaad innovation is to endorse cost-effective industrious ideas targeting new consumer segments and thus, shifts focus from the functionality principle to essentiality. I conclude by highlighting the role of Jugaad innovation in the improvement of the life of people in developing countries in the backdrop of shared patterns in production and consumption processes aided by transparency and reusability.

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