

AVENTURE

VOLUME 12 / ISSUE 2 / APRIL 2022

INSIDE CAMPUS

JAIN Hosts Khelo India

EXPRESSIONS

Siddharth Gigoo

HEALTH TOURISM

Healing in India

SCIENCE & TECH

The Great Resignation Wave

CSR

TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY





FACETS OF WOMANHOOD

happy
WOMEN'S
day

The greatest threat to a nation often lies within. The same factors that make the tapestry of India's nationhood unique are, deplorably and paradoxically, making it feeble. Even as we celebrate our multiplicity, in the hands of a few, it is being used as a potent weapon to generate and fan civil disharmony. In the midst of communal discord raging the country. The Rearview section of this issue of AVENTURE, gives a refreshing perspective on harmonious living. The common people of the country have been and continue to live gracefully, amidst differences. However, powerful vested interests are playing their role in disrupting peaceful co-existence. The enormous potential of the elected government body if channelised towards holistic and sustainable evolution of the country, undoubtedly, would make India an internally secure and progressive nation.

The saving grace for the country and its billions is often seen in the triumph of the individual will; of people from different walks of life, notwithstanding their personal struggles, who are passionate about making a difference to the lives of others. We profile the work being done by two such individuals, Adhi Daiv, a teen who has set out to green the desert belts of Rajasthan and, Dr. Ratnamma, a woman from the Soliga tribal community, who is striving to restore the fundamental rights of her people.

A significant modification in the capitalist strains of India's economy is that Corporate India has progressed to proactively own responsibility to give back to society. The lead story of this issue gives an overview of CSR and Sustainability initiatives rolled out by business enterprises.

For some light reading, do read about holidaying in Seychelles and, the delectable Pickle and its primacy to the India palate. The Sports section profiles a rising table tennis sensation striving to make a mark at the Olympics.

Do not miss the Review section, featuring a compelling and intense interview with writer, Siddhartha Gigoo as he talks about his works of fiction emerging out of his personal loss and trauma as an ousted Kashmiri pandit. In our quest to find out the 'truth' about an event, like the genocide in Kashmir, we can find a direction in Gigoo's very interesting observation that a more holistic version of 'truth' may be arrived at, if more voices express their experiences.

Happy reading!
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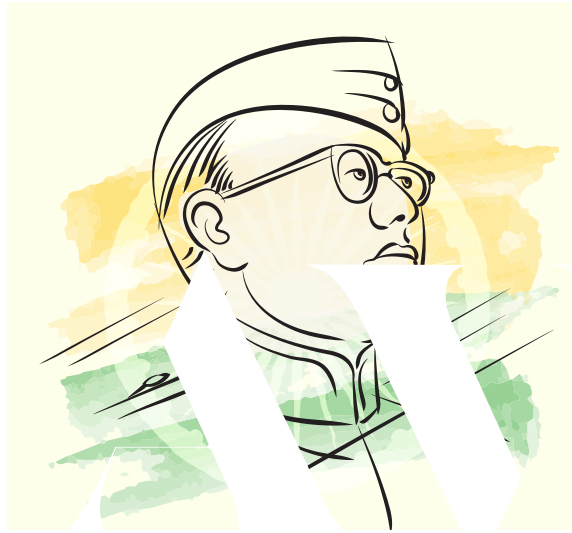
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Women-led Atma Nirbhar Bharat



“Every woman has entrepreneurial qualities and values. Women will become stakeholders in decision-making if they are financially independent.” - Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

A barren plot of land requires energy to be prepared, seeded and tilled; and, to be converted into a field of lush.

It takes creative thinking to supplement the soil's deficiencies and achieve the greatest feasible outcomes. Nation-building is no exception. It demands vitality, zeal, resilience, confidence and novel ideas. And who else but youth, especially young women possess all of these in abundance?

We cannot dispute the fact that youngsters dare to think differently. Women's engagement in the economic process has expanded in India to genuinely make it an 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat.' With women constituting half of our population, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that women-led development will lead the road to a truly self-sufficient Bharat in the long run.

While education and empowerment are the two most important drivers to this goal, special attention has been paid to women from the economically disadvantaged sections of society, who have limited access to learning opportunities and economic resources, limiting their options for earning a living.

ACHIEVING LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY WILL NECESSITATE THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND HEALTH STATUS, AS WELL AS THEIR EMPOWERMENT AND UNIQUENESS.

Achieving long-term sustainability will necessitate the advancement of women's political, economic, cultural and health status, as well as their empowerment and uniqueness. Women's economic independence would be the most realistic strategy for integrating them into Atma Nirbhar Bharat goals, according to the World Bank.

With the United Nations recognising the importance and requirement of women's contributions to the advancement of rural households, and local and national economies, we must collectively work to create resilient social protection systems, labour and product markets, and governance institutions, so those rural women can both make a significant contribution and gain financially from sustainable development.

DR. CHENRAJ ROYCHAND
CHANCELLOR

Wither Women's Empowerment!!



While we may have reason to celebrate women's empowerment in various areas such as, financial independence, access to healthcare and education etc., there is also enough reason to bemoan the distressing state of women in this developing nation. India is ranked the 6th largest economy in the world; is the 2nd most desired nation for

manufacturing; and has many such feathers in its cap. Despite this economic prosperity, India is severely lagging behind in the Gender Gap Index (GGI). The latest report indicates that India has slipped from the 112th to 140th rank among 156 nations in the GGI. Which goes to show, that women's empowerment is a mere mirage in the country. The ecosystem is clearly not conducive for achieving gender equality.

A recent report by National Family Health Survey (NFHS) appallingly reveals that domestic abuse is normalized in the country. A large majority of men justify domestic violence; albeit, the reasons are most innocuous. To make matters worse, a large section of women seem to justify the act! The patriarchal mindset and value system has been internalized by women too and it is deeply ingrained in their consciousness. Sexual, physical and emotional violence against women will not recede unless we undo patriarchy. The responsibility to transform our mindsets lies with adults as much as with the youth.

**IMBIBING GENDER SENSITIVITY,
MAKING ROBUST LEGAL
PROVISIONS AND SETTING UP
FOOL PROOF REDRESSAL FORUMS
TO ADDRESS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
IS THE NEED OF THE HOUR.**

Imbibing gender sensitivity, making robust legal provisions and setting up fool proof redressal forums to address domestic violence is the need of the hour. Government policies and initiatives directed at bringing about gender parity in key human developmental areas is essential. Higher Education Institutions are striving to sensitise the youth regarding gender issues. We at Jain, have inducted several activities in both academic and extra curriculars to provide as many opportunities as possible to empower the youth with information and experience.

DR. N SUNDARARAJAN
PRO-CHANCELLOR

Youth and Social Engagement



World Social Work Day is celebrated in the month of March every year. A few decades ago, social work was a profession in itself practiced by a few. However, today, it has dawned on humanity that to bring about any substantial and sustainable change in our environment or in our lives as a whole, or of others,

the engagement of a majority of the population is necessary. It's simple logic. Large scale change necessitates large scale engagement. Independence from the British was a result of the involvement of every class, caste, gender and religion in the struggle for freedom. The role of the student community in this struggle goes to show the enormous potential of the youth.

Higher Education Institutions are fertile ground to groom the youth to imbibe an 'outward' perspective. To go beyond myopic concerns of the 'self', to exercise empathy and sensitivity to the plight of 'others'. A big question educators have to ask themselves is: what kind of temperament are we engendering in our youth? One that is self-centred, ego-centric and, obsessed with professional growth and amassing wealth or one that strives to find ways and means to empower those that are less privileged?

Several universities abroad allot points for community engagement or give preference to students who have a track record of being involved in social work. Such a trend is yet to pick up in India. HEIs in India too are playing a proactive role in molding the youth, through awareness and training, to

INDEPENDENCE FROM THE BRITISH WAS A RESULT OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF EVERY CLASS, CASTE, GENDER AND RELIGION IN THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM.

contribute to sustainable improvement in the quality of life of the less privileged. While the youth may have brilliant ideas and solutions for teething social problems, they still need guidance in how to translate those ideas into viable, practical and actionable solutions.

There has been a gradual transition in corporate culture too. Corporates are not just earmarking funds but also engineering a mind-set change among management and employees, dedicating time and human resource towards the greater good of fellow beings. Young social entrepreneurs are on the rise and it is indeed a welcome trend.

Awareness and engagement of youth in social work is a sure step towards achieving an inclusive world and in bridging the economic and social gap between classes.

DR. RAJ SINGH
VICE CHANCELLOR

FEEDBACK

Highly congratulate you on the great work you have been doing to publish informative, entertaining and educational articles. The articles published in the magazine were quite interesting and attractive. The headline "Accelerating the Transition to Sustainability" was particularly worth reading as it is encouraging us to make more efforts to overcome current difficulties in order to make the future more hopeful and successful. In return, I wish to thank you sincerely and assure you of my total support and encourage you to publish more articles in AVENTURE magazine in order to inform and raise awareness of people. Look forward to the upcoming issue.

Soungui Ahmed, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Chad

Thank you very much for sending the magazine AVENTURE. The magazine highlights a vibrant role in contemporary society. The articles are of much value which will encourage the readers to express their views through different forms of media. It is very well presented in that it has information, entertainment and educative articles.

Prof. G.D. Sharma, Vice Chancellor, University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM)

I extend my heartfelt thanks to you for providing me with a copy of the magazine. The magazine is worked upon well by the editors and I congratulate your team for that.

Prof. Vijaykumar CG, Vice-Chancellor, Maharshi Panini Sanskrit Evam Vedic Vishwavidyalaya

I convey my congratulations for providing an informative, entertaining and educational magazine for the better functioning of the democratic society. At this juncture, I wish you for your continuous effort in enhancing the contents of the magazine.

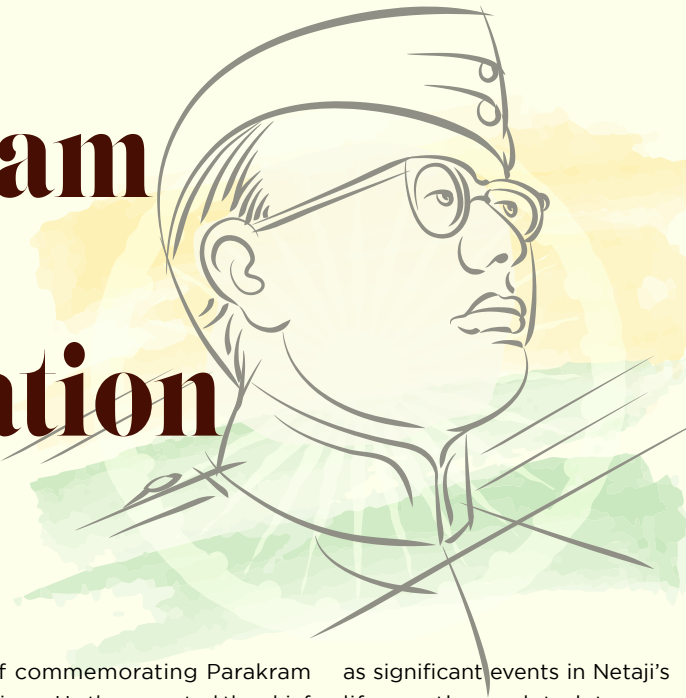
K Parthasarathy, Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Open University

At the outset, I extend my sincere thanks for giving me yet another intellectual treat through the new volume of AVENTURE, Jan 2022, the responsibility of media across the globe in all walks of life is at crossroads. I personally like the feature Media in the 21st Century; it gives glimpses of the thought line of many luminaries and thinkers, also one can see the fault lines as well. I wish such features on contemporary issues would attract the attention of all and sundry. I once again express my deep sense of gratitude to you and everyone.

Dr Arun R Joshi, Vice-Chancellor, Dr. C V Raman University



Parakram Diwas Celebration



A virtual event Parakram Diwas to honour the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, was held on January 23, 2022, and was hosted by CMS Business School, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University). Dr. G S Vijaya, Dr. Trupti and Ms. Sakshi served as the faculty coordinators of the event.

As a mark of respect and remembrance of Netaji's indomitable spirit and selfless devotion to the nation, the Government of India has declared January 23rd as 'Parakram Diwas', a national day to encourage people throughout the country, particularly the youth, to act with fortitude in the face of hardship, and to instill in them a sense of patriotic fervour. The conference was attended by the teaching and non-teaching personnel, as well as students from the members first and third semesters. The event began with a welcome address by Ms. Simran, which was followed by an invocation song by Ms. Amrutha.

Dr. Harold Andrew Patrick, the Dean - Academics of CMS Business School, Jain (Deemed-to-be University), delivered the inaugural speech, in which he spoke about the services and sacrifices of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, as well as his contribution to the nation, and stressed the importance

of commemorating Parakram Diwas. He then greeted the chief guest, Dr Naresh Gupta, who was in attendance to grace the event. The Dean also expressed his gratitude to the student council faculty members and students for their efforts in arranging the event.

A graduate of the Armed Forces Medical College in Pune, Dr Naresh Gupta, after serving in the Armed Forces as a Short Service Commissioned Officer at the rank of Captain, went on to complete his postgraduate studies in anesthesia as well as MBA in healthcare at the Faculty of Management Studies in Delhi. He worked as an anesthesiologist and intensivist for a few years before establishing his own hospital in Delhi NCR, which he continues to manage today. As a member of the Indian Medical Association and the Anesthesia Society of India, among other organisations, he has been involved in social work and has received recognition for his efforts in a number of different avenues. He is a poet and a nationalist.

Chief Guest Dr. Naresh Gupta spoke about the contributions of freedom fighter Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, as well

as significant events in Netaji's life, as they related to our country's independence. As Dr. Naresh stated, "We should and we must commemorate and celebrate all such days that inspire us and imbue us with patriotic impulses, which are beneficial not just in times of war but also during periods of peace and growth." He also instilled a patriotic zeal in the students and academic members who were in attendance, through his speech. During the inaugural address, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was described as a starring figure, a superior leader, a commander, and a revolutionary warrior by the chief guest. He also cited the motto of Netaji Subhash Chandra, which is "Tum Muje Khoon Do, Mein Tumhe Azaadi Doonga," which translates as "Give me blood, and I will give you freedom." On January 23, 2022, he stated that the nation will be commemorating Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's 125th birthday as Parakram Diwas, or "Bravery Day," in honour of the leader's accomplishments. He also drew attention to another of Netaji's slogans, "Jai Hind," which has now become a common salutation.

Briefly introducing Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose in his

speech, Dr. Naresh mentioned that Netaji received his bachelor's degree in philosophy from Presidency College in Calcutta and moved to England to apply for the civil service and returned to India in 1927, where he was greeted with fervent patriotism. Being regarded as a rebel by the British, Netaji joined the Congress as a youth activist and rose through the ranks to become President of the Indian National Congress from 1938 to 1939. Netaji who wished to see the British get expelled always stated that "freedom must be earned; it can never be given." Dr. Naresh went into great depth about how Netaji fought for Indian Independence and for his ideal of Atmanirbhar Bharat/Self-Reliant India and how his life serves as an inspiration. He concluded his speech by stating, "Reality is after all too big for our frail understanding to fully comprehend. Nevertheless, we have to build our life on the theory which contains the maximum truth. We cannot sit still because we do not know the absolute truth."

The winners of the essay competition, which was organised for students on the subjects "Re-conceptualizing the legacy of Netaji in the Twenty-first Century" and "Moral Bravery is more important than Physical Courage," were announced following the address by the chief guest.

On a final note, Dr. G S Vijaya, Professor, CMS Business School, delivered the vote of thanks, in which she summarised the event and thanked the dignitaries, dean, colleagues, and students who took part in the event and helped to make it a huge success.

NUTRITION DURING ADOLESCENCE

Growing up may be thrilling, and the adolescent years are among the most exciting times of one's life, but it can also be challenging as one's physical and mental form undergoes a lot of changes, prompted by immense hormonal changes. Rapid growth and development necessitate an increase in nutrient and energy consumption. This makes understanding the significance of diet during adolescence all the more important.

The National Level Online Webinar on "The Importance of Nutrition During Adolescence" was designed to promote a healthy lifestyle and was open for students, research scholars and faculty members of various universities. Hosted on a virtual platform by the National Service wing of Jain (Deemed-to-be-University), in collaboration with the Bangalore Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the Family Planning Association the webinar was open to the public as well.

While Dr. Sharada Nasimath, President, Family Planning Association of India presided as the chief guest of the webinar, Dr. Shobha G, Associate professor, Department of Human Development, Smt. VHD Central Institute of Home

Science College, Bengaluru was the speaker. Faculty of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and the NSS Programme Officer, Jain (Deemed-to-be-University), provided a heartfelt welcome to the participants, after which the chief guest addressed the participants. Dr. Shobha, while giving an overview of adolescent health and nutrition, also mentioned the significance of maintaining good health. In her speech, she elaborated on the lifestyle issues such as high preference for instant food and other eating habits of the younger generation. She further stated that nutrition, exercise, rest and a positive mental attitude are the four optimal pillars of good health and one should always abide by them.

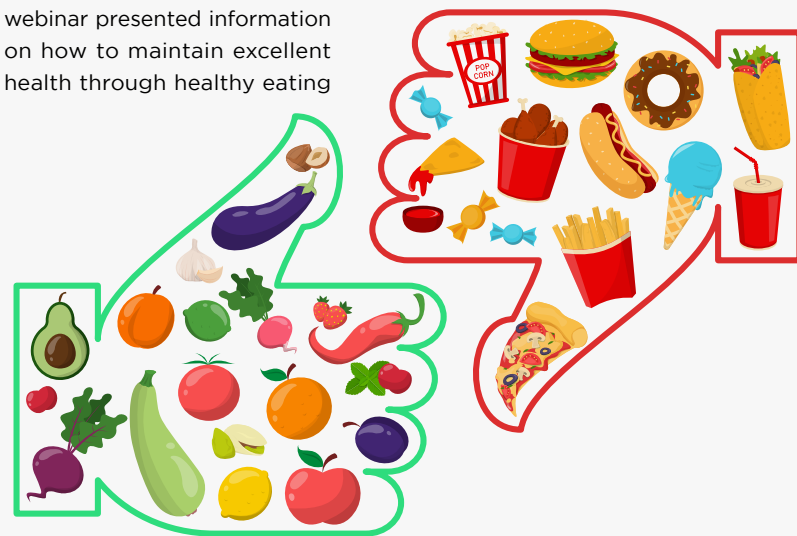
While emphasizing the need to maintain a healthy well-nourished constitution, she said that it is vital to combat viral infections. The nutritional condition is used as a predictor of one's ability to withstand instability during the COVID-19 pandemic. The immune system is influenced by optimal nutrition and dietary nutrient intake; as a result, the only long-term strategy for surviving in the current environment is to enhance the immune system. A healthy diet can help ensure optimal body condition to fight the illness. Nonetheless,

in addition to the dietary management standards, food safety management and good food practices must be followed at all times." In conclusion, she discussed the importance of nutrition in boosting immunity, as well as some expert dietary suggestions concerning nutrition and food safety, in order to counter COVID-19 virus infection.

Next on the panel was Dr. Shobha to educate the participants on nutrition and health. Dr. Shobha also educated the audience on how to make daily meals healthier, the value of staying hydrated, the components of food and the advantages they bring, the importance of moderation, and the requirement of sustainable diets, among other things. The webinar presented information on how to maintain excellent health through healthy eating

habits and daily routines. Besides making the workshop entertaining and interactive, Dr. Shobha generously addressed many questions raised by the attendees on eating mindfully, sustaining habits with consistency, and other relevant topics. The event provided an exceptional learning opportunity, particularly from the perspective of adolescents and their families.

Dr. Rajanijayram, Dean of Students and Welfare at Jain University, offered a vote of thanks and concluded the webinar by emphasising the need for developing a healthy lifestyle throughout adolescent years, as well as the reasons for doing so.

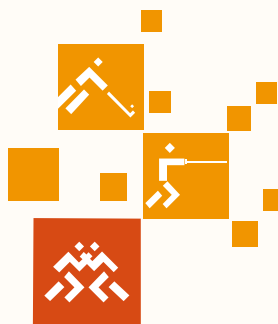


IT'S A GET, SET & GO FOR KIUG 2021

The Khelo India University Games (KIUG), now in its second edition, is a great effort by the Sports Ministry to provide the much-needed platform for sportspersons of universities. This national level multi-sport event is designed to bring athletes from universities across the country to participate in a variety of sport events. Sportspersons in the Under 25 category will be able to demonstrate their athletic and sporting abilities in this inter - university tournament. This even is crucial because the winners will get the opportunity to represent

India at the highest levels of international competition, including the Olympics. Last year, the event could not be conducted due to the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic, and this year's second edition of the Khelo India University Games, was hosted by Jain University. The first edition was hosted by Odisha in 2020.

Conceived to recognise talented athletes at the university level and establish a streamlined development system for them, the Khelo India University Games will witness 4500 participants from around 190 Universities across India battle it out across 20 different sports. As an incubator for grooming talent, KIUG will include Yogasana and Mallakambha among 20 other sports each of which has a long and rich history.



Empowerment and Sports, and Dr. Ashwathnarayan C N, Minister of Higher Education, were also present at the ceremony.

Governor of Karnataka Shri Tawar Chand Gehlot appreciated the central government for choosing Karnataka state to host the second edition of KIUG. During his speech, he stated that KIUG is a component of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Khelo India dream programme and underlined how brilliantly Indian sportsmen performed in the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics and how KIUG will contribute to the country's sporting success. He further urged the youth to participate enthusiastically in KIUG and emphasised the need to promote sports awareness.

As the most-anticipated Khelo India University Games draws closer, the Government of Karnataka, in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India is preparing to host the largest national sporting extravaganza here in Bengaluru, with Jain University serving as the host university.

Karnataka, the host state, released the Khelo India App



for live information about the Games. Hon'ble Governor of Karnataka, Shri. Tawar Chand Gehlot unveiled the logo, the iconic Vidhana Soudha building, Karnataka's Legislative House located in Bengaluru along with two elephants on either side. He also unveiled the official mascot - Jaya (Black Buck), Vijaya (Tiger) and Namma Veera (Elephant). Hon'ble Sports Minister Shri Anurag Singh Thakur unveiled the official jersey and anthem. Dr. K C Narayana Gowda, Minister of Sericulture, Youth

Congratulating Karnataka for declaring KIUG Green Games, Shri Anurag Singh Thakur said, KIUG Bengaluru as Green Games is a gamechanger because not only are you committed to promoting sports, you are committed to protecting the environment, more so at a time when our PM Narendra Modi Ji is steering India towards a leadership role in environmental issues."

As part of the Games' commitment to sustainability, everything utilised beyond the





field of play will be made of reusable materials; electric cars will be used for transportation; and all garbage will be segregated at source in each venue. The Games will thus be waste-free and plastic-free.

Speaking about the mega sports event, Thakur said, "India has thousands of years of sporting history and it is the endeavour of the Union Sports Ministry to promote our age-old sporting disciplines. It was the efforts of our PM that led to the International Day of Yoga being celebrated across the world, and this year our Ministry has also recognised Yogasana as a sport. I am happy to announce that we will have two traditional sports in this year's KIUG and there is a concrete plan in place to fund rural and indigenous sports throughout the year as well." Commending Jain (Deemed-to-be-University), the KIUG's host institution, for its proactive involvement in promoting sports alongside academics, he emphasised the importance of encouraging sports on the University campuses. He praised the Association of Indian Universities for their efforts in supporting university-level sports.

Addressing the 3000-strong student community that had gathered to witness the inauguration, he mentioned that the youth is the primary stakeholder in Sports, Education

and the Environment and asserted the fact that, as the country's present and future, youth have a significant role to play in resolving sports concerns.

The Jain University Global Campus will host 13 different sports, including weightlifting, wrestling, judo, kabaddi, volleyball, swimming, mallakhamba, yogasana, archery, fencing, and karate, boxing and football. Tournaments in football, table tennis, badminton and tennis will be held at the Jain Sports School while shooting competitions will take place at SAI's Southern Centre. Both campuses include world-class infrastructure and state-of-the-art athletic facilities.

At the Kanteerava Stadium, newly laid synthetic grass for athletics will be utilised for the first time at the Khelo India University Games, while a rebuilt Field Marshal Cariappa stadium awaits the arrival of the hockey teams.



KIUG 2021 - THE MANY FIRSTS

- This edition is the first 'Khelo India Green Games'.
- The Games will utilise recyclable materials and it is being ensured that KIUG 2021 will be a zero waste event.
- A first-of-its-kind mobile application has been developed for this edition to facilitate the participants with the Digital India approach. The app will carry relevant information and notifications about the Games that an athlete can use before and during the Games.
- It is also for the first time that NADA will use an App to disseminate Information, Education and Communication to participating athletes so that they are educated amply about the menace of doping.



National Youth Day



To mark the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, CMS Business School, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) hosted a virtual celebration of National Youth Day on the 12 of January 2022. It was organised by Dr. Saurabh Srivastava, Prof. Anurag Jain and Dr. Bidhi Kashyap, faculty coordinators along with the Student Council Team.

The day is observed to bring the attention of the youth, who are future of our country to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, who was always a source of inspiration for the youth of the country and advocated the utilisation of youth power in the development of the country, among other things.

The ceremony began at with Dr. Saurabh Srivastava greeting and welcoming the audience, followed by an invocation song by a student from the School of Business and Economics. Everyone was charmed by the peaceful and beautiful rendering of the devotional song, which served as a pious prelude to the ceremony. This was followed by the M C calling Dr. Sathish Kumar to introduce the significance of the day. He

stated that in the past, this day has been commemorated as a special occasion with a variety of themes.

As a reminder, Dr. Sathish Kumar cited that January 12 is commemorated as National Youth Day, also known as Vivekananda Jayanti. He mentioned that National Youth Day was first observed in India in 1984 by the Government of India, and has been honoured annually throughout the country since then. The theme of National Youth Day 2022 is "It's All in The Mind," which was a significant message of Swami Vivekananda who preached religious tolerance and the integration of Indian spirituality with Western worldly advancement. The speaker concluded the welcome speech by expressing his delight in the commemoration of such occasions.

Next to follow was the address of the chief guest. Ms. Jyoti Deswal - Research Coordinator, Education Department, Institute for Research in Indian Wisdom (IRIW). Ms. Jyothi has been a resource person for FLN, Adult Education at NCERT and for many State programmes. She works with children and

teachers to build conceptual comprehension of basic reading and numeric abilities. Previously she has also trained Rishikulshala teachers (a project for marginalised children of our society) and is also interested in educational research and has had articles published in national and international periodicals. The teachings of Swami Vivekananda were underlined by the Chief Guest, who quoted some of his most renowned sayings. She emphasised the importance of youth in the process of nation-building, as well as the value of physical and mental growth in young people. She urged educational institutions to teach kids about India's culture and history to instill pride in them. She recommended that meditation (for mental well-being) and athletics (for physical well-being) be practised in educational institutions, which is consistent with Swamiji's ideas. While reflecting on Swamiji's life, she encouraged instructors to focus on educating the minds of their students, which will aid in the development of self-confidence, the creation of character, the enhancement of practical knowledge, and the development of both physical and spiritual character. In her speech, she focused on the

famous statement by Swami Vivekananda, "It is All in the Mind." She centered her remarks mostly on topics that dealt with the significance of National Youth Day, essential lessons from Swami Vivekananda that may be used in the educational sphere, and the necessity of physical, mental and spiritual well-being, among other things. Having discussed the concepts of Swamiji that can be implemented in real life, she raised awareness about the significance of National Youth Day. She attempted to effectively propagate her ideas on how to "Educate the youth about India's past so that they are not embarrassed about our nation, but proud of it."

Following the remarks of the chief guest, Prof. Anurag Jain proposed the vote of thanks. He expressed his gratitude to the chief guest for her gracious acceptance to be part of the occasion as a chief guest. In his remarks, he noted that her speech would go far in influencing young people's attitudes toward the philosophy and teachings of Swami Vivekananda, therefore making them better citizens of the future. He expressed his gratitude to Dr. Sathish Kumar for providing an in-depth briefing on National Youth Day. He thanked each and every person who had attended the occasion and concluded the event.

ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is commemorated on March 21 every year to remind society of the harmful repercussions of racial discrimination and to raise awareness about the issue.

The objective of commemorating the day is to highlight the importance of strengthening meaningful and safe public participation and representation in all areas of decision-making to prevent and combat racial discrimination; reaffirming that the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, as well as the right to civic space, must be fully respected; and recognising the contribution of individuals and organisations who stand up against racial discrimination and the right to civic space must be entirely respected.

Despite the fact that the vast majority of individuals strive

for equality, only a small number of those who attempt it are successful. The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination emphasises the need for making an effort to remove prejudice as a constructive step toward attaining equality. To mark the occasion, ANTARAL - Pause and Be the Change, a student forum of Jain (Deemed-to-be University) has taken a step to raise awareness about equality among people of all races and ethnicities, through a photography and face painting competition.

With the theme being 'I am not my hair, am not this skin. I am the soul that lives within - let's restructure the mentality', for the photography contest, the students aimed at encouraging the belief that all members of all races are entitled to the same rights and benefits. Participants were given 1.5 hours for clicking the picture and submitting it.



To cherish what remains of the Earth and to foster its renewal is our only legitimate hope for survival"

Preethi Sriram, a member of the International Newborn Photography Association and a Certified Accredited Professional Newborn Photographers International member, was brought in to judge the work.

Her photographs are built on original and innovative thoughts and subjects, which distinguish her from other accomplished photographers. She praised the participants for their interest and motivation for organising the event, and expressed her appreciation of the photographs that were turned in, noting that it was a challenge to choose the

best among them because all the shots were outstanding in their own right.

A face painting competition was held. The contestants were allowed two hours to complete painting their partner's face. Every participant brought innovative ideas to the table that served the purpose and theme of the event as a whole.

Ms. Tania, artist, IT expert and Brand Ambassador for two of the most popular stationery businesses in India and whose paintings have been sold and delivered all over the world, was the judge for the face painting competition. She opined that such events blur the line of discrimination and promote harmony in society. With the announcement of the winners, the event concluded on a warm note.

DIGITAL DISRUPTION AND BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

A VIRTUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

“In Today’s era of volatility, there is no other way but to re-invent. The only sustainable advantage you can have over others is agility, that’s it. Because nothing else is sustainable, everything else you create somebody else will replicate.” — Jeff Bezos, Founder, Amazon

Digital disruption, or the revolution brought about by new digital technology and business models, is a reality across all industries and geographies today. It is a paradigm change that is here to stay, and it will have far-reaching consequences for all businesses. As a result, the method in which businesses operate has changed. In both society and business, transformation is redefining our role in the world. Transformation accelerates and highlights the already existent and ongoing horizontal and global processes of change in society, both locally and globally. A Virtual International Conference on “Digital Disruption and Business Transformation” was organised recently, by the Shodha Student Research Development Cell of the School of Commerce at JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) in collaboration with iNurture Education Solutions Pvt. Ltd.

Following the inaugural session, Dr. Megha Garud, Assistant Professor, School of Commerce, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), introduced the keynote speaker,

Mr. Tilak Bannerjee, GBS Leader, Author, and Advisor on Digital Transformation and Intelligent Automation in Finance. Mr. Bannerjee delivered the keynote presentation on, “Digital Disruption in Finance and the HUMBOT Model.”

He presented his knowledge and expertise on the practical issues of ‘change’ in the industrial sector. A poll was undertaken to gain a better understanding of how automation is being implemented in various businesses. Following the survey’s conclusion, the organisation concluded that while the danger exists, it does not pose a limitation to its operations. The condemnation of the danger may be insignificant for the duration of the entire programme. Moreover, he stated that the organization’s primary issues were the standardisation of procedures, which included security measures, investments, prioritisation and so on, but that workers’ fear of losing their jobs were not a big source of concern. The application of this digital disruption in finance, he added, has resulted in the organisations becoming extremely successful.

He pointed out that the goal of automation is not to completely replace human beings; rather, the goal of digital transformation in finance is to make it more resilient, and free up time for people so that they can devote more time to their core operations, and build skills.

He also stated that individuals should be aware of the transition in management methods necessary for success. Due to the transition occurring in the financial sector, it is necessary to recognise both the genuine and perceived dangers. He observed that upskilling, reskilling, and career pathing should all have a good impact on employee retention.

He went on to say that a Hum-Bot workforce is unavoidable in the future.

He also mentioned that he has designed a new organisational chart for his company, in which it is critical to recognise when a bot is performing a certain duty and to align the bot with a human to work as a buddy, so that the bot is regarded as an individual rather than as a human worker. As a consequence, he concluded that people must learn to collaborate with robots in order to become the new combined worker of the future. He also noted that when this cooperation occurs, the output is stronger.

Following a brief intermission, a panel discussion on “Digital Disruption and Business Transformation” began. Dr. Megha introduced the moderator Dr. Anni Arnav, Associate Professor, School of Commerce, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University). Dr. Anni Arnav kicked off the panel discussion by providing an overview of the digital transformation process. In the context of social change, she mentioned the transformation acceleration and highlighted the previously existent and continuing horizontal and group processes that are taking place in society.

Mr. Arul Amudhan Gunalan, Director, Head of Marketing and Customer Experience at Skellam AI, Bengaluru, was the first panellist to speak, and he emphasized the necessity of digital transformation by describing how the crisis was managed during the pandemic with the assistance of digital platforms. He also highlighted the many areas in which digital transformation is extensively employed and the benefits of doing so, such as the education sector, the railway sector, and so

on. He also explained what the digital transformation achieves and how we may save time on the job by using real-world examples.

Mr. Ashwini Sahoo, the second panellist, spoke about traditional media. He went on to say that the penetration of digital transformation has aided the development of even the least developed countries.

The moderator next welcomed Dr. Venugopal Prabhakar Gantasala, M.B.A., Program Director and Associate Professor at the New York Institute of Technology in New York City, USA, who spoke about his research. With the digital platforms that are becoming increasingly popular, he recounted his own personal experience. He instanced how the lives of faculty have changed to that of an administrator.

Ms. Ananya Sundar, Digital Intelligence Specialist at Radarr in Bengaluru, was the final panellist to speak. She shared her thoughts on social media from a female perspective. Every week at her firm, she listened in on around 4 billion conversations, which was an excessive amount of data but was only feasible because of the digital transition. She mentioned that it was accessible from any location and at any time and emphasised that this transition has had a profound impact on many people’s lives. It was also brought to her attention that different companies or services are reliant on digital transformation for their continued improvement, which in turn helps them to grow more quickly.

In response to the questions, the four panellists provided their responses, and the moderator,

Dr. Anni Arnav, provided her closing remarks. He expressed his gratitude to the distinguished panellists for devoting their valuable time.

Following the panel discussion, there was a presentation of papers, submitted for the International Conference. Totally, 64 papers were received in response to the call for papers, which were published in the conference proceedings and were accepted for presentation at the conference.

While Prof. Manjunath, Assistant Professor, Government First Grade College, Kolar, led the session on economics, Dr. Seranmadevi, Associate Professor, Christ (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru chaired Track 2, which included HR, International Business, and Information Technology, track 3, which included Marketing, was led by Dr. Rupesh Kumar M, Assistant Professor, Christ (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru.

Following the successful conclusion of the panel discussion, the Valedictory session was held. Prof. Gonica Verma served as the session’s EMCEE (Executive Member of the Committee on Education and Employment).

Dr. A Sharmila, Associate Professor, School of Commerce, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), presented a comprehensive report on the proceedings of the day and the “Best Paper Award” was presented.

ACTIVITIES @CAMPUS

The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) emanates from the vision of the Government as articulated in the President's address: "This will be our tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150 birth anniversary and Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav."

A cleaning campaign in and around the college campus, as well as across the street, was arranged by our NSS unit in conjunction with regular NSS activities. The National Service Scheme (NSS) volunteers from the School of Commerce and the School of Computer Science and Information Technology organised a cleaning campaign

in and around their respective campuses. The aim of the drive was to educate the general public on the need for cleanliness, particularly during pandemic situations. As part of the drive, participants performed skits urging audience to maintain hygiene, designed and distributed posters with catchy slogans, and wrote essays expressing their concern for the environment. While the streets in and around the university were being cleaned, information regarding the proper disposal of wet and dry garbage was being disseminated to the general public.



CLEANLINESS DRIVE



GAUSHALA VISIT



In accordance with the rules established by the UGC for HEIs, The Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat (EBSB) club, in collaboration with the Department of Languages, organised a Gaushala Visit on Tuesday, March 29, 2022, for second-semester students of Jain (Deemed-to-be University).

The morning session began with an interaction between NSS volunteers and gaushala officials, during which the officials recounted their own experiences and encouraged them to get involved in community service. In addition to feeding the cows, the volunteers interacted with the management committee and other employees at the gaushala, posing questions about breeding cows and about the technology used in the gaushalas.

The management team of the Akhil Karnataka Prani Daya Sangh outlined their organization's objective to the audience. They said that cows in need of shelter are taken care of at Gaushala. Students were permitted to take in the panoramic view from the gaushala and to feed the cows while they were there. In India, the cow is revered as mother and is venerated as a goddess of fertility and accordingly several students offered prayers to the cow during the visit. They also learned about the medicinal benefits and advantages of cows. More than 100 students took part in this activity and discussed their experiences, displayed empathy, and expressed pride in having spent a worthwhile day at the Gaushala.

Kannada Nudi Sambhrama

The “Kannada Nudi Sambhrama” was arranged by the School of Sciences (UG & CPGS) in collaboration with the EBSB-Club. This curriculum was designed to stimulate students’ interest in the arts and archaeology, as well as to foster a sense of community among their fellow humans, with the goal of promoting our indigenous culture and value system.

The program’s inauguration was marked by the lighting of a lamp, which was followed by an invocation song and a Bharatanatyam performance.

The principal guest, Dr. Rajani Jairam, addressed the audience. Dr. Jairam stated that if the language is not utilised appropriately, it may have a negative impact on one’s life by citing ancient scriptures that tell the story of Vritrasura. During her thought-provoking speech, she discussed the significance of language in general and Kannada in particular.

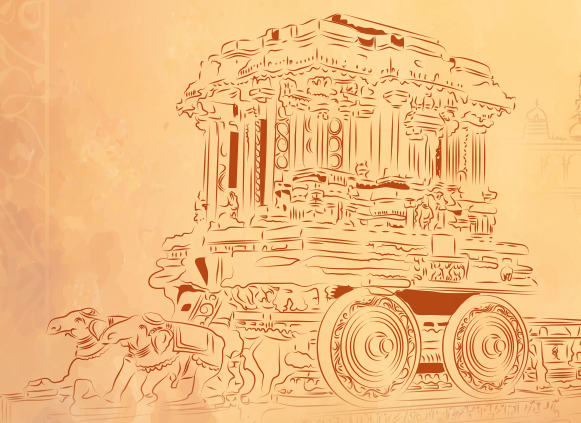
Our proud state Karnataka’s cultural legacy was portrayed beautifully in her speech, and the audience was moved by her words. In her concluding remarks, she spoke about our responsibility towards our state and our language.

Dollu Kunitha (drum dance), a traditional Karnataka dance form that has been passed down through generations was held to commemorate the event. The Dollu Kunitha ensemble put up a high-octane display. Typically, the drum dance is performed in a circular or semicircular pattern, with drum bearers beating their drums to the beat of the song and demands a high level of energy. Drum dancing is often accompanied by singing and accompanying music. Folksongs, recitations, Carnatic music, Bharatanatyam, dance, and other cultural performances were part of the festival. During the celebration, students put on a spectacular show for the audience.



Dr. Varalakshmi, Director, CPGS, in her presentation to the gathering, referred to the ancient poets of Kannada and their works and recommended the audience to take pride in the study of such literature. She spoke about the need for striking a balance between professional study and literature.

Dr. Asha Rajiv, Director of the School of Sciences, sent her best wishes and urged the students to take part in the competition. Dignitaries in attendance presented awards and certificates to the winners.





11th ANNUAL CONVOCATION

Graduation is among the most memorable experiences in one's life. When the freshman year began, the class of 2020 had no idea that they would be participating in a virtual graduation ceremony owing to a global pandemic. COVID-19 has established a new normal, and for many students across the country, a change in plans is a given. In order to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus in big gatherings, many graduation ceremonies continue to be held online.

Coronavirus (Covid-19) compelled schools and institutions across the country to close their physical campuses and adopt an online or hybrid teaching-learning approach. This has been the case for quite some time. However, in order to keep all the odds associated with the coronavirus at bay, the 11th Annual Convocation Ceremony went virtual on March 24, 2022, with students tuning into a pre-taped ceremony from the comfort of their own homes.

JAIN has been offering high-quality education for more than two decades, and it has continued to rise to greater heights. As the University celebrated this year's Graduation Program, JAIN renews its commitment to create graduates who are both competitive and qualified. As the number of candidates graduating from our institutions continues to rise, the University reiterates the new face of holistic, student-centric education. The ceremony began with a procession led by Dr. Manjunath, Controller of

Examinations, followed by officials from Jain (Deemed to be University) and the guests of honour. Thereafter the graduation ceremony began virtually with a prayer to invoke the blessings of the almighty.

Assistant professor Dr. Jayalakshmi Rao anchored the graduation ceremony virtually and commenced the event by introducing and welcoming the dignitaries on the dais, after which Dr. Raj Singh, Vice-Chancellor, Jain (Deemed-to-be University) welcomed the gathering and made the opening remarks of the ceremony. Dr. Raj Singh introduced the Chief Guests, Dr. Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan, Chancellor, Central University of Rajasthan and NIIT University, former Director - ISRO, and Dr. Sowmya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist, World Health Organization. He mentioned that the year's convocation is being designated a special one for several reasons: besides being held in a complete virtual mode, it's the first convocation after JAIN began its new journey termed Jain 2.0 in 2021; and it is also the 1st convocation after Jain was accredited by NAAC with an A ++ grade on Dec 6, 2021.

As part of honouring the graduate batch, Jain (Deemed-to-be University) recognised the International Year of Basic Science for Sustainable Development with the theme 'Unifying the World with the Power of Science,' as the University highlighted the role

of science in uniting, healing and directing society toward a sustainable future.

All the formal components of the normal convocation were replicated in the second edition of virtual convocation, including the Welcome Address by the Vice-Chancellor, the Conferment of Degrees by the Chancellor, the Chancellor's Address, and the Convocation Address by the Chief Guest.



In all 99 gold medalists and 257 rank holders were announced by the University from among 6054 students enrolled in bachelor's and master's degrees as well as M.Phil and Ph.D programmes in the Humanities, Social Sciences, Sciences, Commerce, Management, and Engineering streams. At this year's convocation, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) recognised three valedictorians from the graduating class of 2021, a first for the University.

Welcoming the gathering to the 11th annual convocation, the Chancellor of the University congratulated the students on the significant milestones achieved. He said "I take great pride in addressing you on your special day. Your hard work, dedication and commitment to your goals has paid off today. But this is only part of the story. You are now graduates of a University that prides itself on preparing, shaping, and guiding bright minds like you to be a

source of inspiration and create an impact for the betterment of our society."

He continued, "Jain is honoured to announce that the 11th convocation ceremony is commemorating the International Year of Basic Science for Sustainable Development as proclaimed during the United Nations General Assembly.

This year we are focused on honouring and understanding the importance of sciences for advances in medicine, industry, agriculture, water resources, energy planning, environment, communication and culture. The role of basic sciences is indispensable in today's world. The understanding of science has contributed immensely to the transformation of physiology and psychology.

It has helped us broaden our perspectives in delivering solutions to perceive societal crises and enhance human conditions. The knowledge of basic sciences equips us with the ability to make new observations each day. It encourages us to build more scientific and technical knowledge and create innovative techniques. The wisdom and power of science bolster us to think, feel and visualize a new world and new ways of doing things." Concluding his welcome

address, Dr. Roychand, Chancellor, congratulated the batch of 2021 and shared seven principles and practices that would enhance the student's stature, thoughts and actions. The seven points were:

- Have a right view
- Develop the right resolve
- Be right in your speech
- Exhibit a good conduct
- Pursue the right livelihood
- Put in the right effort
- Develop mindfulness
- Cultivate kindness and compassion in the journey of your life

Chief guest, Dr Kasturirangan, while delivering the convocation address said, "I would like to use this opportunity to greet all the graduating students and recipients of various honours and their proud parents. In the horizon of higher education, Jain is shining like a bright star, thanks to the vision and zeal of your chancellor Dr. Chenraj Roychand. His perennial goals to think big, his unbound energy to galvanize human potential to do purposeful action and his unbroken focus on goals are unique demonstrations of a rare leadership. Jain has acquired its rightful place among the leading institutions of higher education well known for their pre-eminence."

Congratulating the faculty and graduates for keeping their spirit high during the pandemic, he stated, "Over the last two years, you have demonstrated an undefeatable spirit of adapting to the changes forced by COVID and yet progressing your learning under the most trying circumstances. This spirit is what will ensure success in life. It is highly gratifying

to know that the faculty and management of the university have taken action with such a sense of responsibility and concern that the university has lost no time to prevent interruption in the progress of your studies using the power of technology. Your mission for higher learning may have begun here, but it will surely not end here. You should never give up your dreams and aspirations. It is these aspirations that will drive you to higher levels of achievement. I once again congratulate every one of you." The chief guests' convocation address was followed by a graduation oath administered by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Dr Sundararajan.

Dr. Sowmya Swaminathan who was one of the prominent guests of the event further delivered her talk to the graduates. She said, "We are living in an increasingly vulnerable and fragmented world. And while we have all been living through the pandemic for the last couple of years global disruptions are on the rise and in this case, it's a health shock for the universe. Role of science and technology, along with education, continues to play a crucial role in solving the challenges we face. In a day and age of digital connection, it is imperative to differentiate between facts and truth. For this, we need to be aware. And appropriate awareness can only come through good science education focusing on rationality, a questioning mind, and of course trust that comes from having good role models."

MATRUBASHA DIWAS

The Department of Languages in association with Ek Bharath Shrestha Bharath (EBSB-Club), JAIN (Deemed-to-be-University), observed “Martubhasha Diwas Celebration”, on 21 February 2022, in commemoration of the ‘International Day for Mother Language’. The initiative seeks to promote and conserve the mother tongues of nations all over the world, as well as raise awareness of linguistic and cultural heritage in order to encourage unity through tolerance and discussion among people.

The purpose of commemorating Matrubhasha Diwas is to raise awareness among people about the importance of taking pride in one’s heritage and using one’s mother tongue as well as indigenous languages.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has designated February 21 as International Mother Language Day in order to promote the dissemination of all mother languages, raise awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions and diversity throughout the world, and inspire solidarity among people of different cultures and people speaking

different languages. This day is observed as MATRUBHASHA DIWAS in India, and it is commemorated every year on this date to encourage the usage of mother language.

A number of competitions (some of which are described below) were staged in conjunction with this occasion, in which students participated enthusiastically.

The programmes, which were based on the UNESCO-observed theme of ‘Languages Without Borders,’ were created to help English-medium students improve their communication skills and proficiency in their mother tongue and other Indian languages, as well as to assist them in translating from other languages into their mother tongue. Students explained in their mother tongue (Kannada, Telugu, Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil, Marathi, Gujrati, Konkani, Urdu, etc.), the linguistic significance, contribution, and cultural traditions.

They talked about their early childhood memories. Particularly nostalgic were the students who had spent their formative years in rural areas, recalling the moments when the entire family and

the entire community would come together to celebrate. They discussed their cultural identities and shared their opinions on the subject. Students put up poetry performance in their own languages. A few subhashitani – wonderful sayings, folk melodies, and poetry from the works of Kuvempu, Shishunala Sharif, Vemana, Sumati, Kabir, Rahim, Kural, and others – were recited throughout the celebration. The poets, great literary works, and epic characters served as the basis for the quizzes. The quiz competition consisted of two rounds, the first of which was a question and answer round, followed by a round of Dumb charades. Students were invited to write essays, and they participated in the activity by submitting essays expressing their opinions on the subject matter.

Essay writing topics included:

- Importance of mother tongue and our responsibility.
- Cultural unity of India. Regional heritage was the focus of the Chitralkahana pardha.

The paintings were made by the students, and were exhibited. In addition, they recalled the Lori songs from their own language. The panel consisted of language faculty members as well as Asst. Prof. K Akarsha as its chairperson and the panel evaluated each participant’s level of involvement.

Prof. Rajani Jairam delivered insightful and motivating dialogues from the Ramayana, quoting “Janani jannmabhumischa swargadapi gareeyasi,” from the Upanishads – “Maatrudevobhava.” She also spoke about the dasa sahitya of Kannada, the Sants (Kabir, Rahim, Gurunanak, and others) of the Bakti movement, and also described the significance of the many languages spoken in the country. She concluded her speech by outlining the cultural significance and explaining the concept of vasudhaiva kutumbakam.

A large number of students participated in these competitions, and 24 awards and certificates were awarded to the winners.

The following contests were held (offline) between February 14th and February 21st, 2022.

1. Vaachana spardha - Elocution
2. Padya Gaayana spardha -Recitation
3. Rasaprashne - Quiz
4. Prabandha rachana - Essay writing
5. Gaayana spardha -Lori songs
6. Chitralkahana -Painting Exhibition

NEYP 2022



Jain (Deemed-to-be University), under the aegis of Paryavaran Sanrakshan Gatividh and in collaboration with RV University and Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences, held the National Environment Youth Parliament (NEYP) 2022 at the university and regional levels. With Green Assocham supporting Jain (Deemed-to-be University) as a Sustainability Partner, in its efforts, this event is regarded as the first-of-its-kind endeavour since it was organised exclusively for students from Higher Education Institutions throughout the country and included subjects such as viable steps to address environmental challenges.

The objective of organizing the NEYP was to inspire students to consider and participate in current environmental concerns, as well as to reflect on the viewpoints of people from other parts of the world. The

secondary goal was to get the best possible resolution that was consistent with the vision of New India towards “Environment and Sustainability.” The National Environmental Youth Curriculum (NEYC) also worked to ensure that the formal Climate and Environment Education programme was completed and implemented.

Emphasis was placed on potential activities in addressing significant environmental crises at the event, which was open to students from all around the country who are enrolled in higher education institutions. During the event, students actively interacted with the theme of Environment and Sustainability, sharing their opinions on the subject and reflecting on developing best practices and solutions in this area. The discussions were centred around the role of the young as transformational leaders who can help people

comprehend their surroundings and, in turn, pave the route for national success.

At the regional level, 61 competitors represented the region’s 11 participating universities. In addition to the host and cooperating universities, renowned private universities including Woxsen University (Telangana), KL University (Andhra Pradesh), Mother Teresa Women’s University (Tamil Nadu), Dayananda Sagar University (Karnataka), Vels Institute of Science Technology and Advanced Studies (Tamil Nadu), REVA University (Karnataka), and CMR University (Karnataka) eagerly participated in the Regional Event. A significant portion of the discussion revolved around alternative and renewable energy sources. The attendance of 22 judges from around the nation, including a prestigious group of academicians, entrepreneurs, management experts, and notable working professionals, added to the occasion’s opulence.

These events took place on both levels using virtual Zoom platforms in two rounds—each of which was further divided into break-out rooms to facilitate discursive involvement. The University level event hosted a total of 41 participants and was evaluated by JAIN Faculty Members from various Schools and Centers. At the conclusion of the final round, eight individuals were chosen to compete on a regional level. On 21 January 2022 (Friday), an online felicitation ceremony was organised to recognise the stakeholders’ efforts at the university level, which was presided by the honourable Vice-Chancellor of JAIN (Deemed-to-be University),

Dr Raj Singh. At the National level, eight students were shortlisted to participate in this event, which is scheduled to be conducted soon at the Parliament House Complex by the National Host, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies, Faridabad (Haryana).

On the 28 of January, a virtual felicitation session (through Zoom) was organised for participants. Distinguished guests included Dr. H D Charan (Founder Vice-Chancellor, Bikaner Technical University Rajasthan & Chairman, National Committee on Universal Human Values AICTE Delhi), Dr. Y S R Murthy (Vice-Chancellor, RV University), Dr. Raul Rodriguez (Vice-President, Woxsen University), Dr. N C Wadhwa (Director General, Manav Rachna Educational Institutions). While they emphasised the need for discussing the most serious environmental issues of the day, they also heaped praise on JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) for making genuine efforts to bring the event to fruition. Dr. Raj Singh not only expressed his satisfaction at the enthusiastic engagement of students, but he also linked this project to the larger framework of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which aims to instill inventive instincts in students through a variety of initiatives. Dr. H D Charan emphasised the importance of continuing to make such efforts in the future.

NEYP 2022 has provided JAIN (Deemed to be a University) with a window of opportunity to broaden its sights to include the entirety of the country. In the hopes of bringing glory back to the region, we are looking forward to seeing the victors of the Regional Level Event.



College cultural fests have returned to city campuses in their traditional form following a two-year hiatus, bringing with them cheer and whistles, kiosks to browse through, and a riot of hues and emotions.

Aside from the numerous cultural, sporting and cinematic events that were put on hold while the Coronavirus epidemic wreaked havoc around the

world, the pause in the exciting campus festivities that college students eagerly anticipate were the ones that made a student's life monotonous.

After two years of no on-ground activities on college campuses, the Jain (Deemed-to-be University) fest season returned in the last week of March, after two years. Even as college fests were rocked by celebrities and social media influencers, the

social media pages were a hive of activity as the excitement built, and the offline mode of fests increased the number of participants.

With Covid-19 precautions in place, Taru-Samkruthi was conducted at the campus of Jain University. Tarusamskruti is a national-level intercollegiate festival where the cultural, business, and technological activities all come together

under one roof to create a rostrum for bringing the hidden talents to the forefront of public attention. Over 3000 people from 29 different states of the country gather beneath a single tree to celebrate unity as well as all forms of artistic expression. Fests organized by various departments were given different names under the banner of Taru-Samskruthi, before which Folk-Fiesta, an annual event was organized.

Vibrant Campus



Folk Fiesta

Folk Fiesta, a yearly event, organised by Samashti - The Student Council, is the finale of the college's annual ethnic day as well as the college's carnival celebration. With the variety of activities scheduled, the day promised to be an incredible ride for everyone in attendance at JAIN (Deemed-to-be University).

The folk fiesta got off to a flying start as the music team's 'Mic check' stirred up excitement for the day's festivities. It would be an understatement to say that this event was attended by a large number of people as the crowd turnout was massive.

The Veni Vici dance team, a high-intensity Indian dance troupe, captivated the audience with their ferocious energy and unfiltered exhibition of emotions. The anchors of the day made sure that the entire audience was on their feet at all times. The Raagbandits, a music group known for its outstanding mélange of raag, sur and taal, put together a scintillating symphony.

The Heads of various departments from JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) made their presence and expressed their appreciation. The unveiling of the banners began shortly after that. The Samashti logo was the first to be unveiled, followed by the 'Tarusamskruti' and 'Pulse'

logos. Finally, when the excitement reached a feverish pitch, the topic for Tarusamskruti 2022, Monopoly, was unveiled. The mesmerising rhythms of the dhol electrified the atmosphere, and the audience erupted in applause. The kiosks provided everything from food to recreational activities, which everyone enthusiastically enjoyed.

Samyoga

Samyoga is a national level intercollegiate festival hosted by Jain (Deemed-to-be University). At Samyoga, creativity in its purest form is appreciated and therefore theatre enthusiasts, music lovers, dancers, fashion icons, painters and writers, take this as an opportunity to come together and compete to exhibit their talents.

Sankalpa

Sankalpa is an event that strives to bring together all the technical, photography, videography, and gaming aficionados under one roof to provide a holistic experience.

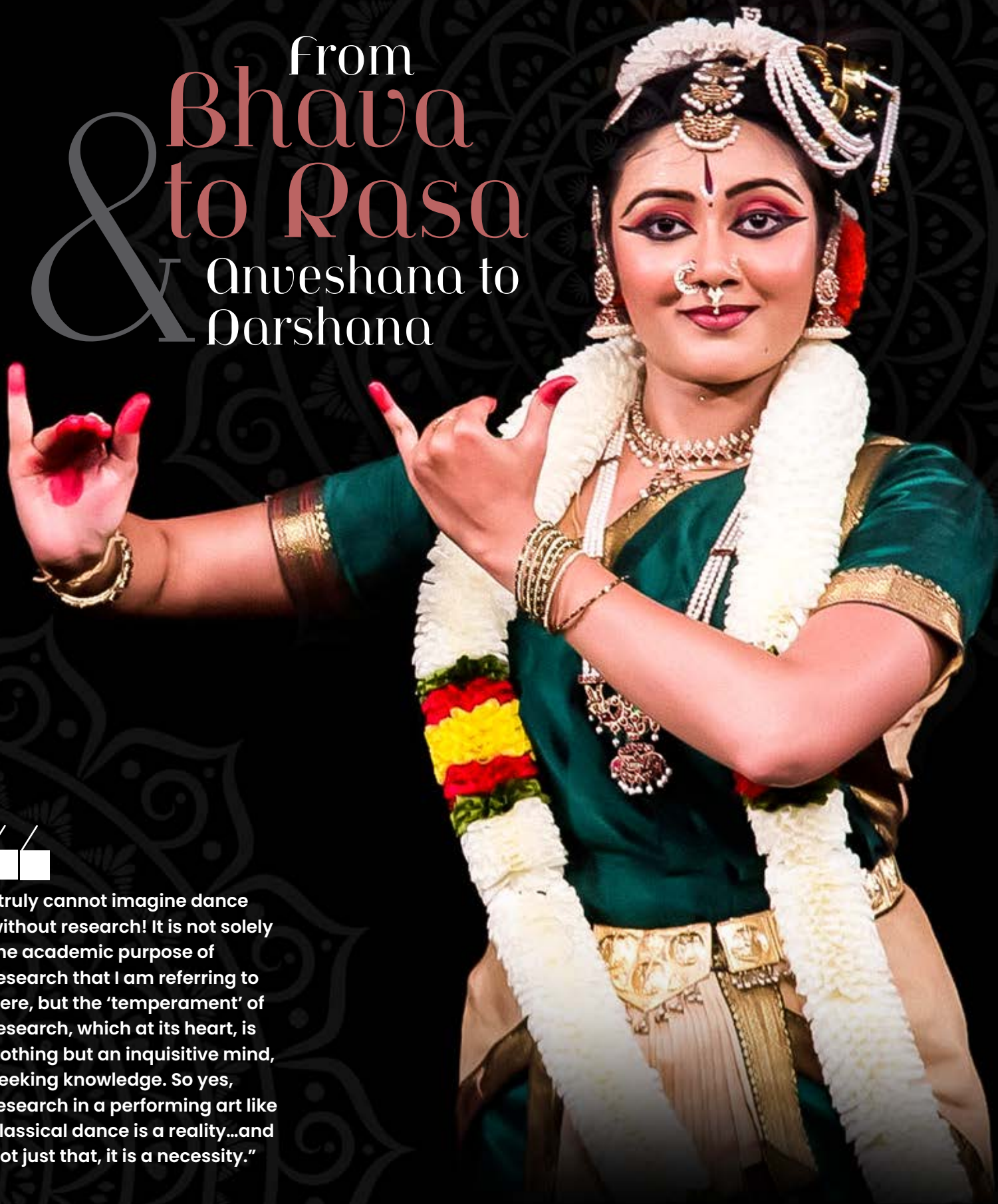
Samanvaya

Samanvaya is a commerce fest that places a strong emphasis on the primary aspect of commerce and includes contests such as the best manager, marketing, public relations and finance-based activities that simulate real-life crises and corporate dilemmas, among other things.

Pulse

The music is amplified, all emotions are allowed to run wild, and jolts of electricity rush through everyone's veins at the same time during Pulse. When the music starts playing, it's just you and the stage on which you're performing. Pulse, an intercollegiate dance competition held at the national level, is a Samashti offering. This is the great finale of the beautiful art of dance, in which all elements are fused into a single performance.

From Bhava & to Rasa Anveshana to Darshana



I truly cannot imagine dance without research! It is not solely the academic purpose of research that I am referring to here, but the ‘temperament’ of research, which at its heart, is nothing but an inquisitive mind, seeking knowledge. So yes, research in a performing art like classical dance is a reality...and not just that, it is a necessity.”

Madhulika's journey with research began when she was pursuing Master of Arts - Dance at JAIN (Deemed-to-be University). During the second year of the programme, as part of the curriculum she was introduced to the concept of writing a dissertation. "I remember the initial feelings of excitement and a bit of hesitation regarding what research in dance could entail. Although, she had already been introduced to research that has led to monumental contributions in the field of dance history, reconstruction of an ancient dance form, classical literature, and many such interesting subjects, the thought of doing research in a performing art and wording it down into a full-fledged dissertation seemed like a daunting adventure to the danseuse. However, over the last 8 years, having completed the M.A and M.Phil dissertations, having co-guided many post-graduate students in their dissertations and currently working on her Ph. D, she says, "I truly cannot imagine dance without research! It is not solely the academic purpose of research that I am referring to here, but the 'temperament' of research, which at its heart, is nothing but an inquisitive mind, seeking knowledge. So yes, research in a performing art like classical dance is a reality...and not just that, it is a necessity."

Madhulika appreciates the focused sessions of research at Jain that began with M. Phil. Research Methodology classes. She has found them to be the most enjoyable and informative sessions that she had with Dr. Sandeep Shastri. To help research students understand research at the macro level a heterogenous group of students was created by combining



students from various streams and disciplines. Students had plenty of opportunities to interact with research scholars of other subjects. Students were forced to work with others rather than stay in their comfort zones. To substantiate this, Madhulika talks about one particular assignment that students of Cultural Studies discipline had to undertake in the area of Biotechnology. She says, "Just imagine...a herculean

task of familiarizing and writing about a science stream that had gained tremendous popularity over the last few decades, but still seemed so ancient and alien to our artistic brains! Albeit, the final assignment was a very modest work, but the process of attempting to understand another discipline and their research was an eye-opener." A large duration of classes, she recounts, were spent on practical application

of the theory sessions discussed earlier in the day. Impromptu presentations, solving case studies, group discussions and many such robust activities filled the RM classes with much laughter as well as nervousness, but most importantly thought-provoking discussions that eventually led to an understanding of the topic of the day. She fondly recalls, "Our precious tea & snack time was very well utilized for the same...4pm to 7pm of our Friday evenings time just flew by!"



According to Madhulika one of the most sought-after elements at Jain is the strong research programme structure that ensures a comprehensive understanding of 'research' itself, as well as allows one to explore their own understanding of the research elements in the chosen fields. The common Research methodology sessions, the field-specific Core paper classes, the subject-specific Advanced coursework paper, and a further nuanced researcher's-topic-specific coursework paper, she points out, are a wonderful way to initiate a student into research and narrow down the focus areas. She found the skill development sessions enriching and enjoyable; 'Cooking-without-fire' under a



My guide, Dr. Shobha Shashikumar, is an inspiration to say the least! Being a researcher and performer herself, she carries the vision for blending the two in a unique and aesthetic way; and making sure that her research students do not miss a single thread in approaching their respective topics despite their limitations...she is a true gift to students of dance research."



surprisingly tight budget, she says, taught her many lessons, "not to forget the delectable outcome!" The 2-day Research Retreat including faculty sessions, guest sessions, research scholar presentations and the cultural evening is an event every student looks forward to. "I must admit, as much as we await this event to meet our fellow researchers and the informational sessions, it is also accompanied with just the right amount of anxiety at presenting our work progress!" she says.

Research in dance being in its adolescent stage, the challenges for a student can be quite intimidating if not for the right guidance, Madhulika shares. "I must say, I have been blessed with the best of guidance at Jain." She mentions that highly experienced scholars like Dr. Choodamani Nandagopal with her vast

knowledge and Dr. Karuna Vijayendra with her expertise in art history introduced her to a wide range of disciplines. Madhulika says that Dr. Mythili Rao who heads the research section, has a fantastic vision for seeing methodology in literally



any topic. "My guide, Dr. Shobha Shashikumar, is an inspiration to say the least! Being a researcher and performer

herself, she carries the vision for blending the two in a unique and aesthetic way; and making sure that her research students do not miss a single thread in approaching their respective topics despite their limitations... she is a true gift to students

of dance research," says the research scholar. There are a wide range of topics that are taken up for research in

dance; historical development of dances based on archeological sources and ancient treatises, temple traditions, various styles and some of their reconstructions, documentation of oral techniques and traditions through the Guru-Shishya Parampara (which is a very key element in any performing art form), study of literature which includes various texts/ treatises as well as poetic literature that becomes the core content for dance compositions, comparative studies of various dance styles within and outside India encompassing many social & cultural studies, interdisciplinary studies involving psychology, sociology, cinema, yoga etc., subjects of philosophy, and of course the area that blends it all – aesthetics. An M.A or Ph.D student at Jain has the opportunity to explore any area that they have interest and expertise in. Speaking

from her experience, Madhulika says that from the fundamental philosophical and technical aspects of dance to a multidisciplinary approach covering various areas, every topic poses intriguing challenges to a research scholar. It is key to remember that the topic and a vision for the subject must lead one into a dynamic approach for arriving at a research methodology, the employability of techniques, the process of analysis and so on. Especially in today's times when there is an overload of information available just a 'click' away, picking the right sources and ensuring their authenticity itself is a quality that needs to be developed by every researcher.



"I am tempted to take refuge in the thoughts of an exemplary scholar, Shatavadhani Dr. R Ganesh, who has made an extraordinary contribution to art by propounding 'intelligence' as a sentiment that can be expressed and enjoyed through artistic creation and appreciation. He beautifully states that this 'Dhiira-rasa' which refers to a very refined intellect, arises from the primordial emotion called 'Kutuuhala' i.e., Curiosity! One cannot fail to recognize and relate the entire journey of research, beginning from this very simple and natural curiosity of an inquisitive mind, up till the final completion of the work into a dissertation or a thesis or even a performance as a celebration of intellect – an honest journey from Bhaava to Rasa...from a personalized search to a macro universalized vision!" she sums up beautifully.



CSR

TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

APARNA SHIVAPURA

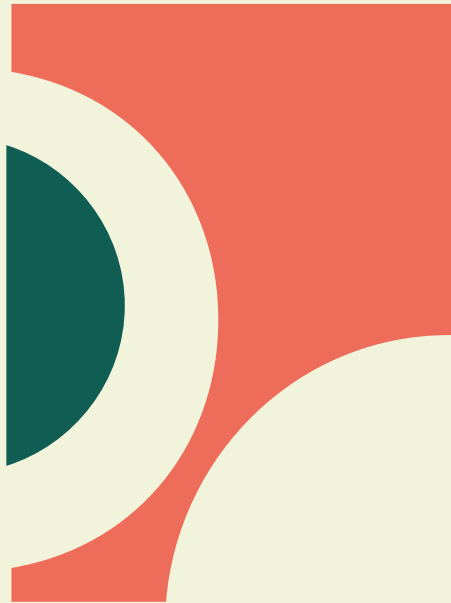
Gaps are widening between the haves and have-nots, the earth seams are ripping off at the edges, and the world is heated up with fury and emissions. Everyone has to play a part, conscious and significant to hold it back together, and set off the spin to peacefully put her back on her axis. Thankfully, legal compliances in the corporate milieu are paving the path for invaluable transformation in SUSTAINABILITY.



THERE IS NO PLANET B!

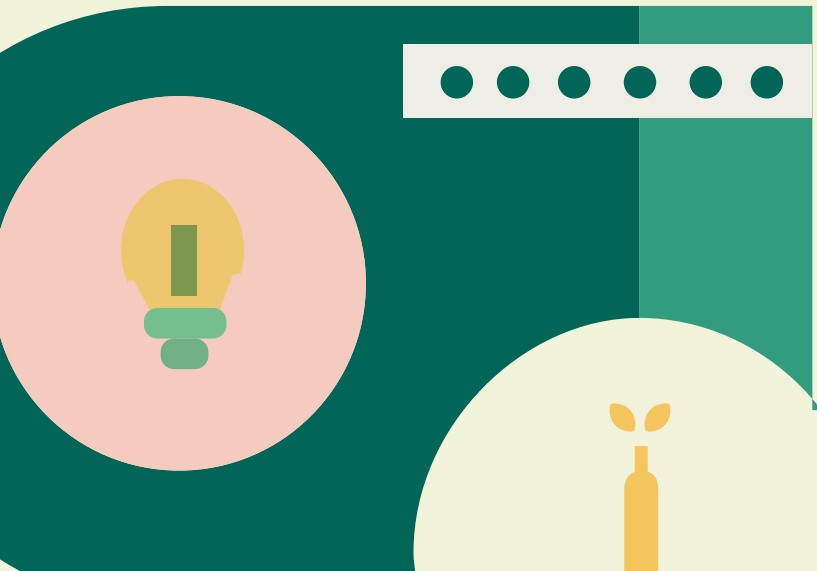
“It is our collective and individual responsibility to preserve and tend to the world in which we all live.”

—Dalai Lama



The burdens of degradation, pollution and misuse are weighing down the Earth and evidently, ripping off the edges. There is an enhanced clamancy for actionable transformation spread across the country. Driving innovative sustainability, climate solutions, community development and empowerment is the need of the hour.

Comprehensive Global Sustainability is the answer with the world heading on treacherous ground leading to deterioration and self-destruction, if this does not sound cliched. As more hands on the deck are needed to ensure the boat stays afloat, Corporate Social Responsibility towards Sustainability is building more muscle to take on more weight and lighten the Earth, literally and figuratively.



WHAT TRULY, IS SUSTAINABLE?

For decades now, the World Economic Forum (WEF) is associated with tangible outcomes in the space of global sustainability efforts. It has developed a critical imperative to follow Sustainability measures and embodies it in its vision and philosophy. The Sustainable Development Impact Summit hosted by WEF annually, brings together the world's top academics, politicians and business, youth and civil society leaders to address the most pressing issues on the global sustainability agenda.

UNITED NATIONS SDGS

In a global partnership, 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) shared by UNITED NATIONS MEMBER STATES bind all countries that are continually focused on Health, Education, Reduction of Inequality, Economic Growth and a pivotal focus on Climate Change, Saving Forests and Oceans.



CSR AND SUSTAINABILITY PANORAMA

As Ralph Bicknese, a recognized practitioner of Sustainable Design, specializing in regenerative architecture, says, "Sustainability is about Ecology, Economy and Equity."

As per NITI AYOG's latest SDG India Index, India has recorded valuable progress in SDGs with the initiatives of Corporates, Government Policy and Institutional Bodies. The accomplishments are founded on aspects of collaboration and synergies yielding significant results and greater progress.

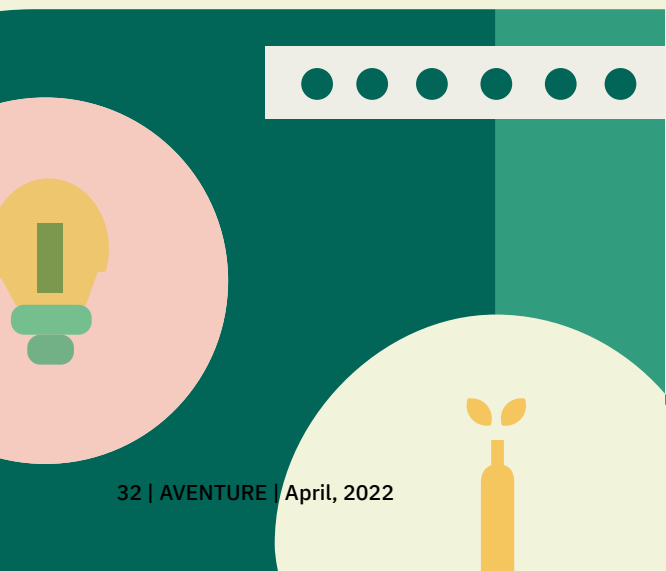
Businesses around the country are enhancing and accelerating integration of social and environmental concerns, beyond financial focus. Projects by corporates include initiatives in Renewable Energy, Reduction in Carbon Footprint, Environmental Sustainability, Social Environment Development, Water Conservation, Disaster Management, Tree Plantation, Education in Rural India and more.

GLOBAL BRANDS BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY BRIDGES

Through innovation, lateral thinking and a passion for making a strong footprint in Sustainability, select brands are truly paving the way for transformation in Ecology, Environment and Economy. Pharma giant Johnson and Johnson has incorporated several initiatives like leveraging Wind Power and other Renewable Energy projects. It is said the colossal brand Google has committed over \$1bn towards Renewable Energy, and also backs socially relevant causes.

Coca-Cola puts a lot of thrust on Climate, Agriculture and Degradable Packaging with also phenomenal efforts in the direction of Waste Management. Ford pledges to be carbon neutral with all its products by 2050, while Bosch is also committed to building the ecological footprint in Climate Action, Water Usage and more. GE has launched a Renewable Energy business strategy and rolled out innovations as intelligent water meter, wind turbines and more.

There have been remarkable accomplishments by companies using the power of innovation and technology to make colossal and long-term value impact on the planet. Microsoft plans to achieve zero waste by 2030, by making all surface devices recyclable, and is investing in R&D towards path-breaking climate solutions. Adidas has innovated its products internally, preventing over 2000 tonnes of plastic entering the sea. From making efforts in being generally charitable to consciously choosing issues and



challenges that they resonate with, companies globally are making steadfast progress.



To cherish what remains of the Earth and to foster its renewal is our only legitimate hope of survival.” Wendell Berry, Environmentalist, Activist and Novelist.

CORPORATE CSR IN INDIA

On April 1, 2014, India became the first country to legally mandate corporate social responsibility. Section 135 of India’s Companies Act makes it mandatory for companies of a certain turnover and profitability to spend 2 per cent of their average net profit for the past three years on CSR.

Today, Corporate CSR has moved ahead, way beyond philanthropy. The association is not limited to and includes critical areas of development, challenges and sustenance that is much needed. With corporates weightlifting causes that have a tangible impact on the environment and economy, CSR is now making headway and playing a visible role in accelerating the country’s socio-economic growth, with a simultaneous focus on environment and ecology.

Sustainability as part of the Fabric and Fashion Industry is now gaining a strong foothold in India. Design Consultant and SME, Vani Kannan believes, in work that involves textiles and fashion, a circular economy

driven by sustainable practices is a thought that has found steady ground over the years, as we humans become more and more aware of our responsibilities in sustaining our world. “Less is more, is a choice reflected in brands across the world, with conscious efforts in recreating design processes, adapting scientific data analysis, virtual platforms, investing in recycling and building sustainable sourcing and supply chains, along with truer brand messaging. This journey towards responsible retail is non-negotiable, a continuous one that brands and consumers hold together,” she points out.

While organizations, brands, companies comply with legislation, their investments are also directed towards growth and development of marginalized communities and the environment. It is interesting to see how companies have specific departments, functions and teams to execute CSR and Sustainability throughout the Financial Year. According to a recent survey, companies spent 48 per cent more towards these initiatives as compared to times prior to the legislation. India spent over INR 100 billion spread across education, skill development, social welfare, healthcare and environment conservation, while the Prime Minister’s Relief Fund saw an increase of 139 per cent in CSR contributions.

LEADING WITH LIGHT AND A HEART OF GOLD

According to Raghuram Krishnan, Director – Finance, Adobe India, Korea and Global Shared Services, CSR and Sustainability consciousness at a corporate and a personal level comes from a culture of thinking and living the vision

of Sustainability. At a personal level, he says he has ensured that he lives every moment with an awareness and mindfulness about the usage of natural resources, complete elimination of plastic, and an overall orientation towards preservation, conservation and

regeneration. He has made sure to have passed this vision on to his family and children. “My son, for instance, only uses OKO filtration water bottles, a simple inclusion which filters water and is plastic free, he is also aware of the impact of neglecting our environment,” he says.



Adobe India, through its CSR towards Sustainability programs, has been actively participating in the Himalaya Cleansing projects, collaborating with Healing Himalayas, to render it plastic free. Over the last decade and more, the organisation has planted lacs of saplings to create green lung spaces, and collaborated with various bodies to develop recycling plants in Himachal Pradesh.

“I am also personally involved with Litterati, a technology app providing actionable insights on the world’s litter data. Through the company and personal efforts, we have actively supported several animal welfare groups, animal rescue centres, child education, cancer treatments and more,” adds Krishnan.

The critical turning point for the success of these initiatives as a corporate, a company or an individual, as he says, is by enabling social and environmental sustainability and integrating it into our daily lives, thoughts and actions.

CSR, SUSTAINABILITY IN THE ‘GREEN’ COLOR

Several organizations are making a conscious effort to paint GREEN the city’s landscapes. From creating oxygen hubs, innovative lung spaces, saving birds and extinct animals, anti-poaching projects, technology for animal welfare, planting trees, building greenspaces within the city, corporates are literally leading the way, demonstrating how an integration of technology, innovation and ideas can engender transformation.

Rajesh Mysore, Director – WMG Wealth Management, Risk

Advisory Solutions quotes Author Robert Swan, “The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it.” The Group specifically drives several green initiatives, including collaboration and affiliation programs in Reserved Forest Areas, technology aids for anti-poaching, support and welfare for forest staff, aids for conservation and development among others. Organizations are anchoring cutting-edge projects in sustainability through CSR commitments, including energy efficient agriculture, solar glass to generate power, natural alternatives to plastic, reducing human-animal conflict, green buildings and more.

In 2021, many companies diverted more than 50 per cent of their CSR budgets towards sustainability initiatives. Long-term livelihood and recovery programs for entrepreneurs in the post-corona world is gaining momentum in India. Projects covering humanitarian aid, ecological regeneration, healthcare and climate has received maximum upliftment. According to the latest reports, brands like Godrej Consumer Products, Infosys, Wipro, TCS, Jubilant Life Sciences, Grasim Industries, Vedanta Group, JSW Steel, Tata Power have been leading by creating valuable differentiation in this space.

CtrlS, Asia’s largest Rated-4 Hyperscale Data Centre, was recently awarded the most prestigious ASSOCHAM Award for Sustainability Excellence in Energy Management. The current and past winners of ASSOCHAM awards include SAP, Tata Consultancy Services, L&T, Cognizant, Ashok Leyland, ONGC, SBI Life Insurance, JK Tyre, Tata Capital, ICICI Foundation,



Corporate Sustainability is a company’s delivery of long-term value in financial, environmental, social and ethical terms.” – UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL IMPACT.

NTPC, Paytm and others who have made efforts to integrate economic, environmental, and social objectives alongside the company’s operations and growth. Their efforts cover sustainable practices to efficiently manage energy consumption and reduce carbon footprint.

WOMEN LEADERS & WOMEN BENEFICIARIES

In 2021, the world saw a remarkable rise in women leadership driving corporate sustainability programs from climate emergency, reducing carbon footprint, emissions reporting, human rights violation, safe chemicals leadership, oceans revival, renewable energy, wildlife development and revival of animal habitats. Companies have globally built in responsibility in functions catering to these issues and women are heading key portfolios including – Global Innovation and Sustainability, Worldwide Sustainability, Sustainability and Social Impact, CSR Chief, Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability, Impact Strategy, and more!

The United Nations is also working with home grown companies in India to transform the lives of women through sustainability initiatives. Rural women are being trained

to become solar pump and panel technicians, clean energy leaders and other inclusive programs like climate action, gender equality and employment. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs includes women empowerment at its core. In fact, it has been established that driving gender equality is quintessential to achieve the transformative vision of the 2030 Agenda.



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CSR And CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY

The phrases seem overlapping and at times, suffer replaceability. There are similarities and yet, there is a need to establish and distinguish the unique aspects of both the concepts, which are at heart, 'good-in-nature.'

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY
Enables a company or an organization to be socially accountable to itself, the public and key stakeholders.	Exhibits environmental social governance (ESG) in its DNA including environment, economy and society.
Focuses specifically on the initiatives of the company towards society and environment.	Develops a sustainable strategy for the future.
Has an element of compliance.	Has an element of enablement.
Can be time-bound and short-term.	Founded on long-term objectives.

REALITY BITES - THE OTHER SIDE OF SUCCESS

Companies have to be highly conscious of the vulnerable side of the CSR and Sustainability vision. From the absence of a robust business case, to misalignment in leadership and execution, inability to prioritize goals, lack of incentives for teams, low accountability on goals, weak systemic and tracking mechanisms contribute significantly to an initiative that starts on a high note and trails off into anonymity.

FACTORS HINDERING SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

A mindset change from perceiving these as 'extra-curricular' to mainstream will be a starting point.

An accountable team that is willing to treat it like an internal business project will lift it off the ground to the desired destination.

Absence of clear guidelines laid out within the organization is another factor leading to lack of transparency.

Another significant factor for failure is the lack of alignment between the finance teams and the implementing teams.

Unless there is collaborative effort within organizations to make Corporate Sustainability a culture, the gap to internalization will be higher.

Lack of metrics pre-during-post implementation of these projects leads to huge gaps!

And of course, management incentivisation with visibility for the initiative will ice the cake! SREEKARA I P - Founder, WMG Group says, "As a company, we have to be fully conscious of the resources used, its relevance and impact. Awareness and conscious choices make way for a greener world, a sustainable planet for future generations to inherit."

IN THE OFFING

It is said that future economic recovery will feature Sustainability at its core. A few upcoming trends in this domain include -

- Data Analytics to project accurate data on low-carbon footprint, and other data to show company's real-time progress on CSR and Sustainability.
- ESG will witness an increase in spends triggered especially by the global Corona crisis.
- Renewable Energy will receive substantial impetus signalling global retirement of coal plants.
- Climate Positive, a concept which companies push as an indication of their commitment towards climate neutrality is gaining strong foothold.
- Go Green, a visible and popular trend to enhance the demand for natural and green products is here to stay.
- Electric Vehicles is an undisputed space where companies are moving beyond CSR towards business strategy.

In short, the increased and qualitative awareness about all aspects that fall under CSR and Global Sustainability is undeniable. An understanding of the differentiation between the two is enabling clear and directed efforts to achieving successes in both. Through institutionalization, an awareness at the corporate level and finally, at the individual, it is hand-in-glove towards a common goal, that has urgency and need for unprecedented acceleration.



Our biggest challenge in this new century is to take an idea that seems abstract – sustainable development and to turn it into a daily reality for all the world's people."

Late Kofi Annan, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Former Secretary General of United Nations, Founder Kofi Anan Foundation.



FRAGMENTED IDENTITIES AND THE QUEST FOR CATHARSIS

Siddhartha Gigoo is a Kashmiri Pandit poet, novelist and filmmaker. Born in Srinagar in 1974, he, along with his family, was forced to flee from the Kashmir valley in 1990 due to political turmoil, militancy and ethnic cleansing of Hindu communities. He studied English Literature at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He is now based in New Delhi with his family and juggles corporate employment with his creative endeavours.

His body of work is wide, covering poetry, short stories, novels and filmmaking. He is also an accomplished flautist. His short stories, *The Umbrella Man* won the Commonwealth Short Story Prize (2015) for Asia, and *Elephant's Tusk* won the New Asian Short Story Prize (2021).

The Kashmiri Pandit genocide and ousting has been recently pushed into the limelight following the film, *The Kashmir Files*. Most of Gigoo's writings are rooted in Kashmir. He explores through his works what it means to exist in an exilic state of mind, with the personal as well as generational trauma



Siddhartha Gigoo

that violent displacement brings says *Neha Bhudgavi*. What follows is a conversation with him on life, loss, identity, writing and the essential human condition.

N: What is your earliest childhood memory?

SG: I have lots of memories, growing up in Srinagar, walking

to school for the very first time, playing with my two imaginary friends! It is a burning topic over the past few weeks with the release of *The Kashmir Files* film, but it has been our reality for many years – we were thrown out of Kashmir and have been exiles ever since.

N: Can I ask you how it feels?

SG: I tell my friends to watch the movie if they haven't already.

Largely, millions of people in India who were unaware, now know what happened. There is a lot of evidence on what happened, the conditions that led to our ousting, the horrors we were subjected to, and the horrors we faced after being expelled, camp life for elders and children, there have been talks, conferences and festivals where people like me get invited to share our experiences. Most of my writing is around what happened during the Kashmiri Hindu exoduses. However, writing does not have as much mass appeal in India.



Cinema reaches the masses and has a greater impact in our country. The cinematic experience on a big screen drives the message home. Images are not subject to your imagination but picturised for you. Had we not seen *Schindler's List*, many of us would still be unaware of the Nazi horrors. Not many people read holocaust literature, despite thousands of books on the subject. A two- and half-hour movie – be it *Schindler's List* or *Hotel Rwanda* (about the Rwandan genocide) – is watched as entertainment but has the power to inform the masses about injustices.

The same applies to *Kashmiri Files*. It is a movie that every Indian should watch to recognise and come to terms with what was thrust upon their countrymen.

Yet, there are your own people who don't believe you. That can be hurtful but what matters is we keep telling our own stories and continue putting out our truth to the world with conviction.

N: Has the process of storytelling been cathartic for you, personally?

SG: Of course. I think everyone who has faced trauma writes to find some closure. But there comes a point when the catharsis turns a dark corner and one sinks into a dark dreary tunnel of realisation, pain, grief -- all over again. There is a generation still living with the truth of this trauma, and those wounds are still raw and waiting to be healed.

What will you say to the person who has lost everything? No place for them in his ancestral lands, no place for them in camps, death, disease, and stigma following them for the past 30 years, it is an unending misery that has no viewers.

Seeing one's elders lose their minds after the horrors visited upon them, is not an easy thing. Prolonged suffering and pain, day after day, month after month, year after year. The deaths of the generation prior to ours was horrible. Living in terrible conditions, clinging to a hopeless hope that authorities would take steps to rehabilitate them and give them justice – they did not deserve such deaths. Instant deaths almost seem preferable to this.



I prayed for my grandfather's deliverance from this pain. I prayed that he should leave this terrible camp-life riddled with the pain of memory and existence.

There were many times that I thought we wouldn't come out of it alive. I was sure that I wouldn't be able to do anything in life. For years, I had no goals. It was a situation of absolute deprivation. We had no money. We were just wandering, in extreme heat, unsure and unaware of what is next. To be born into a life of plenty, of safety and security, and to have all that snatched from you, it is traumatic. We were not prepared (how could we have been) It was devastating.

The camps were meant to be a temporary measure. Six to 12 people were crammed into one threadbare fabric tent in

the oppressive heat, and there was scarce water. We had to trek long distances uphill with buckets to get water, which, when accessed finally was dirty, full of worms, stinking. Such water was an elixir to us. Disease was everywhere. My own skin was full of rashes for many months in those years. Imagine the heaven that Kashmir was, is, with its clear cool streams of clean water, and in contrast this infested liquid. The concept of time, personal space, identity and memory, all collapse into one bundle. It hit us hard.

It was around 1990 that we were forced to leave, forced to flee with naught but the clothes on our backs. And finally today, the rest of the country feels a small fraction of the shock that we felt. "Oh, so this is what happened to you?" they say. Our entire family watched the film a few days ago. My mother

and father were openly crying – a thing that has not happened for many years. It was an absurd situation, because it was not just a movie we were watching, we saw ourselves in it. We were in identical situations, places that we were certain we wouldn't escape alive. But then the lights come on and you try to remind yourself, it is just a film. During the interval we leave behind the bloodshed and bullet holes for popcorn and coffee.

Reality, memory, time and space collide and swirl into a single entity, and the trauma seems never-ending. The fear is – what if this is a dream, and that is the reality we have to return to? A part of us is still there, trapped, helpless, crying, pleading, begging for mercy, waiting to die. A part of us will always be there. But we try to pull ourselves out of that and remind ourselves that we are alive and lucky. We persisted. And many hard lessons were learnt from this. For better or worse, it shapes you and makes you what you are, that is the essence of human nature. As students of life, you try to explore these questions – what is the nature of pain, suffering, greed, violence, the human condition? Answering these questions is a lifetime's work. When you read books about war and displacement, including recent events like Ukraine, you realise it is an unending fact of life. We are programmed to destroy everything, including ourselves.

N: How would you define your exiled consciousness? With the continuing and fresh waves of violence against pandits in the valley, is it hard to reconcile what happened then as an exceptional event?

This is exiled consciousness, that you become aware every

day where you have come from. That is your defining identity. If I am like this today, it is because of my past, both generational as well as personal. It is the respecting of one's history. This trauma, it has and it continues to impact me today, which is why whatever I write about is based on these facts or about myself. I think about it every single day and I allow myself to be impacted by my past. It is how I honour our collective histories – by telling every story that needs to be told and by not forgetting what happened. Because it is important.

N: What is it like to be a parent to a Kashmiri child who has never seen her homeland? What are your hopes for her in terms of her Kashmiri identity?

SG: My daughter is now in class 12. She knows, of course, of what happened. But I have no expectations from her. Let her decide when and how she wants to explore her past. Right now, this generation is too busy with their present happy distractions, and I don't mind that at all. However there comes a time in everyone's life when they want to explore their past more deeply. They ask their parents, grandparents, grand aunts and uncles to sit and narrate the stories of their childhood and the journey of the family. I would like to be that person for her.

What does it mean to know a person? Even among old friends, how often do we ask them about their families, their parents and grandparents, their ancestral villages and their migrations, the places they came from. Rarely. What were their names, their occupations, their dreams? We don't know. And even scarier is that we don't know ourselves, our own histories. What truth is more essential than one's own history? We are so hungry to

judge others that we forget that not every conversation is about us. Do we really assess ourselves genuinely as human beings? Maybe it is a good thing that we don't, because standing naked in front of oneself is a horrifying experience. You are the judge, victim, jury and convict.

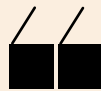
N: And what is your hope for the future of Kashmiri Pandits? Is this complicated by political tensions and agendas?

SG: Until a time that there is a proper resolution for what happened, and the community gets acknowledgement and justice, it is important for us to raise our voices and keep telling our stories.

Government apathy is a whole discussion unto itself. Regimes changed, but camp life remained. No central authorities worked to relieve our miseries. Our communities were small and could have been easily improved overnight, but essential needs like regular supply of clean running water just never happened. In the 90s, there wasn't much we could do, we were in communication vacuum essentially – no phones to call or emails to shoot or Twitter to voice our discontent.

I was still living in the camps when I went to university in '95. The scenes from the movie which depict it as a political hotbed really resonated with my personal experience. Ideology is the biggest killer of empathy and humanity. A very incorrect reading of socialism and Marxism led to a very distorted view of society among students and even staff. Whenever I related the story of the sufferings of Kashmiri Pandits, it was met with blank faces and disbelief. I am talking of one of the best universities in India and people outright refused to

believe that the genocide and exodus happened. I invited my friends to visit my home, the refugee camp in Jammu, but they all made their excuses. This was a sign of their wilful unawareness. They were more bothered about injustices in the rest of the world. It was very sad to see their myopic common view of the world where people in University believed that the genocided and exiled community were actually the privileged class in Kashmir. Imagine justifying mass killings even if the claim of greater economic prosperity of our community was true! However, all this did not impact me and I did not need their validation for my truth. I was steadfast in my decision to talk and write, about my personal history.



However there comes a time in everyone's life where they want to explore when their past more deeply. They ask their parents, grandparents, grant aunts and uncles to sit and narrate the stories of their childhood and the journey of the family. I would like to be that person for for my daughter."

My first consciousness of bias against pandits was much before the 90s. As a child in class 4 or 5, I knew I was aware of being a minority in a state, I felt unsafe during many instances, and it was almost a long time coming. Human nature discriminates, it is nature.

Sometimes it goes out of hand and takes a very ugly turn. We were constantly made to feel

less than. Personal relationships and friendships aside, there was always an undertone of them Vs. us, with us being constantly made to feel inferior.

N: There is a view that certain recent retellings show a less aggressive, less conflict-ridden view of the exodus, terming it a mere skirmish, minor agitation etc. What is your view on such portrayals in film and other media?

SG: I know who you mean, and that will always be there. There are stories from the 1990s regarding camp life which were so horrible that siblings and cousins kept things from one another. It's possible that they don't know the full extent of horrors. It's also possible that the truth is so gruesome that they cannot reconcile themselves with it. I believe that every voice matters.

Somewhere we also have unrealistic expectations as audience or readers – that a single film or book will tell our stories perfectly. It is not so. We spoke of *Schindler's list* before – it put Holocaust into public consciousness for the first time, but many Jewish intellectuals and laypersons despised the film, for various reasons. Spielberg took this feedback and made another film, a grittier, testimony-based holocaust documentary, which was also critically acclaimed. So, there is always space for reflection and improvement. Similarly, *The Kashmir Files* is a testimony-based film, backed by documented real events. Testimony makes for the most impactful cinema.

So, with regards to your question on fiction writers, Kashmiri Pandits themselves, who downplay the horrors of the true events – I say let them write!

There is room for evolution. Let us all write. Let us flood the spaces with all our voices. The body of works by Kashmiri Pandits on their experiences is not wide at all – not more than 20 or 30 books. Not much research has been done on this subject either. There are several articles, newspaper clippings etc. These are yet to be fully explored and turned into books. There are some documentaries and video recordings about the injustices of camp life, but these are all privately owned. There is evidence of unimaginable horrors out there, hundreds of books and movies are yet to come into existence based on testimony of survivors. I look forward to it.

N:Your works are predominantly fiction, and yet, they have an autobiographical element to them.

SG: I have always had this thought – who am I to decide what is fiction or non-fiction? Music never gets classified as fiction or non-fiction. Listeners merely judge whether a song is appealing to them, and what mood it evokes. Writing is the same – a story can move people whether it is 'real' or not. What is reality – this is a philosophical question.

My dreams could be my reality. Is the ability to perceive something the test of reality? We are at a stage where we haven't come to terms with our own truths and histories. Once we do that maybe we can discuss what is fiction. My own creations are not entirely my own – I rely on the life-stories of others, their experiences, my imagination could be someone else's reality and vice-versa. There is multiplicity in imagination. So yes, every work of fiction is intimately tied to one's own experiences.

Kaadu-Naadu

Sojourns of a Soliga

More than six decades into Independence, many communities, like the adivasis (tribals) in India continue to live on the periphery of democracy, where fundamental rights and a life of dignity are a mere mirage. Although, the governing body of the world's largest democracy is making efforts to set right the wrongs meted out to them in the guise of 'larger good', sustainable development and progress is still a far cry. A majority of the community is caught in the crossroads between retaining their languages, indigenous knowledge systems, artistic, religious and cultural traditions, and forced or voluntary 'mainstreaming'. Empowering them with basic facilities and rights, without tampering with their intrinsic identity is the larger challenge facing the government, NGOs, corporates, or any other external bodies working towards the betterment of *adivasis*, and of course the *adivasis* themselves.

Shubha Srikanth talks to Dr. S Ratnamma, the first Soliga woman from Karnataka to be awarded a doctorate in Tribal Studies for her research on 'Socio Cultural Study of the Soliga Nomadic Community'. A mother of two, 45-year-old Ratnamma, supported by her husband Doddaiiah has dedicated her life for the betterment of not just her community but all adivasis in Karnataka.





Born in the deep forests of Chammanahalla in Chamarajanagar district, Ratnamma would have led a lifetime in the confines of her podu, but for the fact that she is one among a handful of educated Soligas. A passion for learning, ignited very early on, guided her to transcend all boundaries of caste, gender, geography and most vitally a static mindset. With no model to emulate or example to follow, with no helping hand or familiar path to tread upon, every step that Ratnamma took was a step in the dark, guided by single-minded devotion and the desire to uplift her brethren.



In Karnataka there are nearly 151 tribal communities. Among these, about 14-15 forest-are the moola adivasis (aborigine tribes) who live in the forests and forage for subsistence.”

After resisting child-marriage, still a norm in adivasi podus, she went on to complete post-graduation. She served as a health educator for a decade in several towns of the state. “One day it struck me that I was working with naadu jana (urban people) who had the means, when my own people were on the throes of poverty and deprivation. I decided to return to my land, my people. I had to start from scratch. That’s when I founded Sai Pragati Foundation.” After nearly three decades of working for the welfare of the Soligas, she completed her Ph.D in 2019, Kannada University, Hampi. Mind you, this is not an honorary doctorate heaped on the worthy and unworthy alike or a ‘purchased’ title as is the norm these days, but a rich scholarly work, a result of hard work and intellectual fervor.

May not be literate, but certainly refined and educated.

The tribal identity is far from homogeneous. The Soliga community that Ratnamma belongs to is a moola adivasi (aborigine tribe) that still lives in forested areas or on the fringes of those forests after being ousted from their home of several generations. The moola adivasis unlike other tribes barely step out of their podus (hamlets). They have no education and are unaware of the world outside. Despite the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 (recognizes the rights of forest dwelling tribal communities to forest resources), most adivasis are denied entry into the forest. There is also a ruling that requires the government to provide adivasis land rights for the place of their dwelling and farm land, and basic infrastructure facilities. However, it’s still a far cry.

The Soligas of Biligiri Rangaswami Temple Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka, victims of wildlife protection measures,

had lost access to the forest. After an arduous battle with the government, they were granted Community Forest Rights (CFR) recognised under FRA of 2006. Yet, ironically enough, none of the residents of Chammanahalla (a tribal hamlet, where Ratnamma was born) in Chamarajanagar district had received their land registration papers until a few years ago. "I am the third generation adivasi of Chammanahalla where I was born and where my grandfather and mother still live. None of the residents of my village had received their land rights document," informs Ratnamma. In 2016, when she was a Grama Panchayati member, she vowed to secure her people their rights. None of the villagers had any identification documents, be it caste certificate, Aadhar card or ration card. When she talked to them about forest and land rights, they couldn't wrap their head around these concepts. Yes, they were bewildered and angry that their home was snatched away from them, courtesy anti-tribal policies of the state. Ratnamma says, "While I was educating them about the need for these documents, they asked me, 'Why do I need a piece of paper to document and record ownership and assert possession? Why measure land? Why break it into pieces?' For us, nature is our mother. Whether it is land, forest, river or mountain, it belongs to everyone. In fact, we refer to forest animals with kinship names and live harmoniously with them. Our people may not be 'literate' but they certainly are 'educated and refined' in their sensibilities and worldview," says Ratnamma with pride.

After convincing the Haadi Samithi (local governing body of the hamlet) of the

importance of these documents she communicated with government officials. A group of officers along with the Tahasildar came along with the



Ratnamma was conferred the DH Changemakers Award 2022 for Community Empowerment.

necessary paraphernalia and helped the people fill the forms for caste certificate, aadhar card, ration card etc. Ratnamma then helped her people apply for land rights letter of claim. Ninety-five Soligas, including Ratnamma received land ownership rights eventually. Applying and registering is only a small first step. Ratnamma had to continuously communicate with the various government departments and officials and follow up for several months before they received their letter of claim. "I have seen paper work getting stalled for years together. Without external pressure rights, benefits, claims remain on paper and gather dust on the shelves of a government office," she says.

No primary healthcare centers or schools

Ratnamma finds that access to healthcare and education are the two-most pressing needs for the tribal community. It wasn't her college education or Ph. D that gave her this perspective. "My father wanted me to study. He sent me to school when no other child from the podu had set foot into a school. All I ever wanted since then was to learn at school. Today, whatever I am and whatever I am able to do for my community, is because he decided to educate me,"

Ratnamma says with gratitude.

Ratnamma places a high premium on education, particularly of girl children, for she believes that health and well-being of women can be assured only through education and awareness. Most podus do not have even a primary healthcare centre. The aborigine tribes are facing a double-edged sword. Far removed from urban infrastructure, their access to healthcare is limited or absent. The forest areas, from where they foraged their healthcare essentials like herbs and roots and berries, are closed to them, leading to the erasure of indigenous medicines from the collective consciousness of the tribal folk. Prohibitory laws by the government on certain healthcare practices such as for instance, home births, are also de-skilling them.

The Soligas, as other forest-dwelling tribes, are inheritors of a very rich heritage of indigenous knowledge systems, especially related to medicine. In an attempt to revitalize their knowledge of medicinal plants, Ratnamma has begun to grow them in her farm and is encouraging others too to do the same. She is also beginning the process of documenting their vast knowledge, primarily, oral tradition, to ensure all is not lost. Ratnamma is also nursing the dream of opening a hospital in her podu. Her younger daughter has joined the MBBS course and this is the first step to the realization of her dream. With no established socio-cultural practices related to marriage, children begin to cohabit once they reach menarche. Within no time, the girls become pregnant posing a big risk to their health and wellbeing and of the newborn. "Cases of maternal deaths,

still births, premature births, maternal anemia, are very high among our tribal populations. If these children focus on education, they gain a few more years. By which time alongside education, their bodies too develop enough for a healthy pregnancy, they mature in their thinking and get an idea of how they would like to live their lives, how to raise children, and safeguard their health," points out Ratnamma.

For the past decade, she has been going to every village household, talking to Adivasi parents about the need for educating their children. Initially no one was inclined to lend her an ear, but today children and parents call her on her mobile. "Children from my community call me. They have aspirations of joining a particular college or pursuing a particular course and they ask for my advice. It is very gratifying because our children now have the power to nurture dreams in the conviction that dreams can be fulfilled," she says, forgetting, that she was the first to break the glass ceiling, giving her community the power to dream.

Ratnamma, however, is not removed from ground reality. Education may bring about a change in attitude and awareness, but it is yet to make a difference in terms of employability and socio-economic standing. "Parents often tell me that getting education is very well but what about securing a job? This is the stark reality. After graduation, I couldn't get a job which is why I got into social service. I may have a Ph.D., but does that guarantee me a well-paying job? NO! While we tribals may get education, we cannot compete at the professional level in the outside world."

Besides, education is expensive. Often Ratnamma helps parents with the school and college fees. “Our people do not have the means to fund education and hostel facilities,” she says. Although, the Social Welfare Department pays for the education of tribal children, the colleges demand that parents pay the fees at the time of admission and then get a reimbursement from the department. At this juncture parents withdraw from admission, because there is no way they can arrange the fee amount.

Failure at the executive level

Ratnamma recollects the time when she served as one among the three members of the State Committee for Tribal Rights (Aranya Hakku Samithi). The committee, in charge of eight districts of Karnataka camped in remote tribal podus (hamlets) to document first-hand the living conditions of the people. This was a one-of-a-kind exercise. They did not have basic identification documents like caste certificate, Aadhar Card, Ration Card etc.; they were deprived of forest rights and land rights; and, had no roads, sanitation, potable water let alone houses, subsistence

or healthcare facilities. She recollects that for the first time, a Social Welfare minister had actually visited a tribal hamlet. “He visited a remote hamlet called Bombegallu, where the committee was camping and announced a bevy of facilities and financial aid. It was the first time that a government servant had cared enough to concern himself with tribal communities. Sadly, nothing happened because of the failure at the executive level,” reminisces Ratnamma. Tracing Ratnamma’s sojourns between ‘kaadu-naadu’ (forest-land) is to understand the complexity of the political and bureaucratic machinery, fraught with corruption, redtapism and above all apathy and languor. Government policies and demographic challenges are stalling their progress. Karnataka is home to 51 tribes in the Scheduled Tribe category. Soligas are a small minority forming only 2 per cent of the population. “We are not even a vote bank,” she says. Many tribes in the ST category have substantial populations, are vote banks and are economically and politically strong. They are educated, and hold professional jobs and occupy prominent decision-making offices in the government and private sector. We are fighting with

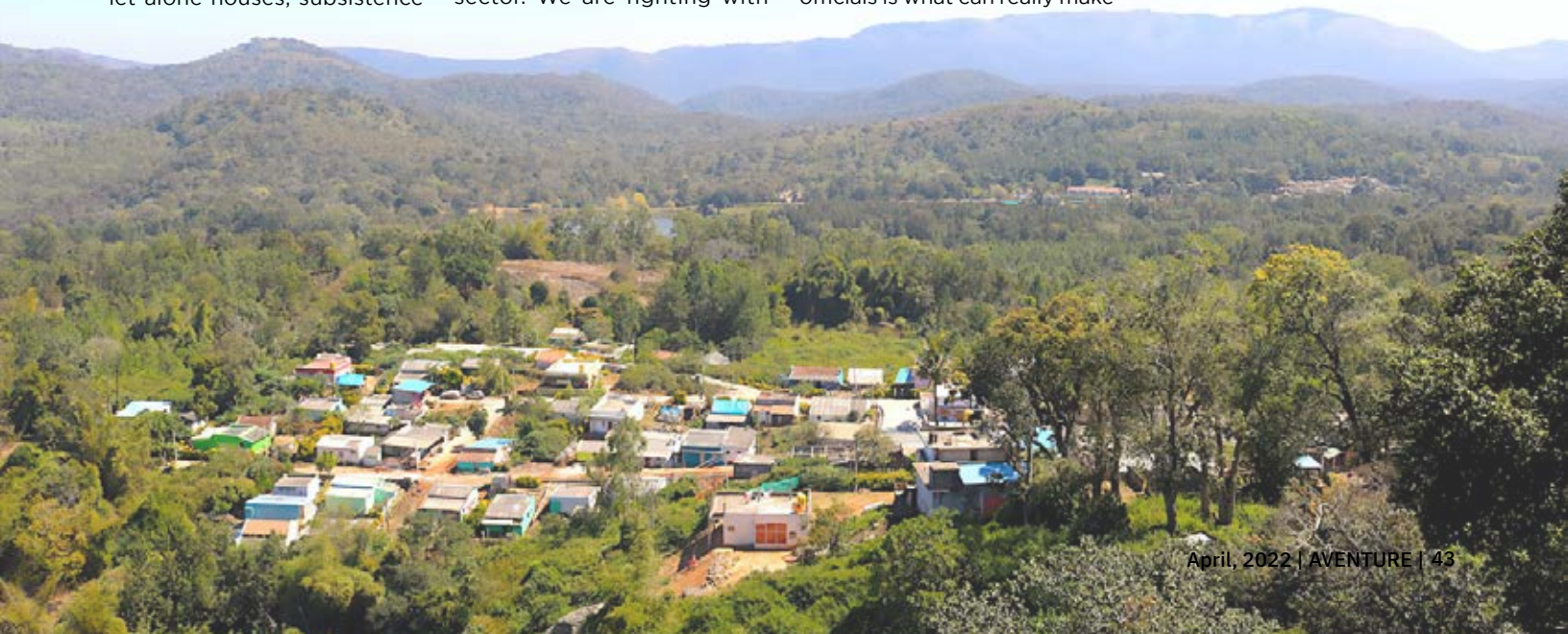
the Social Welfare Ministry, and Education Ministry to give us, the moola adivasis, at least 1 per cent reservation in educational institutions since we are first generation learners. “I make it a point to tell parents that even if our children get small jobs in the forest department or the social welfare department, we must embrace it. It will at least encourage others to study. Gradually, with every new educated generation, we will be able to witness change and progress.”

If intrinsic change in the mindset of adivasis is a measure for sustainable change, the intent of those in power to help the adivasis avail what is rightfully theirs is another. Ratnamma says, “Change has to come from within and outside of our tribal communities. Our own people refuse to see sense sometimes. Without my knowledge some elders in my own podu perform child marriages. In such instances, I have to seek the support of officials who can come and stall these marriages.”

Says Ratnamma, from her long and tedious engagement with government officials, “At the end of the day, ‘intent’ of elected representatives like MLCs and MLAs and other officials is what can really make

a difference.” Rights, facilities, grants, are available on paper and remain on paper; they fail to reach the beneficiaries and this is where the chasm lies. Elected representatives should ideally become the voice of the tribals and communicate their problems to the ministers at the State and Centre. “There is a long chain of hierarchy that every document or decision needs to traverse before it reaches the decision makers and back. Every link of the chain is a roadblock in itself. Things don’t move on their own. I continuously follow up with officials and pressurise them to pass papers and orders, all of which have administrative provisions. I am able to do so because I am educated and understand the administrative setup and processes. How can an ordinary Adivasi from a remote podu have such access? So this is how and why adivasis continue to live on the fringes of the democracy that is India.”

Ratnamma is no short of a hero. Her only magic wand is education laced with empathy. Education she has earned. Empathy she has nurtured. A messiah for her ilk.



Arid Dunes to Lush Canopies

Sixteen year-old Adhi Daiv is the founder of 'Project Urvara', a not for profit community based organisation, guided by the motto "Sasyashyamlam Mataram - Greening Mother Earth", and is on a mission to green the barren brown swathes of Rajasthan. What started as a small step has now grown into a full-fledged movement involving school students, anganwadi workers, panchayat workers, rural people and volunteers. Leveraging the technique of 'Dryland Agroforestry', the initiative has been instrumental in planting over 2200 trees, generating employment for over 125 rural folk, directly impacting 27,000 villagers and 3500 rural children, several lacs of litres of water saved and several lakhs of income generated for the rural people. Amidst attending college and tuitions, studying, managing the affairs of Urvara, especially raising funds, and shuttling between Gurugram and Rajasthan, Adhi Daiv made time for an interview with *Shubha Srikanth*. What follows is the single minded devotion of a teenager to create impact at the grassroot level of rural Rajasthan, the ripple effect of which augurs well not just for the villages but the entire state and eventually the planet.





Adhi was born to a farmer's family of Panchgani village in Rajasthan. He lived with his maternal grandparents while his mother worked in a different country. He grew up listening to the difficulties faced by the women and children owing to acute water scarcity in the arid deserts of his home state. He watched women haul water over several miles in the scorching sun each day. It bothered him that they struggled for something as basic as water, taking away precious time from children. It resonated deeply

distribute 2,000 water-wheels to 128 families of Bohal village in Bhiwadi district of Rajasthan. The waterwheel costed Rs. 2,000 each and Adhi realised most village folk couldn't afford it and huge financial resources would be required to provide one to every household. Besides, only drawing water was made easy. Women still had to walk miles together in scorching heat hauling water, impacting their health adversely.

Adhi began to search for a solution that was not only



with him given the fact that his childhood was spent away from his mother. As he learnt the hazards of environmental degradation on the planet, he became more and more engaged with the havoc man was wrecking. He moved from his grandparents' home in Uttar Pradesh to Gurugram for better education prospects. However, the conditions back in Rajasthan lurked in his mind.

When Adhi was 13 years old, an NGO launched a program to distribute water-wheels, which would ease the process of drawing water from wells. Adhi was instantly taken in. Through crowd funding he raised nearly Rs. 62,500 on the Fuel a Dream platform and helped

financially feasible but would also have a deeper impact in terms of reach and longevity. He chanced upon the one litre greening concept discovered by Sundaram Verma, a Padma Shri awardee. Notwithstanding his trepidation, Adhi mustered enough courage and met Verma in person to better understand 'Dryland Agroforestry', as the technique is called. "Sundaram Verma ji gave me utmost attention and patiently answered all my queries. I was struck by his humility. It was the perfect solution - holistic, financially viable with long-term impact," says Adhi. All of 13 years, Adhi had found his calling in life.



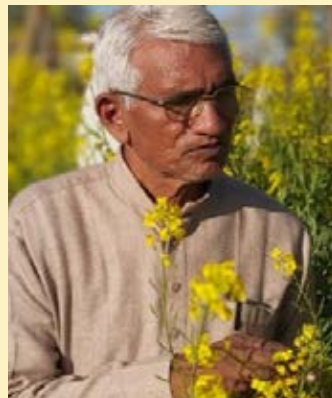
Adhi Daiva

He drew up a plan under the guidance of Verma. Seventy per cent of Rajasthan is unirrigated land and gets one per cent rainfall of the country. The only sustainable way to improve the lives of the rural people was to increase the green cover. Adhi identified goshalas and schools as the ideal location to start the greening project. Schools were unwelcoming, unkempt spaces and the buildings were dirty and dilapidated. Poverty and paucity of water left the villagers with little to provide as fodder and water for their livestock. They let go of their beloved cattle to roam about, scavenging amidst filth and their faeces bred diseases. Such abandoned cattle were cared for in Goshalas

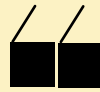
Before launching Project Urvara Adhi had to fix a big logistical issue. "I was sitting in Gurugram trying to work out a plan for the people of Rajasthan. I figured, mobilising the local community was very essential. Not only will that give them a sense of purpose but also make them aware of the gravity of the situation. Involving the ecosystem in this endeavour was important for quick and lasting action and that became

the fundamental strategy of Urvara," Adhi points out.

As a first step, he educated the villagers about his ideas and how it can bring about a vast change in the life-style and wellbeing of the community. This meant talking to the village folk, telling them that there is a solution to their water-woes; teaching them the technique, and, finally the enormous bearing this would have on their lives and the global environment. Adhi went personally to each village and talked to the people. The fact that he was a local, familiar with their culture and lifestyle endeared him. He of course conversed in the local dialect too. With his humble background and humility he



Sundaram Verma



Sundaram Verma ji gave me utmost attention and patiently answered all my questions. I was struck by his humility. It was the perfect solution – holistic, financially viable with long-term impact."

was one among them, deeply and genuinely concerned and driven enough to lead change. "It wasn't easy to gain the trust and support of the local people or government officials. But the fact that Urvara was associated with a name as big as Verma ji's helped. Having gained their trust, the immense responsibility that had been placed on my shoulders dawned on me. I couldn't and wouldn't let them down," he says with rare conviction for a lad of sixteen.

He contacted the principals of various schools, sought their permission and began his work.

At this point, he also engaged with the local panchayat and other administrative officials.

"The SDM of the region and Padma Shri awardee Himmat Ram Bhambhu (also known as the Tree Man of Rajasthan) participated in one of our tree plantation drives. That gave a big boost to the credibility of Urvara. The presence of government officials encouraged the village community and the level of engagement of the village community impressed the government officials," says Adhi. Today, the lush green canopies

ooze oxygen to enliven children and offer shade to play, have fun and quarrel with their mates. "Children are happy with the fresh environment not to mention the hygienic atmosphere. Greening the Goshalas ensured a steady supply of clean and healthy fodder for the cattle of the village. That was a significant impact since for the rural folk cattle are like family and they depend on them for their livelihood," says Adhi.

Last year, Project Urvara raised Rs. 5 lacs and planted trees like ardu, churel, rohirda, neem, ber and bajra in 12 acres of land in 5 villages in Sikar district and one in the city centre of Sikar, impacting nearly 20,000 people. Adhi envisions to extend the drive to other villages in Jodhpur, Juru, Nagaur and other districts of Western Rajasthan.

Raising funds has been the most challenging task for Adhi. When he started, he raised about Rs. 1.5 lacs from online fundraising and another 1.5 lacs through donations. He realised this was not a sustainable model. "As much as people and organisations may appreciate your work, things change when you ask for financial support," says Adhi. Since then he has been pitching his project at several competitions. "Winning or even showcasing your project spreads the word, and enhances the credibility of your organisation. The idea is to invest the prize money into the project," he adds. Adhi's next step is to attract corporate funding. It's been only two years since the inception of Urvara, he prefers to wait a few more years for it to mature into a robust model before approaching corporates. However, today several organisations and NGOs are contributing to Project

COMMUNITY & CULTURE

Urvara, further strengthening Adhi's resolve.

Adhi, 16 years now, remains untouched by the glamour and attractions of urban lifestyles. "My humble background doesn't bother me. It doesn't matter to me that I don't have an active social life in the sense of how a teen would define it or that I am not exposed to a lavish, luxurious lifestyle. Because what matters is not how you lead your life but what kind of example you set out of it," he explains with incredible maturity.

His mother, his biggest support system, says, "He has grown up the hard way. Perhaps that is the reason for his matured sensibility. He is juggling a lot of things. I only wish him the best and my support is always assured."

As Adhi points out, most of us spend a lifetime seeking a purpose to lend a sense of fulfilment to our lives. Adhi been lucky to have figured out his calling this early in life. As a message to the youth he says, "If you find yourself at the cross roads searching for a way ahead, just tell yourself that you want to do good to others, and you will surely find your way."

Adhi is in every sense of the word a leader! He believes that a leader is one who sets an example, and has lived up to it. "People will not be taken in by mere words and speeches, or by grandiose plans for the future. What they want to really see is that you be 'present' and that you prove by 'action'. You cannot 'force' it upon people to accept or follow you, but your action must be such that they 'will' themselves to follow your example," he surmises based on rich life experience uncommon for a teen.

What is Dry Land Agroforestry?

DRYLAND Agroforestry using 1 ltr of water to grow a tree. The one-litre water technique, Adhi said the process required 30 centimetres of deep soil ploughing that has to be done five days before the beginning and just after the conclusion of the monsoon season. Through this process, moisture of the soil can be absorbed by eliminating the weeds and controlling the capillary action in upper soil surface that allows recharging of aquifers.

Guiding Principles of Urvara

Inclusion, environmental justice, equitable distribution of natural resources, community centric, impact at the grass root.

Long-term Impact of Urvara

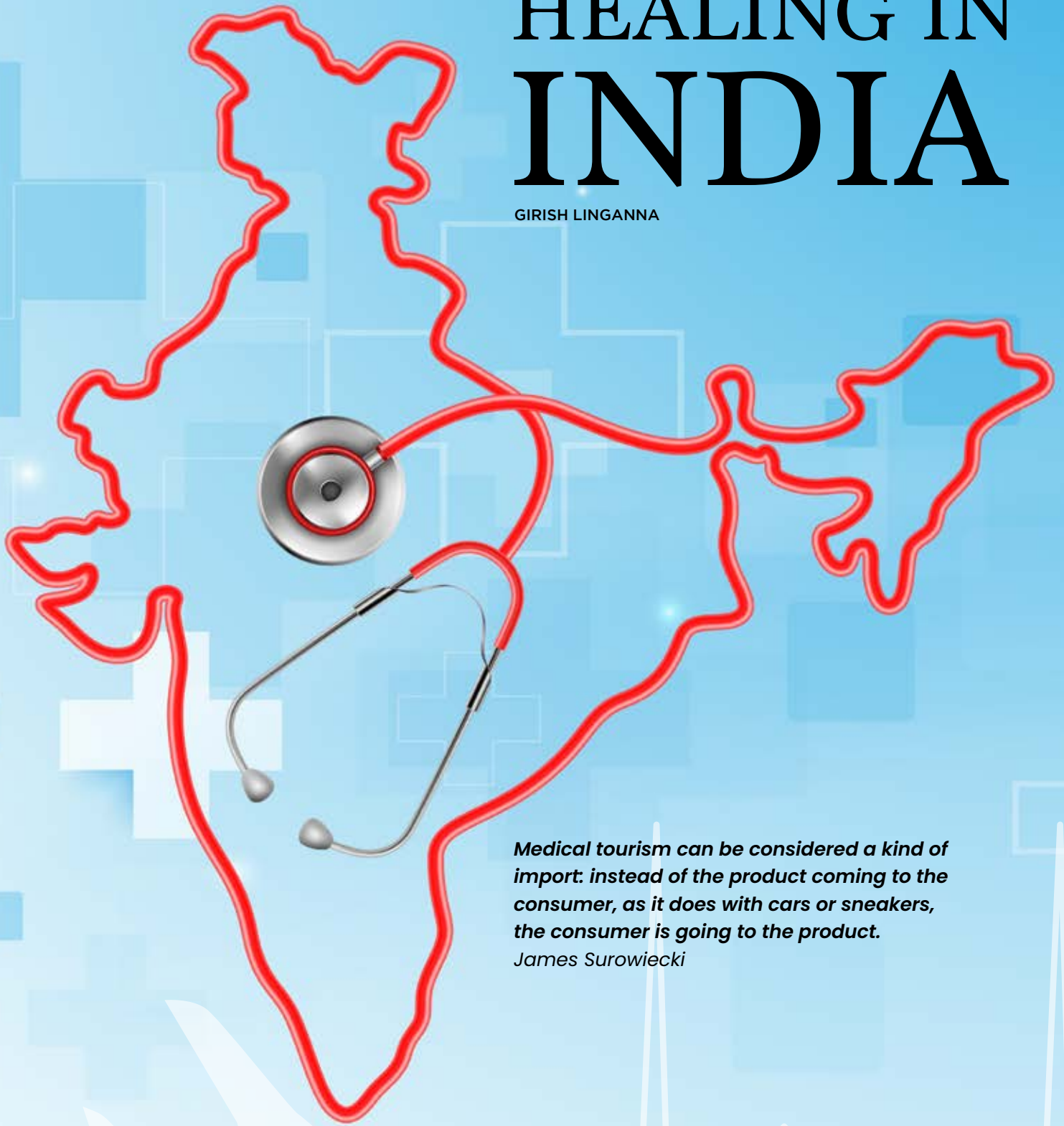
Water conservation, ecological improvement, soil improvement, poverty alleviation, employment generation, community empowerment, higher farm yield, food security, mitigate climate change, raw material generation for artisans, restoring ecosystem, community prosperity.

Recognitions

- First Prize in India Innovation Challenge - 2021.
- First Prize in The Empower Startup Contest, organized by The Children's Post. The contestants are mentored by Atal Incubation Center – Shiv Nadar University, and IIM Calcutta Innovation Park.
- Winner in Young Founder's Summit - Singapore 2021.
- Among the top 6 winners of the Young Founders Summit Asia, 2021 organised by Smarter Me, Singapore. It is a global start-up competition and accelerator program, dedicated to teenage and pre-teenage founders who want to use innovation and technology to disrupt the status quo, improve lives and change the world.
- Was made a member with an exception to his age limit by the Climate Reality Leadership Corps who looked at his extensive work in the field of climate change, community mobilization and climate literacy under project URVARA.
- Adhi Daiv was made a member with an exception to his age limit by the Climate Reality Leadership Corps who looked at his extensive work in the field of climate change, community mobilization and climate literacy under project URVARA.
- Won the first Prize for School Champ for Climate Change by Fair Gaze and United Nations Information Centre, India & Bhutan.

HEALING IN INDIA

GIRISH LINGANNA



Medical tourism can be considered a kind of import. Instead of the product coming to the consumer, as it does with cars or sneakers, the consumer is going to the product.

James Surowiecki

India has long been regarded as an enchanting window to the East. The rich cultural heritage makes India the most sought after travel destination for the rest of the world. As Indians, we grew up listening to and believing in, 'Athithi Devo Bhava' which roughly signifies 'The Guest is God'. Hospitality hence runs in the veins of Indians. Tourists, particularly, from the West have always been attracted to the Indian subcontinent for its significantly diverse culture and of course the geographical marvels it is blessed with.

History indicates that from mid to late 20 Century the affluent from third world countries travelled to America and Britain for medical procedures. However, towards the fag end of the Century, a reverse flow emerged with tourists from the West seeking third world countries for medical treatment. Developments in the healthcare infrastructure and large number of highly skilled and educated healthcare professionals prompted this trend, not to mention the assurance of world-class healthcare services at less than half the cost! India is marching ahead as a go-to-destination for medical tourism attracting customers from Asia, Africa, Europe America and Saudi Arabia, among others. Sources peg the inflow of medical tourists to nearly 10 per cent of the total tourist inflow to the nation and which, in 2019, accounted for a ball-park figure of 700,000 people.

Of course, the COVID-19-induced pandemic, left thousands of patients from far flung countries who had chosen India for medical treatment in the lurch. Those awaiting organ transplantations were the worst hit. Cancer patients, bereft of

timely treatment, advanced to critical stages or lost their lives. However, medical tourism has revived in the last six months and there has been an upsurge in the inflow of patients.

Medical tourism is a growing global sector with a market value of USD 44.8 billion in 2019, with over 1.40 crore individuals travelling to different nations for better medical treatment. From 2020 to 2027, the sector is predicted to grow at an average annual rate of 21.1 per cent.

Despite the enervating impact of the pandemic on the travel and hospitality industry, statistics seems to be positive, forecasting the worth of the Indian medical tourism industry to \$5-6 billion dollars. India's Medical tourism market is estimated to reach a whopping USD 13 billion in the current financial year. According to the Medical Tourism Association's Medical Tourism Index of 2020-21, India looks bright in the tenth position out of 46 countries.

Medical Value Tourism (MVT)

How did the perception of the world towards India change from a disease-ridden, backward land to a choice destination for high-end medical treatment? This was not an over-night development nor was it a result of any single factor. There are critical reasons why citizens of a country travel to other destinations for medical treatment. It is a combination of astute entrepreneurship of private hospitals, liberal government policies, high-stake investments in corporate hospitals, specialised skills of the healthcare fraternity, affordability, minimal waiting time, perceptions about the country, convenient air connectivity, relaxation in visa regulations for patients

Medical tourism may be defined as 'activities related to travel and hosting a foreign tourist who stays at least one night at the destination region for the purpose of maintaining, improving or restoring health through medical intervention'.

Medical intervention activities are often classified into:

- Medical Treatment: Curative Treatment such as cardiac surgery, organ transplant, hip and knee replacement, Cancer care etc.
- Wellness and Rejuvenation: Treatment offerings for rejuvenation and aesthetic enhancement of the human body such as cosmetic surgery, stress relief, spas etc.
- Alternative Medicine: AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) in the Indian context.





and their caretakers, effective law and order maintenance, a secure environment for foreign travellers, English-speaking and multi-lingual community, largely tropical climate, cosmopolitan culture among a plethora of other factors which contributed to the growth of the healthcare sector that fast became fertile ground for foreign travellers. Investments in the Indian healthcare sector is growing by leaps and bounds. According to a survey, in the last decade India has attracted over USD 25,300 million in key healthcare sectors of Medicines and Pharmaceuticals, Hospitals and Diagnostics Centres, and Medical and Surgical Appliances. India happens to be the fourth largest medical device manufacturing market in Asia, with a projected worth of USD 50 billion by 2025. The diagnostics sector is constantly on a rise and is estimated at USD 4 billion, with 25 per cent of the market being capitalized by leading players.

Customised care keeping in mind the cultural context of

the patient goes a long way in making foreign tourists feel at home. The medical ecosystem is well-acquainted with the culture and language of international travellers and the ease of cross-cultural connectivity is another reason why foreigners flock to India for medical aid. Many leading hospitals in India have special administrative desks, dedicated infrastructure and human resource to exclusively cater to foreign nationals seeking treatment in their facilities. Several leading hospitals in India are operating overseas offices or have agents in foreign countries to attract and book patients and coordinate their travel and medical treatment, end-to-end. From ticketing, to accommodation, safe local travel and choice cuisines, to finally organising and managing a itinerary for tourism, they take care of everything.

World class treatment which is also pocket friendly is one of the main reasons why people look to India. For instance, patients from America save not less than

65 to 90 per cent compared to the cost of healthcare in the US. This is despite Indian hospitals having cutting-edge technology and well-qualified medical and paramedical staff. India offers oncology treatment, knee and hip-replacement surgeries, and minimally invasive procedures like dental and cosmetic procedures, IVF treatment, hair transplantation, laser eye surgery among others at an extremely affordable cost.

Affordability of high-value treatments is certainly a distinction. India has the lowest price for 13 medical treatments, ranging from heart bypass and spinal fusion to liposuction and IVF therapy. India bragged a very low Consumer Price Index (CPI) of 24.02, which is reflection of efficient economic policy.

The high-point is that affordability does not come with compromise in quality.



Indian doctors and surgeons have garnered immense trust and respect from the international community."

Indian doctors and surgeons have garnered immense trust and respect from the international community. India boasts of some of the finest surgeons, paramedics, nurses and doctors. The British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (BAPIO) estimates that the UK has over 40,000 Indian doctors against half the population of patients. In America this record stands at

about 50,000 doctors from Indian origin. In Australia or Canada about 20-30% of the working doctors are either of Indian-origin or have received their education in Indian medical institutions. Not to mention the proliferation of nurses from India across the globe. This is a clear indication of the highly skilled, talented and educated Indian human resources personnel in the medical sector, which has been acknowledged by the international community Armed with a sturdy pharmaceutical industry and a range of well-equipped diagnostic centres, rehabilitation services and medical device manufacturing sector - Indian Medical ecosystem is in a good position to attract a growing customer base.

Attraction for Traditional Healing Systems

Government policies have of course played a critical role in the development and growth of the Wellness Tourism Segment. Besides, the global consumer behaviour has altered drastically and all eyes turned towards India for a holistic approach towards lifestyle and increasing immunity and overall health. The National Medical & Wellness Tourism Board (NMWTB) was established recently to provide an institutional framework and to promote medical and wellness tourism.

The 'Heal in India' campaign was launched to promote India's holistic health value propositions to the rest of the globe. In this post pandemic phase, the government has eased travel restrictions for over 100 countries including Oman, Ghana, Qatar, Nigeria, Kuwait, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Mauritius among others giving a further boost to medical tourism.



The traditional alternative medicinal systems appeal to foreign travellers as the allopathic system is more focused on curing an illness through medications or surgical interventions.”

Since the pre-pandemic phase the government floated the policy of popularizing the age old tradition of using medicines and food from organic sources. In early 2014, the Ministry of AYUSH was launched with the sole purpose of spreading awareness, conducting research, and propagating alternative healing approaches used by indigenous communities of India. This has boosted the local economy resulting in an upsurge in market growth fuelled by rising consumer preference for Ayurvedic products and alternative healing techniques.

High-end ayurvedic and yoga centres have mushroomed in several parts of India, which attract foreign travellers for rejuvenation and relaxation. Residential treatments run into lakhs of rupees. But they become affordable to foreigners, especially those from the West as it is pounds, euros and dollars against rupees. Yoga is a major attraction. In Karnataka, Mysuru is the yoga destination for domestic as well as international tourists. Ayurvedic oil massages combined with plant-based food, is a major attraction for detoxing the mind and body. Kerala is again a hot destination for traditional oil massages. Courtallam, Haridwar, Pondicherry, Rishikesh, Taptapani, and Thiruvananthapuram have been identified as the seat for wellness tourism.

The traditional alternative medicinal systems appeal to foreign travellers as the

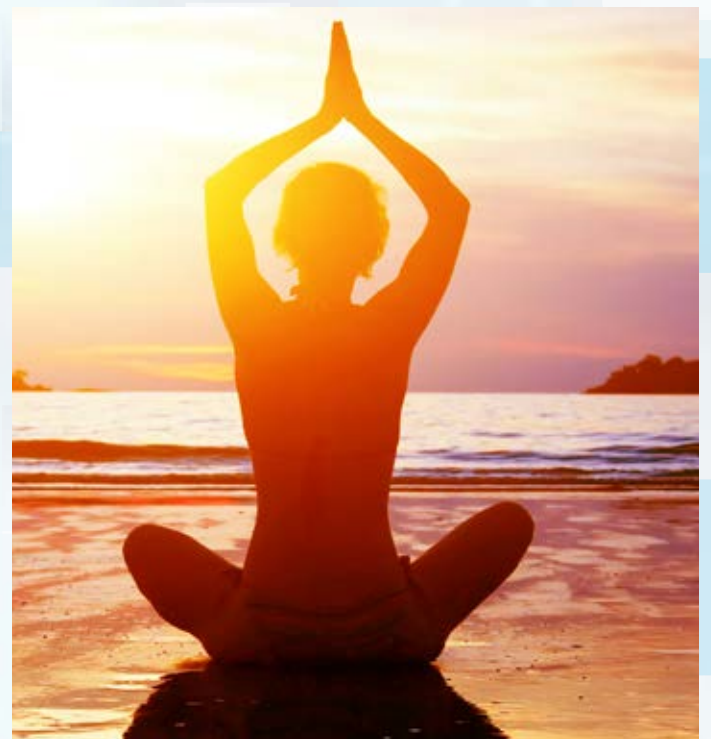
allopathic system is more focused on curing an illness through medications or surgical interventions. Alternative techniques focus on plant-based medicines for external application and for

ingestion. Most often allopathic tradition also is concerned with minimising symptoms rather than investigating and addressing the root cause of the illness. Whereas, alternative systems may take a longer time to find cure but approach from the bottom up, which is a big attraction to foreign customers.

Poised for Growth

Let's welcome the fact, that India has a thriving healthcare infrastructure with numerous state of the art multispecialty hospitals well equipped with the latest technological facilities to perform complex surgeries and treatments. The kind of post-operative care provided by the Indian medical system is on par with global standards. So, 2022 seems a hopeful proposition for Indian Medical Tourism industry to be the prime choice of patients across the world.

Girish Linganna is Member, ESI Hospital Development Committee and MD, ADD Engineering India (Indo-German Company)



The Great Resignation Wave

.....
Can organisations weather the storm?

SHWETHA H C & USHA PRASAD

Globally, a ubiquitous trend, significant for its impact on corporate health, surfaced recently, when India-based multinational IT businesses like Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys announced quarterly profits -- a sudden spike in attrition, which got dubbed as the 'Great Resignation Wave'. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck and prompted enterprises, irrespective of size and sector, to embrace new technologies, an all-time surge in the demand for IT professionals hit the market. As the economy began to slowly revert to pre-pandemic 'sanity,' new obstacles were introduced, one of which is, a large numbers of employees resigning from their jobs. While many lost jobs with companies closing down,

millions of employees have been voluntarily quitting their jobs for greener pastures since last year.

The primary reason for this trend is an increase in employment openings in the IT sector with the dire need for new hardware, technologies and services. Coincidentally, the bizarre pandemic experience prompted employees to re-evaluate their professional and personal goals. With 3-4 offer letters in hand, 'The Great Resignation' wave, has gone to prove, that it's an 'employee-driven market', at least for as long as it lasts.

Better Opportunities

During the pandemic, more than half the world's workforce suffered from burnout, with long working hours amidst the four walls of the home. Dissatisfied with work conditions and salaries, employees began to search for new experiences and challenges and perhaps better roles and recognition. Over half of all job applicants are seeking work in fields in which they have little or no expertise, according to recent statistics.

To counter attrition, the Indian market went into an overdrive in hiring and offering generous compensation packages. "It's hard to keep up with other organizations in the market. There are a lot of opportunities out there," says CEO of Bengaluru-based technology start-up, Girish K.

"We have also observed instances of unethical behaviour on the part of some employees. They accept the joining bonus, leave the company after a month or two, and do not bother to reimburse the incentive given. These individuals have a negative impact on others. They participate in virtual interviews, receive an offer letter, join, and then go as swiftly as they arrived," he says highlighting the murky side of the marketplace.

The Impact

In the throes of this wave, are the talent acquisition executives who are under maximum pressure to determine the underlying variables contributing to increased resignation rates, conduct quantitative analysis of the

problem and arrive at quick solutions.

Human resource managers from a variety of industries and sectors believe that the situation is becoming a matter of grave concern. Estimates indicate that more than 30 per cent of India's overall workforce is looking for better career prospects for fatter pay cheques, new challenges, work-life balance and greater flexibility.

In 2021, the information technology industry witnessed a record attrition rate resulting in a recruiting frenzy in 2022. According to reports, the largest IT businesses in India have employed more than two lakh individuals so far this year, mostly as a result of increased attrition and a strong demand for technically trained staff.

Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, there has been a significant increase in the number of defections. The industry's employment base has grown considerably. There is a notable difference between last year and now, and there is a substantial degree of rapid attrition, with people joining and exiting within three months. According to an HR Director of a cloud technology business, "This just implies that the recruits are unsatisfied with their current circumstances and are ready to explore the wide possibilities that exist outside the organisation."

She continues, "To remain competitive, even a mid-sized IT corporation seeks the same skillsets as large IT companies and start-ups. Consequently, best-suited, competent prospective employees are presented with numerous

professional possibilities, and if they receive a better offer, they are not reluctant to resign the new post within a month. Nobody, including ourselves, has the luxury of being selective, as everyone has a personal interest in their own well-being." She further adds, "Even if you make the finest offer, many would decline and remain with their existing employers, as even

organisations are undergoing major modifications to retain their top-performing employees. As a HR professional, I would do the same because I don't want to lose a critical resource and cause the business to suffer." "Instant attrition has been on the rise in recent years, and it's insane. Besides, offer rejections are rising at a rate of greater than 50 per cent.



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This is only likely to grow in the future as more and more large corporations establish operations in Bangalore. Besides, with fancy job possibilities such as working out of any place, it's a competitive labour market right now," she says.

In this context, businesses are not only paying greater compensation to attract the best employees, but they are also recognising the flexibility that comes with working from a remote location.

In the words of a Team Leader at a leading IT business in Pune, "We have been receiving resignation emails on a daily basis." I have worked with this firm for 15 years and am very satisfied with my position. In spite of the fact that I had not considered quitting or moving employment, the firm announced a retention incentive, and a promotion is also being discussed. It is making every effort to keep top stars in the mainstream."

"The majority of job seekers are looking for innovative tasks because of stress and monotony caused by the recurrence of work patterns, particularly in a work from home environment. Millions of workers are resigning each month from an ecosystem that promotes excessive anxiety and exhaustion and many of them are expressing a desire for novel avenues to learn new skills," says Prashanth, HR executive at a reputed MNC in Bengaluru.

The Great Resignation

The term was coined by Anthony Klotz who predicted the mass exodus in May 2021. Klotz is a professor of management at Mays Business School.

Incentivising for Retention

Organizations have devised retention measures to weather the Great Resignation Wave. They are conducting 'stay' interviews to determine the factors that motivate employees to remain in their present positions, particularly significant individuals who have been with the system for two to three years. They attempt to engage with the applicant immediately following an offer to determine the degree of satisfaction with the offer.

Companies are launching monetary and non-monetary awards and recognition programmes, among other incentives. They are looking at financial wellbeing, routine wellness, work-life balance and other aspects of employees' lives. Furthermore, they have come to realise that fast-tracking promotions, professional growth, providing employees opportunities for innovation and earning patents contribute to a company's ability to differentiate itself.

"The general tone among employees is one of uncertainty about the nature of employment

in the future, even as employers search for ways to entice people to work full time." Because there are so many start-ups in Bangalore, everyone is receiving excellent work, a good income and a wonderful opportunity to learn.

When you consider the quantity of choices they have, it's easy to become side-tracked," says Ashutosh Das, Senior Manager of a digital payments company.

As a result of shifting circumstances, the Great Resignation is now being referred to as the 'Great Reshuffle,' with the majority of individuals considering a job move rather than quitting their jobs. If this pattern continues the bubble will pop and it is only a question of time.



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Moonlighting

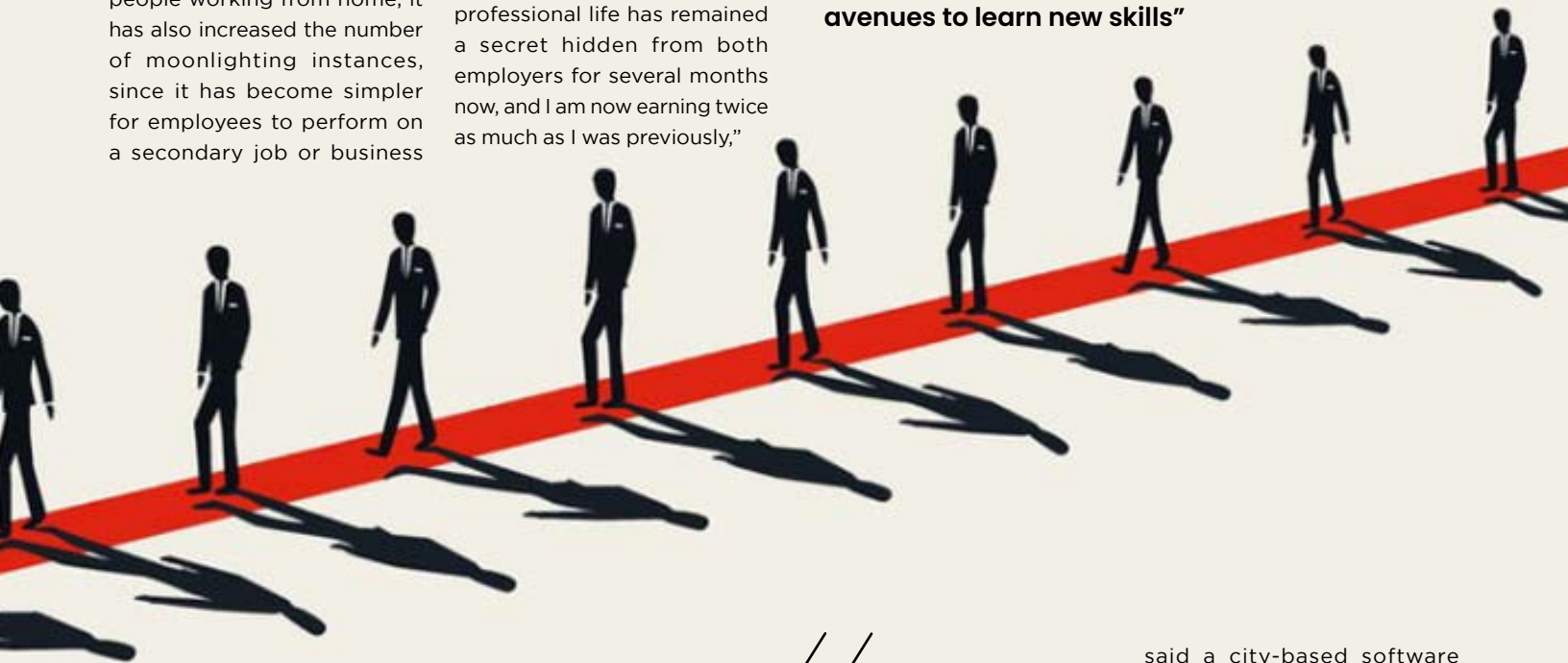
The global economy collapsed in 2020 as a result of COVID 19. A large number of employees were left hunting for and/or doing numerous jobs in order to retain job security and a continuous stream of income, with up to 70 per cent of remote workforce holding multiple jobs. While the pandemic has increased the number of people working from home, it has also increased the number of moonlighting instances, since it has become simpler for employees to perform on a secondary job or business

without informing their primary employer.

“Since my job at my company was undemanding and rarely monitored, I made the decision to use my spare time to improve my profits. Because of an upsurge in remote employment prospects during the lockdown, I was able to secure a freelancing position with a non-conflicting city-based firm. My double professional life has remained a secret hidden from both employers for several months now, and I am now earning twice as much as I was previously;”



The majority of job seekers are looking for innovative tasks because of stress and monotony caused by the recurrence of work patterns, particularly in a work from home environment. Millions of workers are resigning each month from an ecosystem that promotes excessive anxiety and exhaustion and many of them are expressing a desire for novel avenues to learn new skills”



The general tone among employees is one of uncertainty about the nature of employment in the future, even as employers search for ways to entice people to work full time.”

said a city-based software developer who prefers to remain anonymous. In response to the question on the ethical dimension of whether or not he feels he is cheating his company, he quickly retorts: “I would feel that way only if my job was being badly affected. While I am able to complete my responsibilities at both companies, I do not feel I am in violation of any regulations.”

Note: Various employees, workers, and other stakeholders from several organisations have provided inputs for the creation of the storyline.

At a time when we pride ourselves for having mastered the technology of communication, we still fail to 'hear and listen' to voices that need to be heard. Perhaps, the reason why plays like 'Iti Ninna Amrita' remain relevant even today (the original play set in the years before and after Independence, and premiered in 1992) is not just because they portray the complexity of human relationships but also the complexity within the human language of love. *Iti Ninna Amrita* is an epistolary play translated into Kannada by Jayanth Kaikini from the Hindi original, 'Tumhari Amrita', written by Javed Siddiqui. The play narrates the journey of two childhood friends Amrita Nigam and Zulfikar Haider, hailing from aristocratic families of Lucknow and their lifetime relationship through a series of letters that oscillate from the personal to the political to everything-in-between. The story is set over a span of five decades that also includes the transition of India from a British colony to an Independent nation, and the Partition that follows.

Zulfi and Amrita meet at Amrita's birthday party for the first time in the year 1940. What begins as an infatuation develops into a deep friendship as they begin to share personal stories and soon they find themselves seeking each other's company and emotional support. The correspondence between the two begins with details of their everyday lives, rantings about family,

friends and acquaintances, and rejoices of little wins in life. Over time, the bond deepens, as casual conversations turn serious and deep laced with emotional intensity, with the added dimension of petulance hemmed by immaturity, anger and jealousy.

The two characters appear diametrically opposite in more ways than one. Amrita, endowed with a creative instinct, is enthralled by the artistic world and wishes to live her life unapologetically and on her own terms. Zulfi easily succumbs to his patriarchal and authoritarian family and remains subservient to their dictates. Amrita offers the creative and emotional element to the relationship, Zulfi brings in only

practical and conventional ideas, often leading to collisions. As the riots in Lahore and the news of partition make rounds, Zulfi's family contemplates leaving India.

Amrita's is a broken family. She is troubled by her mother's psychological distress and emotional withdrawal following her father's second marriage to a young courtesan from Meerut. Amidst this chaos, she continues to express her creativity through her drawings on the bedroom walls which at first is dismissed by her father as 'signs of insanity'. Dewan Saheb takes her to a psychiatrist, while Amrita's mother figures marriage as the best solution to insanity. Amrita proposes to Zulfi, but he refuses on grounds

of the huge chasm between them, read, religious differences. When Amrita refuses a marriage proposal arranged by her father, enraged, he sends her to Dehradun. Frustrated, from then on, she completely detaches herself from him emotionally, while continuing to seek and find solace in writing to Zulfi.

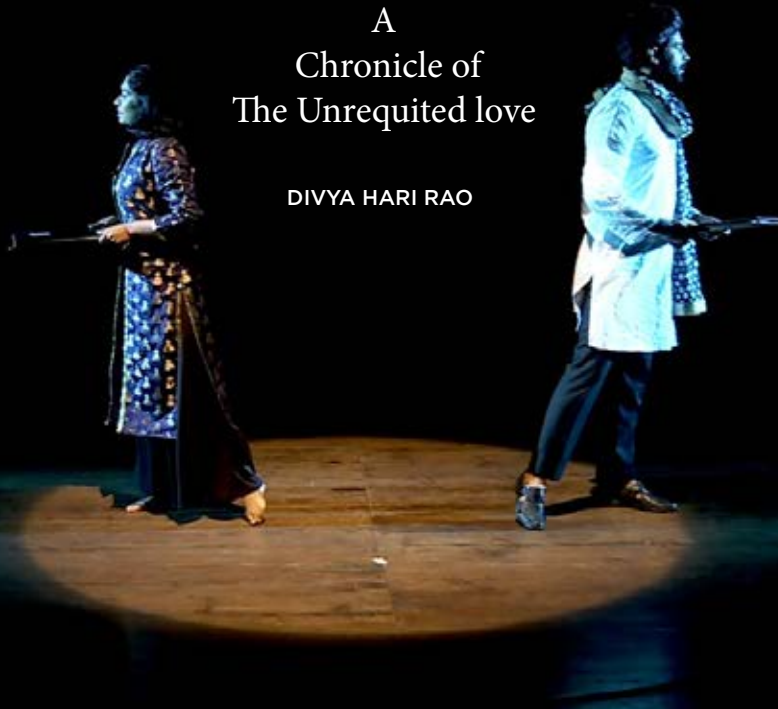
The physical distance between them widens when Zulfi is sent to Aligarh Muslim University for higher studies, and Amrita is sent off to J J School of Arts, Mumbai by her father who chances on the value of her creative skills. In one of her letters, she mentions that perhaps, until then he had not actually 'seen' her art. At J J School, Amrita rediscovers her sense of freedom and experiences a sense of belongingness. In her yearning to become free like nature, on one of her visits to the beach, she undresses herself to metaphorically set her spirit free. This prominent scene resembles the climactic scene in Kate Chopin's 'The Awakening' where the protagonist, Edna Pontellier strips herself and jumps into the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The free spirit, yet yearns for Zulfi's love.

Amrita's delusional experiences at the Prince of Wales museum, where she imagines a bahadur's wife from a painting is laughing at her, and smokes a borrowed cannabis from an American tourist, signal her deteriorating mental health. As a consequence, she is expelled and her stay in Mumbai is short lived. Amrita's peculiar

Iti Ninna Amrita

A
Chronicle of
The Unrequited love

DIVYA HARI RAO





behaviour worries Zulfi who fails to understand her fragile condition – a result of a mother wallowing in her own wounds, a father always distant from his family and a lover who hasn't the courage to transcend boundaries to unite with his love. Instead, he taunts her and refuses to write to her thereafter. The fear of disconnection intensifies and she decides to end the friendship once and for all.

Amrita and Zulfi's relationship is a tug-of-war filled with reconciliations of several kinds; but love remains unrequited. Every encounter between Amrita and Zulfi remains an unfulfilled moment of naivety. Having known each other through letters, they fail to connect when in the company of each other. Zulfi's lack of sympathy for Amrita, is visible through the eerie silence of suffering, and his detachment over time, grows deeper. The deepening chasm between these two individuals gains gigantic proportions in the communal violence that is raging, leaving the country divided.

Years later, Zulfikar attempts to break the silence, pleading to transcend the past, but Amrita counters saying that one can go far away but not far enough from one's past. Amrita has

moved to Paris and despite the freedom to be her true self, she feels alienated. Zulfikar starts his career in government administration in India and his marriage to Shaheen takes a tragic turn in Amrita's life



For the younger audience who have never watched older productions of the play, the plot remains relevant as it evokes the mishaps of virtual relationships and engagements of all kinds that are a norm today."

leading to the deepening of her mental instability and morbid dependency on cigarettes and alcohol, amidst her unsuccessful marriage to Andy (whom she meets in Paris). Amrita's attempt to conform to conventional societal standards is seen through her imitation of Zulfi's life, in which she miserably fails. Amrita, upon her return to India, finds Zulfikar rising in his political career. His rise to power makes him vulnerable to a journalist who threatens to publish his letters to Amrita. Amrita is now on her deathbed in the corner room of

a hospital in Dehradun, where she begs Zulfikar to continue to write to her to and to save her from feeling lonely in her death. For Zulfikar, Amrita's death is a moment of redemption for failing to recognize the person that she was.

'Tumhari Amrita', one of the longest running plays in the history of Indian theatre has been previously adapted into the Kannada theatre by M S Sathyu. However, Usha Bhandary's directorial venture, experiments with the symbolic versions of the younger selves of Amrita and Zulfikar (played by Akshaya and Darshan). For the younger audience who have never watched older productions of the play, the plot remains relevant as it evokes the mishaps of virtual relationships and engagements of all kinds that are a norm today. Also, Amrita's implicit hint of feeling lonely throughout the play is a relatable experience for us, irrespective of age and geography and ubiquitous communication technology.

Kaikini's simple dialogues hold the audience's attention and pulls them to actively participate in the transformation of the protagonists leading to the disruption of their relationship. Nalme Nachiyar and Deekshith Shetty's performance as Amrita

and Zulfikar is commendable. However, introducing two older actors to represent the later stage of their lives would have amplified the impact. Deekshith Shetty is convincing enough to make the audience hate Zulfikar but isn't convincing enough to play the role of the politically powerful middle-aged man. The shifting spotlight to highlight each character's dialogues manages to hold the audience's attention. Amrita's descent into madness is amplified by the light that fades away even as the spotlight remains bright and steady on Zulfi which bespeaks his bright future. Minimalistic costume helps foreground the narrative, despite subtle changes alongside the evolution of the characters. A distinct part of the stage was set with a series of paintings by Santosh Ambarkar, Arjun Nagarkar and Monica K that were reflective of Amrita's psyche. The predominant song 'Aaj Jaane ki Zidd na Karo' elevates the experience of the pain of separation between the two, along with aalap that reflects the sombre mood. Usha Bhandary's team has presented an exceptional performance that strives to bring about a balance between the past and the present, while being inclusive of the interests of different generations of audiences.



Pickle

The Soul of Indian food

ROOPA RAJAN

Pickle, achar, urgai, uppinakai, athanu, loncha! Isn't your mouth watering already? I suggest you keep some pickle handy while you read this article!

It's not a rare sight to see Indians combine a small piece of pickle with each morsel of food. An Indian thali is incomplete without a pickle in the corner. Though it occupies the littlest space, it is indispensable and adds a special flavor and tang. In fact, most dishes, from North or South, East or West call for the pickle as accompaniment - from *aloo ka paratha* to *dal chawal* and *curd rice*.

Memories in a Jar

Personally, opening a jar of pickle, is nothing short of opening the window to my memories. I'm sure this is true for most of us who had the good fortune of spending summer vacations in *ajji mane* (grandmother's house). The humble pickle takes me down memory lane to when my grandmother created magic with her hands; a special pickle for every season for the entire household. This was the time when you didn't pick the plastic pickle bottle off the shelf, adulterated with artificial flavours, preservatives and what not!

Every jar of pickle then was hand made with effort and served with love to the entire household, packed off to relatives and shared with neighbors too; a seasonal ritual, really.



Large-sized *bharanis* (ceramic jars) were emptied, washed and left to dry in sunlight, when the next batch of pickle preparation would commence. Plastic hadn't invaded our lives as much and folks were aware that the high salt and acid content would react with plastic. These beautiful ceramic jars came in different shapes and sizes and it was a taboo for anyone as much as to touch the them. Not, just the *bharani*, no one was allowed to lay a hand on any ingredient that would go into the pickle. Hard science was behind this taboo. The bigger *bharani* was always set aside for the mavinkai (mango) pickle, the king of pickles, while the smaller ones were for *nallikai* (gooseberry) and *herlekai* (citron).

Pickle making was auspicious like performing a puja. If you ask me, cooking, whether it is brewing a cup of coffee or preparing an elaborate *holige* (a sweet-meat) demands the kind of dedication and focus that is warranted when performing a ritual. Grandfather would go to the *pete* (market) with a list of ingredients and specific instructions regarding the touch and feel of the fruit or vegetable and the spices, and most importantly, the store from which it is to be sourced!

On the morrow, the ingredients were sun-dried and roasted by just one or two women under extreme hygiene. The fruit or vegetable was sliced or cubed

and mixed with rock salt in the ceramic jar. Dry roasted and powdered mustard, fenugreek and cumin were added along with red chilli powder. Hing (asafetida) was added to sesame oil, warmed slightly then allowed to cool and added to the pickle. Once the preparation process was complete, the pickle was left to blend, marinate and ferment from a few days to weeks. The ceramic jars were tied with clean white soft muslin and then the lid closed and allowed to rest for a few more weeks. The pickle stored in the jars were given a mix every alternate day and stored in a cool and dry place. Only wooden spoon or spatula was used to mix or even remove the pickle from the jar. The same person was expected to do this, under hygienic conditions. Too many hands, they said, would spoil the pickle. Besides, the jars were never touched after sun down.

As summer set in, stacks of raw mangoes made their first royal entry to the market. Your first bite of the mango pickle is nothing short of a gastronomical extravaganza. The sight of it tantalizes your salivary gland. The tang hits your tongue first, and then the spices leave you teary eyed! And as your teeth dig into its flesh, the taste of mango melts on your tongue. What's to stop you from licking your fingers!

If mango is pickled in summer, then we have *Amtekai* (Hogplum) ready to pickle just after monsoon followed by Indian gooseberry, carrot, reddish, turnip, bitter gourd, garlic etc. for winter. The seasonal specialty of Karnataka is the mango variety especially *appe midi*, *amtekai* (hogplum) and *nellikai* (Indian gooseberry).



Here are a few varieties from South India

A Potpourri of Ingredients

The most common spices in pickle making across the country are mustard, fenugreek, red chilli, salt and asafetida. Oil and salt serve as preservatives. At times, green chilli replaces the red chilli for a differently tasting lemon pickle. A small quantity of roasted fenugreek helps in preservation and fermentation.

Mavinkai shunti (mango ginger) and magali beru (mahali roots) are special additions to the gooseberry pickle. The taste and flavour entices you irrevocably. Mango ginger is easily available in the market but the mahali is rare and expensive. The Mahali is found deep inside thick forestland and only a few tribals are known to cultivate them. Unfortunately, the mahali plant is on the endangered list. Fresh green pepper sold in bunches in the market also makes its way to lend colour, taste and flavour.

Avatars of Indian Pickle

The beauty of a multi-cultural country like India is that every state has its variety of pickle, along with numerous local variations! It is knowledge and wisdom passed on from generations; the use of local and seasonal ingredients, proportions and choice of spices, choice of preservation options like salt, oil or vinegar and of course the technique; and this is what makes every regional variety a classic, a unique formulation that every Indian family can boast about!

- Telegu cuisine from Andhra Pradesh is known for its hot, tangy and spicy food. Apparently, any vegetable can be turned into a tasty pickle or chutney by an Andhraite. Avakkai pickle brings pictures of fiery red colour of the chilly, liberal use of sesame oil and strongly flavoured mango pickle. Garlic pods in the pickle gives a unique twist.

- Drumstick in pickles?! I was surprised too but loved this Tamil Nadu specialty. Drumstick pieces (an inch and a half long) are sauted and marinated with spices including fenugreek and mustard. Kannimanga urgai is similar to the midi from Karnataka. Bite sized tender mangoes are brined for a few weeks and then spiced, making it a must with tayir sadam or curd rice. A cooked pickle variety from this state is the Manga thokku. Firm and matured mangoes are grated and cooked in oil with spices, which enhances the taste of the comparatively blander idli, dosa, adai or rice and ghee. If mahali root is marinated in curd and dried and added to the pickle. This pickle though is not for everyone.

- Apart from fruits and vegetables used in pickling, the one special pickle which gets mentioned in Kerala is the Chemmeen Pickle or Prawn pickle. Fresh prawns from the backwaters of Kerala are sun dried for a long period, before being desiccated and marinated with spices.



Here are a few varieties from North India.

What sets the North Indian pickles apart from those of South is the use of fennel seeds, onion seeds and mustard oil. Mustard oil, commonly known as Kachi Gani tail is known for its pungent smell and unique flavour. The pickle from each region is unique and zestful made with seasonal and local ingredients.

- Aam ka achar: Cut raw mango is spiced with mustard, fenugreek, cumin, which are dry roasted and coarsely powdered and added along with salt, chilli powder, fennel seeds and onion seeds along with mustard oil. The pickle is sun-dried for days and sometimes weeks before it can be consumed.
- The Assamese Bhoot Jolokia Achar or ghost or king chilli is exceptionally hot and pungent. This red chilli is pickled with bamboo shoots.
- Have you heard of ferns being pickled? Ligri ka Achar from Himachal Pradesh is exactly that! Young and tender slightly curled shoots of the fern that shoot up aplenty in the region, are pickled.
- The sweet and tangy Amle ki Launji a pickle made of gooseberry is common in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand.
- A personal favourite from Gujarat is the Chana Methi achar, a lesser-known variety. Chickpeas and dry fenugreek seeds and raw mango are blended with an assortment of coarsely ground spices and preserved in mustard oil.
- Most of us have tried the dry variety of fried lotus stem sprinkled with salt, pepper, chilli powder and chaat masala, but here is an exotic pickle from the Jammu and Kashmir region, the kamak kakdi ka achar.
- A season special made from winter vegetables is the Gajar – Gobhi - Shalgam Achar. The sweetness of carrot with the tang of turnip when combined with cauliflower and spices, gives a supremely delicious pickle which goes best with parathas.
- A personal favourite is the Nimbu ka Katta Meetha Achar in which the tang from lemon when combined with jaggery and spice powders makes for another tasty pickle.

History

Pickling is a way to preserve food for off-season consumption. It is indeed, a great technique to preserve the goodness of fruits, vegetables, fish, meat etc.

Pickling falls into the ritual category of 'cooking without fire'. The heat from the Sun being harnessed to create the final edible product with various spices for taste and preservation of the pickle for months and in some cases years.

According to K T Achaya (1923-2002), a renowned nutritionist and an authority on Indian food, the origin of the word Achaar (hindi?) is obscure. In AD 1563, Garcia da Orta describes a conserve of cashew fruit in salt as achaar. In AD 1687, a bamboo achaar and mango achaar are noted in Thailand and Indonesia.

A Kannada work of 1594, the *Lingapurana of Gurulinga Deshika*, describes no less than fifty kinds of pickles.

According to the New York Food Museum's pickle History timeline, cucumbers that are native to India, were first pickled in BCE 2030 in the Tigris Valley.

The word *Pickle* comes from the Dutch *Pekel* or Northern German *Pokel* meaning salt or Brine. In The Definitive Glossary of British India, the word 'achar' finds a mention in CE 1563, in works by Garcia da Orta, a Portuguese physician, describing a conserve of cashew with salt which he refers to as 'and this they call Achar.'



Health Benefits

According to Ayurveda, pickle kindles the digestive fire or agni in the body and thus help in the digestive process. Pickles are a reliable source of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants and help in maintaining gut health.

Our ancestors were well-versed in the science of sustainable eating and health. They used local ingredients, seasonal fruits and vegetables, spices and sunlight. It is a great way of preserving seasonal goodness and reaping its health benefits for a long period with minimal ingredients, simple cooking methods and natural preserving techniques.

Make some time to make pickles at home, even if in small quantities, for in doing so you are contributing to the preservation and perpetuation of a very important cultural component - culinary heritage, innovated and perfected by your ancestors!

GI Tagged Pickles

Incidentally a few pickles have successfully received the Geographical Indicator tag. The water, soil and climate of the geographical location contribute to the exclusivity of these pickles.

Appe Midi Uppinakai

Appe Midi from Malnad region is a small-sized whole mango with unique aroma and is used to make pickles and has earned world renown.

This deliciously tangy mango is grown exclusively in Sagar, Ripponpet and Hosanagara taluk of Shivamogga district, river valleys of Aghanashini, Kali, Bedthi, Sharavati and Varada of Uttara Kannada district, Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts, Malnad region of Chikkamagalur district and Sakleshpura region of Hassan district. *Appe Midi* pickles are much sought-after as they retain their texture and taste for a whole year.

Recently, Shivamogga postal department released a special postal cover dedicated to the *Appe Midi*.

Dalle Chilli Pickle

The red cherry pepper chilli of Sikkim is locally known as the Dalle Khursani. This simple yet delectable pickle in oil is a burst of spice on your palate giving distinctive zest to your meal.

Kachai Lemon

Kachai Lemon pickle from Manipur is a rich source of ascorbic acid, containing 45-51 mg/100 ml juice. The best way to preserve and enjoy the health benefits is by pickling it.

Kodaikanal Hill Garlic Pickle

Kodaikanal Malai Poonda is known for its medicinal and preservative properties due to its antioxidant and antimicrobial potential, which are attributed to the presence of higher amounts of organosulfur compounds, phenols and flavonoids. There are many traditional and local recipes made with this variety of garlic but pickle is certainly worth trying.

Mizo Chilli Pickle

This particular chilli pepper from Northeast India came into the limelight when it acquired the Geographical Index (GI) from a small and remote district in Mizoram called Siahia.



VIJAY MRUTHYUNJAYA

It's a 'Paradise on Earth', like none other. None other because the catchy and flowery phrase is the most commonly misused term in travel catalogues and among tour operators alike, the world over.

To really believe Seychelles is indeed a 'Paradise on Earth', one has to personally visit this little-known, if not obscure island and get lost in its mesmerising beauty.

Seychelles may be a remote travel destination; in fact, a tiny

dot on the world map. But in reality, this idyllic nation of more than 115 islands off the coast of East Africa is perfect to relax and rejuvenate for discerning travellers who cherry-pick their holiday spots.

We found this out, much to our delight indeed, just before the global lockdown due to the Covid pandemic a couple of years ago. Almost all the tourist spots, dotting the length and breadth of this island nation, are every traveller's ultimate escape or experience.

Interestingly, Seychelles also has a connection with James Bond! Simply because, it has a view to kill! Legend has it that the author of James Bond novels, Ian Fleming, came to Seychelles in the late 50s to find inspiration for his spy saga.

According to newspaper clippings, neatly catalogued at various information centres on the Island, 'Fleming based himself at the Northolme Hotel on Mahe, a secluded hideaway on the northwest coast with picturesque views of Beau Vallon Bay and Silhouette

Island'. Originally built by an eccentric, retired English colonel, the Northolme has been revamped several times and is now a boutique resort and worth a visit, even if it is at the cost of missing a beach or two. Each villa is hidden in the midst of tropical greenery and reflects the Creole (the official language of Seychelles) architecture of the island.

"Two years after his visit, Fleming is believed to have published a collection of five short stories entitled For Your Eyes Only - three of which have



Mesmerising Seychelles

been made into blockbuster Bond movies. The final villainous tale in the pentalogy, *The Hildebrand Rarity*, is set entirely in the Seychelles on-board a luxury yacht named *The Wavekrest*," reads a paragraph marked in red in one of the newspaper clippings.

"The marine life here is a riot of colour and movement, especially in the Northolme's secluded beach cove," Fleming himself has noted.

Don't be surprised if during your visit you get to see a beautiful Bond girl dipping her toes in the water and staring out to the Indian Ocean or catch Daniel Craig in his famous blue swimming shorts frolicking with one of the hourglass Bond girls in a matching two-piece bikini!

By the way, the antagonist in the film *'License to Kill'*, Milton Krest (played by Anthony Zerbe), is named after a popular tonic and ginger beverage on the island.

Coming back to our destination. Reaching Seychelles was much easier than we had anticipated, thanks to ignorant friends and misleading travel agents who tried to sell us a host of

'dream' packages to predictable destinations like Maldives, Mauritius and Madagascar. By choosing Seychelles, after some initial trepidation of course, we had our once-in-a-life-time holiday. We fell in love with the place the moment the Air Seychelles plane began its descent through thick clouds before giving us a kaleidoscopic view of the lush green mountain ranges, endless stretches of boulder-dotted white beaches, glittering lagoons and coral reefs, and the bewitching flora and fauna.

A four-hour flight from our port of embarkation, Bahrain,



A 30-day free-of-cost Visa (for Indians) was obtained without any fuss."

to Mumbai was followed by an equally smooth journey to our destination Mahe, the main island of Seychelles. A 30-day free-of-cost Visa (for Indians) was obtained without any fuss.

As we left the airport, we were gently reminded, through colourful life-size banners on either side of the road, of the

famous couples to have visited Seychelles, including some marquee names like Abhishek Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai, Prince William and Kate Middleton, and David and Victoria Beckham.

No wonder, Seychelles is today on the bucket list of almost all international travellers looking for those magical moments.

Seychelles is a tiny archipelagic island country in the Indian Ocean with a population of less than 100,000. Mahe, home to the capital Victoria, Praslin and La Digue are the main islands.





The Seychelles culture and society is an eclectic and enigmatic mix of different influences, beginning with French, British and African at the time of Independence from the United Kingdom in 1976, and Chinese and Indian in recent times.

As we already had a jam-packed itinerary, we did not waste any time at tourism counters or the hotel information desk.

After a good night's rest, we were all set to explore this exotic island nation.

First on the list, not surprisingly, was the beaches. You are spoiled for choice here as the list is endless, and as our local friend and guide suggested, 'one better than the other'.

The Pink Sand beach (Anse Source D'Argent) in La Digue and the Anse Lazio in Praslin are a photographer's delight. While

its pink sand below azure waters is the centre of attraction, the beautiful granite boulders and the native takamaka trees form a perfect backdrop.

The Anse Lazio is also picture-perfect and, according to many travel websites, is the sixth best beach in the world. It is also a favourite spot for snorkelers as its abundant underwater life is unmatched.

It is said that one can even occasionally find sea turtles feeding on the beaches. No wonder many Hollywood and Bollywood (mainly song sequences) films are shot here – as far as I remember, Tarzan the Ape Man (1981) to the Castaway (1986) and, more famously, the Shah Rukh Khan-starrer *Ram Jaane* (1995).

The next day was reserved for visiting historic sites and nature reserves. Seychelles is not far behind in these areas either as it



is one of the leading nations that protects habitats of threatened species, allocating 42 per cent of its territory for conservation, according to our guide and friend.

Aldabra and Vallee De Mai

Nature Reserve are two UNESCO World Heritage sites in Seychelles, virtually untouched by humans and visitors need special permission to enter these remote locations.

Aldabra, part of the Morne



National Park, is the second largest coral atoll in the world, according to our guide and friend again, and has the largest population of Giant Tortoises.

The sight of hundreds of tortoises, of all ages and sizes, one weighing more than 200 kgs and aged more than 100 years, crawling all over the place is a rare sight to behold or just the opposite depending on the individual visitor's taste and choice.

Next on the list was a visit to the wild Coco de Mer - which produces some of the world's largest coconuts (some weighing up to 20 kgs!) and infamous for its 'resemblance to a pert posterior' (in simple language, women's buttocks), according to the official handout.

Fond Peper in Praslin National Park is another captivating nature reserve. The national bird

of Seychelles, the Black Parrot, can be spotted here. But with only 200 of this rare species around, we had to walk for more than an hour to spot one.

In the end it was worth the time and effort as we not only spotted one of these most colourful creatures on earth, but also got to hear its high-pitched whistle.

Seychelles is also famous for its scuba diving spots with some of the popular ones at Brissare Rocks, Fishermen's Cove Reef, Shark Bank and Trompeuse Rocks.

We chose the second as it was close to the other sites we had planned to visit on that day, and it was not a bad choice either as the stunning topography of coral reefs, drop offs, wrecks and canyons amid rich and diverse marine life were a feast for the senses.

The last day was spent exploring

Victoria, the smallest capital city in the world which can be, trust us, covered by foot in less than a day and, as we counted, has only two traffic lights. It is named after Queen Victoria during the British colonial rule.

There are still plenty of reminders of that era, including the Victoria clock tower in the centre of town.

"Inspired by Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, it was shipped from London by mail steam ship and erected in her honour in 1903," informs our guide as we soak in the atmosphere.

The Sir Selwyn Selwyn Clarke Market is one of the town's top attractions, the fishmongers' corner, in particular, where locals, very much like us Indians, bargain with vigour for freshly caught tuna, octopus and red snapper. We ended our tour on a divine note visiting the Arul

Mihu Navasakthi Vinayagar Temple, the only Hindu temple in Seychelles. Situated close to the Sir Selwyn-Selwyn Clarke Market, the temple, small but brightly painted, stands out from the rest of the buildings for its picturesque architecture.

It reminded us of the temples of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, but, mercifully, not anywhere near as crowded.

The places we could not visit, due to time and budget constraints, include some famous wildlife sanctuaries, adventure sports sites and various other hiking and trekking spots. And, of course, the expensive helicopter experience.

We, however, boarded our flight telling the beautiful, and most friendly and peaceful, Creoles - we will be back. Sooner than later!



TENACIOUS AT THE TABLE!

PADMA VIJAY KARTIK

In her free time you will find her sprawled on the couch watching Chotta Bheem, looking every inch a child. You would never believe that she has some pretty impressive super powers of her own. With 3 international gold medals, 2 international silvers and 1 international bronze, this 12 year old from Chennai, is a table tennis prodigy!



Of trophies and medals: Hansini after her win at Hopes.

Five years ago Hansini Mathan Rajan stumbled onto the sport by accident, when she accompanied her cousin to his coaching class.

“She was keenly watching the game so I asked her to play. I observed that she had a natural instinct and a very good ball sense. I immediately convinced her parents to enroll her because it’s always better to start young” reminisces one of her coaches, Muralidhara Rao. Hansini enrolled at the Mylapore Sports Trust and the SDAT-AMK Table Tennis Development Centre under the Rao Brothers. This dynamic duo of Indian table tennis comprises of Srinivasa Rao: Dronacharya awardee and father of Table tennis champion Achanta Sharath Kamal; and Muralidhara Rao: an NIS Coach with many accomplishments. Together they have been responsible for the training of prominent Indian paddlers like Sharath Kamal, Shamini Kumaresan, N.R. Indu and Bhuvaneshwari. They, along with State coach Ms. Meenakshi Ganesh, have taken Hansini under their wings on her flight towards Table Tennis glory.



I understand the importance of practice. On some days it is hard to get up, but then I think of playing table tennis and that motivates me immediately”

It’s pouring outside, Chennai rains at its worst, but there is no respite for Hansini or her parents. The training must go on. A normal day starts at 5 am, with sessions at 6 sharp. Two hours in the morning is followed by four hours of school and then three and a half hours of coaching in the evening. Hansini’s discipline is unwavering.

“I understand the importance of practice. On some days it is hard to get up, but then I think of playing table tennis and that motivates me immediately,” she says.



Hansini with her coaches: from right to left Muralidhara Rao, Srinivasa Rao, Hansini and Meenakshi Ganesh.

The training sessions comprise of supportive exercises followed by competitive training as well as weekly intra-league and intra-club matches where the players get an opportunity to match their skills against new competitors.

“Every time we face a new player we come across a different style, and we have to learn to think on the spot and change our game to match that.” says Hansini.

“Hansini is a very focused and dedicated player. She is committed to practice and follows instructions very well. She is able to assess her opponents correctly. Her strength is her attack game,” says her coach, Mr. Srinivasa Rao.

Hansini is a recipient of the National Khelo India Scholarship, and the Champion's Development Scheme of the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu. For the past three years she has been supported by the Ultimate Table Tennis programme (UTT). Here she has access to professional physical and mental trainers, dieticians and specialists in sports medicine, who correct issues and update her skills and techniques, keeping her at the peak of her performance. The Table Tennis Federation of India and the Tamil Nadu Table Tennis Association have also been an immense support ensuring that she is able to participate in all relevant tournaments hassle-free.



Formidable focus

This has been an advantage for her, both at the National and International levels. Her first International tournament was the World Junior Swedish Circuit Tournament in the under 13 age group in 2020. It was a completely new environment and older opponents with unfamiliar techniques. Despite all this Hansini won a bronze.

"I was a little scared at first but once I got into the game I got

my confidence back "she says humbly.

At around this time Covid started rearing its ugly head worldwide.

"On the flight back to India there was a passenger coughing in the adjacent row. It was only later that we realized the possible implications of that" recalls her mother, Dr. Pratibha Ramani.

With Covid running riot all sports clubs were required to close down. It is a testament to the dedication of her coaches, the 'never-say-die' attitude of her parents and the generosity and support of her friends and fellow students that Hansini's coaching was largely uninterrupted during the pandemic.

"My friends Vishal, Vaibhav and Guru Sanjith had table tennis tables at their homes and I practiced there. We followed Covid rules and wore masks, sanitised our hands and admitted only a few people" remembers Hansini.

All this training readied her for the next set of tournaments: a series of International matches in well monitored Bio bubbles.

"We had to take our RTPCR every day. I hated it when they put the swab in my nose, but now I am used to it" she states. The discomfort was a small

price to pay as she bagged two gold medals, at the 2021 World Table Tennis (WTT) Youth Contenders, in Tunisia and in Muscat.

She went on to win the 2021 ITTF Hopes Challenge, held at Jordan, in the under 12 category. The Hopes



Hansini playing an older opponent at the World Junior Swedish Circuit Tournament

Programme is the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) High Performance and Development department's talent identification programme. Twenty U12 players are selected from the 226 member associations. Here Hansini had the privilege of being trained by renowned coaches like Massimo Costantini and Zoltan Batorfi amongst many others.

"It was a pleasure to work with Hansini" recounts Zoltan Batorfi, the girls head coach (ITTF), "She has a unique technique which she uses very well. Her tactical skills are very mature

and she has a high level of concentration which is unusual for this age. She has a bright future".

She is the first Indian to win this event. Hansini beat Syrian, Hend Zaza (3-1). Zaza had been the youngest Olympian at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. But Hansini's

powerful backhand returns, one of her signature strokes, saw her winning the match. Hansini receives automatic placement in the Hopes Squad for the Under-15 World Championship in December this year.

Her other international victories include a silver medal in the under-15 category at the 2021 WTT championship at Muscat (this win single handedly paved way for the Indian team's qualification at the under 15 Youth World Championship) and a bronze medal in the 2021 WTT championship held in Croatia.

Hansini is currently ranked world number three for under 13 and was the National Champion 2021 for the same category.

Hansini's journey has been a collective one. Since both her parents are doctors, they look toward the support of their extended family. So whether it's pick-ups and drops, packing tiffins, braiding her hair or helping with homework; grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins all chip in. Other table tennis parents step in with car pools and tournament chaperoning on the rare occasions that Hansini's mother can't make it.

Her school, P.S. Senior Secondary School, has been very cooperative and even takes the initiative to re-administer whatever exams she misses.

Of course Hansini is a stellar student, and does her best to

submit her assignments as soon as she can. In fact she has her heart set on becoming a Dermatologist like her



“My friends Vishal, Vaibhav and Guru Sanjith had table tennis tables at their homes and I practiced there. We followed Covid rules and wore masks, sanitised our hands and admitted only a few people.”

grandmother and uncle. Be it school or sport Hansini is always cool, collected and very focused; an uncommon quality for one so young.

“It is rare to see Hansini flustered. Winning or losing,

nothing shakes her. This kind of mental composure is a marked advantage in the game.” says her coach Meenakshi Ganesh

“She is a deeply religious child and has strong faith In Chandrashekarendra Saraswathi Swami gal (Mahaperiyava) of the Kanchi Mutt. And I think this contributes a lot to how composed she is “says her father Dr. R. Mathan Rajan.

In fact Hansini's talisman is her silver Mahaperiyava pendant. Most Sundays the family drive down to Kanchipuram to pay homage at the Mutt. This is the one family outing that they manage in between all their hectic schedules.

Her ultimate dream is to win a Gold for India at the Olympics and she understands that this means she will miss family functions sometimes or movies at the theatre or school picnics.



Hansini with Sharath Kamal

“I feel sad at the time but the competition is very tough and I have to work really hard if I want to reach my goal” says this wise table tennis warrior.

But for now she is content spending her rare moments of leisure watching Chotta Bheem.



Borders Banished!!

SHWETHA H C

Circa 1998. I returned home from school to be greeted by a large lock hanging on the door. As I began to worry and sob loudly, my neighbour Reshma aunty rushed to my aid. She reassured me and said that my mother had gone to see my grandmother who was hospitalised. The following two months were mostly spent at Reshma aunty's place because both my parents were on call at the hospital round the clock. She braided my hair and assisted me in putting on my shoes in the mornings and dropped and picked me to and from my van stop in the evenings.

Many years during my elementary schooling, I was chauffeured to and from school by Vincent uncle's van service. With an ever-smiling countenance, Vincent uncle was always able to tell when a child was in distress and would console them. Because of his charismatic personality, he was adored by everyone in our group, and I was his favourite.

The majority of my evenings were spent perched on his lap, as he regaled me with tales from his childhood. On days when I felt like the weight of the world was pressing down on my little shoulders, he sneaked some candies into my pocket to make me feel a little better.

Reshma aunty was a stern woman whose mere presence was enough to reprimand the unruly and the disobedient. In fact, I despised her for giving

us terrifying glares as we yelled and played in the streets on several occasions. It was just a matter of time until I moved in with her for the duration of those two months. A school principal by profession (which explains why she looked like a tyrant to any first timer), she was very compassionate at heart, which I was to learn in the following days. In addition to providing motherly care after school, she also made sure I was well-behaved.

Despite being a family of nine, her joint family greeted me with a smile on their faces every evening. Reshma aunty would bring a plate full of my favourite snacks and some healthy ones too, including chips, samosas, dry fruits, salad etc. and would ask me to choose one from each category (one from my favourites category and from the healthy category) and what more could a child want after a long day at school? Their home smelled like a food court, and the kitchen was a hive of activity as they prepared the evening meal. In the middle of her meal preparations, Reshma aunty assisted me with my homework and then after dinner, she fondly tucked me to bed along with her kids. This became a routine until my parents decided to shift to my grandmother's place because now, she was completely bed-ridden and needed utmost care.

Though it took some time for me to become acclimated to my new surroundings, I eventually became accustomed. Days,



India's true potential can be realised only when 'Amar-Akbar-Anthony' can rise together, because, if one falls, the others fall too!"

months and years passed, and we, the '80s kids, had grown into eccentric teenagers with a tremendous enthusiasm for life, having just graduated from high school and uniforms. In our never-ending quest to add degrees behind our names post-graduation journey became a very memorable one.

Sarah, Neha and me, became inseparable. Because journalism lessons were less about theory and more about experience, the three of us spent the majority of our time hanging out. I had no clue that Neha was a Muslim till the end of the last semester, not that it bothered me. A Bengali native, she used to perform Durga Puja and fast throughout the month of Ramzan. She accompanied us to temples, donned a bindi, and recited the Hanuman Chalisa more fluently than we did.

"India is my country. All Indians are my sisters and brothers. I love my country and I am proud of its rich and varied heritage. I shall always strive to be worthy of it." Even after 20 years, this pledge from my school days is what makes my heart grow

fonder about India. Ayeshas, Priyas and Mareetas used to walk in to school holding hands. We shared our lunch and equally enjoyed biriyani, egg toast and curd rice, while making harmless fun of each other's accents.

Growing up, none of us discussed religion and never had it been our concern. Though politicians and radicals have, time and again, tried to divide us in the name of religion, we have always managed to hold each other's hands and stand united. Every time there is a riot in any part of the country, we often read, hear stories about how one community protected the victims from their own radical community members.

India's true potential can be realised only when 'Amar-Akbar-Anthony' can rise together, because, if one falls, the others fall too! Educational institutions must serve as an ideal pot for the children to come together to learn, respect and mutually celebrate each other's differences, and not a place to spread social inequality or sow communal intolerance in their young minds.

If Abdul Kalam could become best friends with Ramanadha Sastry, Aravindan and Sivaprakasan and go on to make India proud, there is no reason for us to not open the doors for children from other religions to enter our homes and hearts. Because united we stand and divided, we.....

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