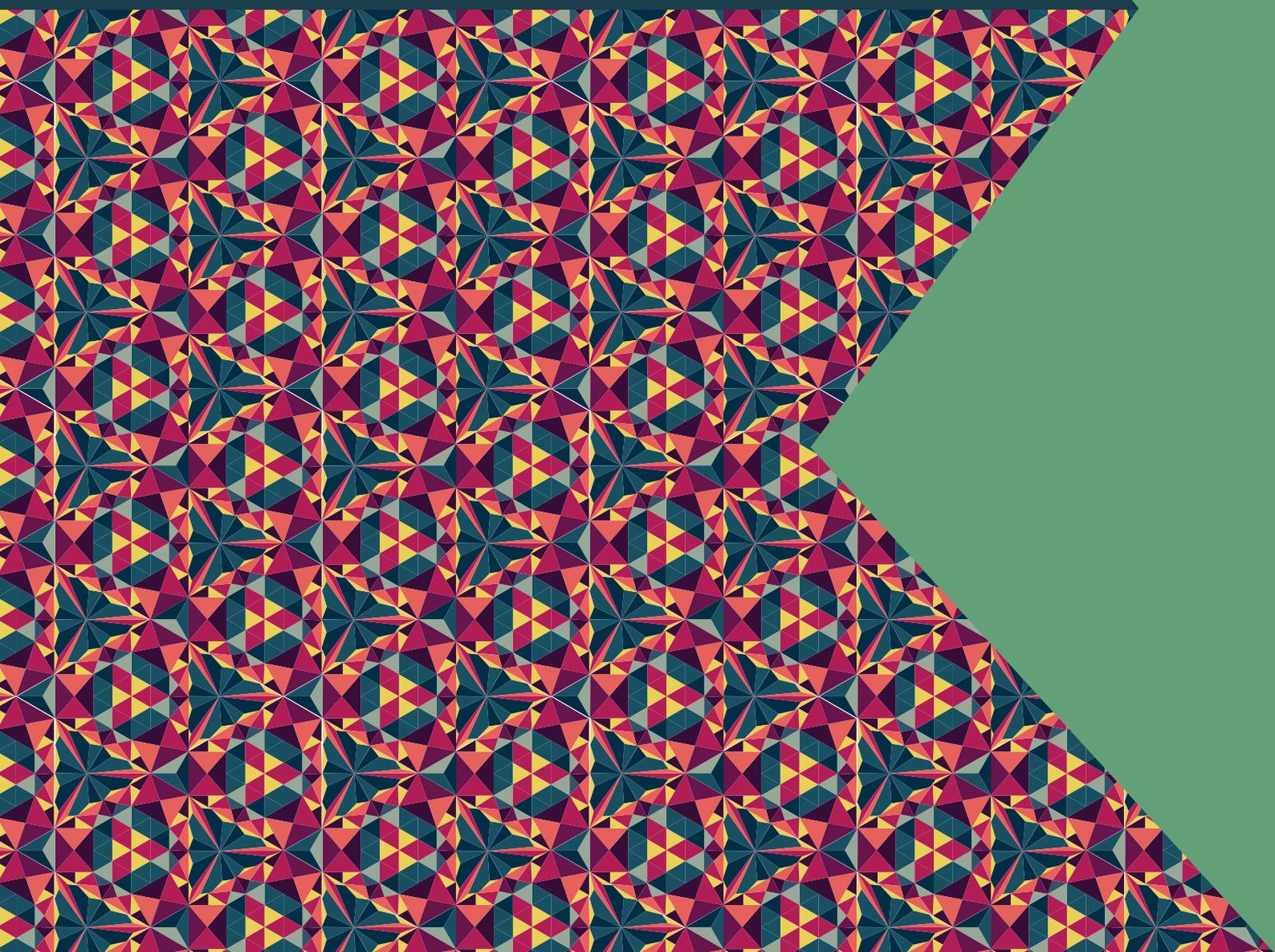


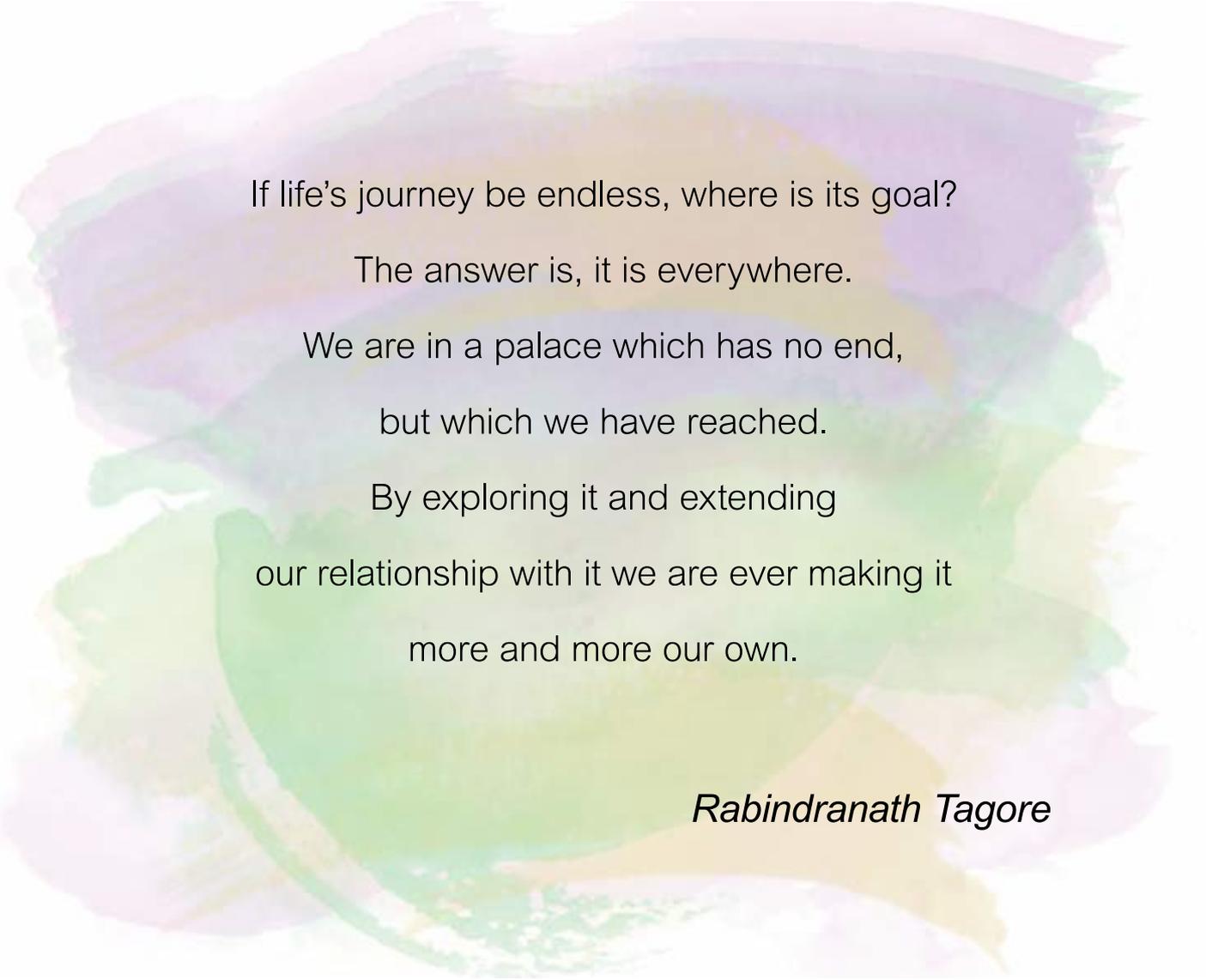


Karvā

KALEIDOSCOPE OF OUR THOUGHTS

'16





If life's journey be endless, where is its goal?

The answer is, it is everywhere.

We are in a palace which has no end,
but which we have reached.

By exploring it and extending
our relationship with it we are ever making it
more and more our own.

Rabindranath Tagore

The Editorial Team would like to thank all contributors, supporters, members of the University faculty and administration for their contribution in bringing out the 5th edition of Karvan. A special thanks to our faculty-mentors for their guidance and encouragement.

You can email your suggestions, comments and contributions to editorialclub@apu.edu.in

From the Editorial Team

Hello Reader!

Welcome to this journey! It is with great joy and anticipation that we release the fifth edition of Azim Premji University's annual magazine, Karvan. We hope that you will enjoy reading this magazine as much as we have enjoyed putting it together.

Have you ever looked through a kaleidoscope and marvelled at how a thousand tiny pieces of coloured glass constantly re-arrange themselves to produce new patterns every single time, each more colourful and exciting than the last? Life at Azim Premji University is similar to this. Each person here is a like a piece of vibrant glass in this kaleidoscopic college, with their own dynamic thoughts, ideas and skills. No two people are the same. With each passing day, with each new event, we interact with each other in several different ways, clashing and rearranging ourselves constantly to form an exciting amalgamation of cultures and perspectives. Through this magazine, we hope to capture this energy, and showcase how truly colourful this college is.

These two years are not easy. With mountains worth of readings and thousands of words to be written in response papers, life here is no cake walk. But where there is work, there is also play, and this certainly holds true. There is no shortage of clubs, cultural activities, sports events and celebrations of various kinds in our time here. As you flip through the pages of this magazine, we hope you will catch a glimpse of some of the exciting things that have shaped the previous year here in this university.

Lastly, this magazine is more than just words. With each reading of its contents, we hope that you will unearth fresh shades of yourselves, shaped by the varied and interesting thoughts of our diverse student body who have carefully penned these down for everyone to read. Life at Azim Premji University, much like looking through the eyepiece of a kaleidoscope is an exuberant experience, and while the pieces may occasionally clash and break, they will always find spaces in between other hues where they fit perfectly, and are able to shine.

Here's to another colourful year at Azim Premji University!

Cheers!

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MESSAGE

ANURAG BEHAR, VICE - CHANCELLOR

The Karvan goes on, as it should. This is now the 5th edition of the magazine of student life and culture at the Azim Premji University. I am one of those many, who know the centrality of student life and culture at a University, from personal experience. It seems also that it's not only (exciting) life lived then but often an unconscious preparation for the future.

This was particularly poignant, when I went back to my college in December 2015, for our 25th year reunion. With every step in that campus, and with every encounter with a friend that I was meeting after decades, I was acutely conscious how those four years had shaped with me.

Shared memories of the chais at 2 am, with animated conversation about the films of Kurosawa, Manmohan Desai and Balachander, about Exxon Valdez, and in the same breath about heart-break and new found love, and of cricket games lost on the last ball, of disasters in the mess and a million more. It was wonderful to discover how much each one of us was the same at the core, yet changed completely. And there was no doubt that life in those 4 years had played a central role.

Let me try to draw, what seems to have mattered most from those 4 years, even after 25 years. While this is a simplification, it's as valid as any such effort can be.

Engagement, deep engagement seemed to have mattered a lot. Whether it was with the teaching-learning inside the class, sports in the fields, student politics and management or cultural activities, what has mattered is whether we were intensely engaged, and really gave everything to it. Seems to be a good predictor of success later in life, in whatever way defined.

Feet being firmly planted on the ground, seems to have mattered equally. Dreaming big, challenging things, have all come to life and become real, only when combined with basic common sense, with humility and with a desire to be constructive.

Friends, affection and love, have mattered more than anything else. While everything may have turned topsy-turvy, the friends have remained and so has their affection. The ability to make friends and trust them, seems to have been crucial throughout life. This has not merely been a matter of success or achievement, but of happiness and well-being.

Finally, Integrity and an ethical-moral sense, seems to have tied everything together. The absence of this has been telling, and the presence truly seems to have integrated the person's life.

We parted at our college, thinking of the 50th year reunion, because it's only now that we realized that 25 years have passed in a flash.

You will have your 5th, 10th and 25th year reunions, and I think that your experiences will remain common at the core, and will continue to shape you. And the Karvan shall keep going on, as it should.

Wish you the very best.



MESSAGE

S. GIRIDHAR, REGISTRAR

Dear Friends,

I write this letter at the period that is most redolent of any University's annual academic calendar.

It is the first day of a new academic year. The second year students are walking into their classrooms for their 3rd semester while the first year students are in the midst of a wonderful orientation program that will prepare them for their stay and study at the university. The faculty missed the students the most during the vacation and I can see a radiant happiness on their faces as they greet their students.

It is also a time when we are preparing for the convocation of the students of the 2014-16 batch who have just graduated. The convocation is on 17 August and we look forward to seeing all these students at the ceremony where their degrees will be conferred on them. These students like our alumni from the earlier batches are already in the thick of their new work lives, engaged fully in what we hope will be very fulfilling and meaningful careers in the social sector.

When the students of the 2014-16 batch left the campus in early May, I wrote a letter to them, not so much a farewell letter but one that expressed our good wishes as well as our great expectations. Perhaps you will allow me to repeat or quote from that letter again here:

"Our alumni will increasingly play a most crucial role as spokespersons and ambassadors of our university. Organizations that wish to take our interns or recruit our students; people who are deciding whether to pursue education at our University – all these people's decisions will be influenced by our alumni and their interactions with our alumni. We will do everything to strengthen our relationship with alumni to keep it vibrant and mutually enriching. So please keep in touch. And a few words as you embark on your exciting new journey. It is a fact that the work place at your organization will be different from what one experienced as a student at the university. Your organizations have huge responsibilities, urgent commitments and rhythm of work – when you join them, they will expect you to strengthen their hands. They will see your personal strengths and the competency that you bring as a result of your education at the University. Many organizations have told us how much they like and respect our students' ability to understand, think, question and create. But what they want to see and will value even more is a good work ethic – basic values like discipline, punctuality, mutual respect and humility. Good organizations will provide necessary freedom and respect even as they will expect you to respect their basic institutional rules and code of conduct."

The batch of 2015, will now have to don the mantle of 'seniors' with responsibility. Some of the great things that have been initiated by your preceding batches must be nurtured. Karvan is one such precious initiative of the students. This magazine is a product of the students' passion and commitment not only to bring it out in time but also to ensure that various perspectives, various languages find space and expression. Thus, to see it in one's hands is a joy not easily described. What is true for Karvan is also true for other student initiatives be they the annual festival UNMUKT, the Quiz Club, the Theatre activities or PAHAL the social initiative. These are saplings planted by the batches from 2011. Each succeeding batch must take care of these saplings and help them grow into fine representatives of the University's culture.

And finally to the new batch of 2016, a very warm welcome. Embrace this place with all its diversity, its exciting possibilities and its constraints. Remember that you are here because each one of us believe you have the heart and mind to contribute in a great manner to social change in India. As you have already seen in your initial days here, there is a core set of values that we cherish. In your safe hands, rests the responsibility of passing on a better place than what you got when you arrived to the future batch of students.

With all good wishes,
Giridhar



MESSAGE

ARIMA MISHRA - PROGRAM COORDINATOR, MA IN DEVELOPMENT

Though development is a buzzword, it is marked with deep contestations over ideas, practices, experiences and trajectories of development. Even after several decades after Independence, India is confronted with many development challenges. While riding on the 'uncertain glory' of economic growth, it faces the hard reality of high maternal mortality, infant and child deaths, persistent poverty and malnutrition in several parts of India. The benefits of developmental policies and program are inequitable along the lines of caste, class, gender, region and ethnicity. Acknowledging the need for engaging with such development challenges, the program is committed to prepare individuals who can contribute to development practice by being well informed of the contours of development discourses and their implications for policies and actions. The program rests on training in development practice, that is theoretically informed and methodologically grounded. The curriculum is thus carefully designed to have a balance of theory and practice.



The program unfolds in a two year period through four semesters with the first two semesters consisting of core courses followed by a wide range of electives in the subsequent third and fourth semesters. Development is not a unitary discipline but an integrated field drawing on insights from several disciplines. Hence the first semester takes the students through different disciplines including Sociology, Political Science, Economics and Ecology to understand the perspectives on development from each of these disciplines, thus initiating students into a broader and comprehensive view of development. The second semester core courses further such lens by introducing them to legal and philosophical aspects of development. An important skill to engage with the program is to have a research mode of inquiry. The course on the Introduction to Research aims to develop such competency. The core course on Skills in Development Practice ensures that students graduate the program with essential hands on skills including organizational, communication, and research and advocacy skills. This course was newly introduced last year (2015-2017). Another core course on an Introduction to Education, Health and Livelihoods was also introduced to familiarize students to key issues, debates and challenges in these development domains.

The third and fourth semesters offer a wide bucket of electives (more than 60 electives) covering different aspects of the domain of development. Since the last one year, students' choices have been widened to include electives offered in other programs (Masters in Policy and Governance and Law and Development), and Masters in Education are cross listed with Masters in Development. These electives provide enough space to the students to realize their own interests for a deeper engagement with specific developmental themes. Students are also given a choice to specialize in any specific aspect of development, thus contributing to the concerned sector. The program currently offers four specializations including Public Health, Livelihoods, Sustainability and Law, Governance and Policy. Apart from specializations and electives, the course of Independent study offers an additional scope for students to have an intensive engagement with questions and issues outside the electives offered.

The program goals distinctly articulate the need for students' continuous interactions with the situations 'on the ground', engaging with complex lived realities of individual and communities, and experience development interventions in action. The curriculum thus has focused space for engaging with the 'field'. The field component gradually develops from a 2 weeks encounter to a deeper engagement through six weeks and eight weeks. These field components spread across the four semesters allowing continuous back and forth between class room settings and field sites seeking to integrate conceptual and theoretical learning with ground realities. These components are a) field immersion (two weeks) b) summer internships (6 weeks) and winter field project (8 weeks) with 2, 3 and 4 credits respectively. The credit structure has been revised with the revised curriculum from the 2015-2017 batch onwards.

The objectives, processes and expected outputs of each of these components are clearly laid down in the field practice handbook. This handbook is prepared for the first time to guide students through the entire journey of field engagement taking them through the academic, operational and ethical processes. More than 100 development organizations across the country

have hosted our students for internship and/or facilitated their field immersion and field projects. The university actively reaches out to organizations committed to the field of development to explore opportunities of learning for our students. Students' field projects have ranged from understanding the lives of workers in bangle factories in Uttar Pradesh to innovations in water resource management in north Karnataka to shadowing village health workers in Chhattisgarh to processes of local governance in remote tribal districts of Odisha.



Damini (2014-2016 batch) interacts with a village health worker in a remote district in Chhattisgarh as part of her eight weeks field project.

Students (2014-16) showcasing their 8 weeks field project work on the state of maternal health in different parts of India through a photo exhibition in Metro Art Gallery, Bangalore. People from different walks of life visited the exhibition and applauded the work of our students.



The program promotes an academic culture where in learning is continuous, both individually and collectively enriching, and rests on values of academic integrity, mutual respect and empathy. Students get an opportunity to learn in a diverse environment with their peer group being drawn from 26 different states in India, with different professional experiences and personal backgrounds. The learning process in the program, both in class room as well as field settings, offers rich scope to learn from one another.

I on behalf of my colleagues in the School of Development take this opportunity to welcome the new batch of students (2016-2018) to this program. We look forward to an exciting journey of teaching and learning together.

Wish you all good luck!

MESSAGE

ANKUR MADAN - PROGRAM COORDINATOR, MA IN EDUCATION

The beginning of an academic year always brings with it a mixed bag of feelings-as a new batch of students arrives on campus, renewed energy and excitement fill the air. Apprehension, nervous excitement and loads of questions writ large on faces, students find their way into a new routine, settling in gradually into a way of life that brings with it expectation and hope. The expectation to learn, to gain perspective and to evolve as individuals. The new academic year is also the time when we bid goodbye to our graduating batch of students. Students with whom the two year journey is about to culminate. As students walk up to the dais to collect their graduation degrees, you feel the same nervous energy fill the air- the pride and joy of having completed a journey successfully, the apprehension of what lies ahead, and the nostalgia of all the sweet and sour memories that one has gathered along the way.

As faculty members, our feelings are no different. As we prepare for a new semester, we feel the same excitement and nervousness as you do. Walking into a classroom filled with a new batch of students is a nerve-wracking experience for us too! With 40 pairs of expectant eyes focused squarely on you, every teacher realizes the sense of responsibility that the role brings with it. It helps us reinvent ourselves, year after year. On the other hand, as the outgoing students come to say their goodbyes, we are flooded with wonderful memories of the time spent together. The comfort that comes with having known one another for a period of time, the classroom space that grows on you gradually, the heat of the classroom discussions, the uninhibited expression of an opinion, the students' questions that you sometimes cannot answer and yet no longer feel embarrassed to admit, the little wisecrack that a student makes at you or the hug that happens spontaneously... all make you realize, the unquestioning strength of the bond that has formed, that will last a lifetime.

Whether you are on the brink of a new journey on this campus or at the threshold of a promising career, know that an inquiring mind, a humble disposition and the courage to question are your best companions on this journey, and that you are not alone on this path. Make meaning of the world around you, make friends along the way, and learn from the challenges that are thrown at you. The world may not appear very different at the end of the journey, but if you feel the difference in your heart, you have hit the nail. All the very best to each one of you!



MESSAGE

SRIKRISHNA AIYYANGAR - PROGRAM COORDINATOR, MA IN PUBLIC POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

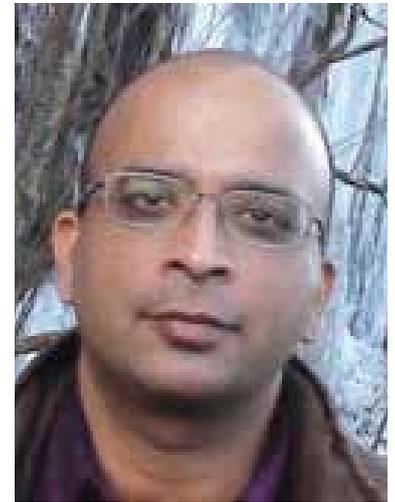
The Master of Arts in Public Policy and Governance, that we refer to as MPG, has now completed its first year and is onto its second year. We have around 38 students in the first batch, and around a similar number in the second batch. What has the experience been like?

If I had to describe it in a phrase, it has been a welcome challenge. In the early months of the programme, and perhaps even now, many of us have been asked how is the programme different from its closer sibling, the MA in Development? The first challenge was to explain the intuition behind the MPG – that institutions matter – and if we want to make our public institutions work because they are the primary drivers or change, we as a university need to pay attention to their workings and governance concurrently with other challenges that inform the other programmes.

The second challenge we thought we would face is to convince the outside world of the relevance of our programme to public affairs in India. We thought we would meet a lot of skeptics outside the university who would be doubtful of our purpose, and therefore be dismissive of what we do. We underestimated their optimism and enthusiasm for our programmes and our motivations. Clearly, there is an active and positive interest, or a buzz if you will, in trying to make governance mechanisms work, and these organizations proved willing collaborators by inviting our students to intern with them. Interestingly, we also underestimated the determination and resilience of our students to intern under challenging circumstances, without getting disenchanted with the bigger questions around which their internships were framed.

As is typical of all Azim Premji University programmes, we also see some students being timid, scared and anxious about their place in the university because they are a bit too, perhaps even unnecessarily diffident, of where they come from, in the initial weeks of the first semester. But it has been a pleasure to see them slowly and surely transform into students with verve, sharpness and a resilience that is admirable. If one has to see how education can transform lives, we are literally living it!

All this being said, we are not just a small drop in the ocean of public affairs, but also a small contingent in the Azim Premji University family. It would be premature to say more about the programme and its experience because we haven't finished even one full cycle yet! Watch this space next year for a better round up of our experience!



MESSAGE

RADHIKA MAHADEVAN AND USHA RAJARAM - UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM COORDINATORS

The experience, thrill and excitement of being on a campus filled with undergraduate students is unparalleled. If last year was filled with nervous faculty members, high drama, uncertain students and not quite there yet infrastructure; I think I speak for everyone when I say that this year we all came back to campus feeling older, wiser and better prepared!

2015 marked the beginning of our 3 year, residential undergraduate programme and this year we added 100 + more students to the mix. The programme aims at preparing young individuals to be active, self-directed learners with the capacity for critical thinking that we think in many ways are the foundation for both personal as well as social wellbeing. While students delve deep into their disciplinary interests,

they also engage with the challenging social realities in India to understand their education as not simply a path to personal achievement but also as preparation to contribute meaningfully to society.

Students choose to do a programme that either awards them a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) or a Bachelor of Arts (B.S.) degree at the end of 3 years. Specialisations offered are Physics, Biology, Economics and combined Humanities (History, Literature and Philosophy). They select their “Major” and “Minor” area of study from the above mentioned list and they could also choose to do their Minors in interdisciplinary areas such as Education Studies, Development Studies and Data Science. All students study courses in the “Common Curriculum”. This entails courses in Critical Reading, Quantitative Reasoning, Understanding India and perhaps the most popular set of courses – Creative Expressions (courses in Art, Music, Craft, Theatre, Sports and other aesthetic pursuits). The common curriculum aim to help build critical and analytical abilities, sensibilities for dialogue, reflection and cooperative learning.

Parents, potential students and many others, often ask us as to why this is a fully residential programme. As educators, we believe that college education should not only be a platform for academic preparation or employment, but also prepare young adults for life ahead in the real world. When we envisioned this programme, we aimed at creating a vibrant, caring, and inclusive environment for learning and living. As teachers, we wanted to offer time and support both inside and outside the classroom to help students understand coursework and broader issues in areas of their academic interests. And finally, as mentors, we aim to engage with students outside the classroom to find out what interests or bothers them and work with them to navigate life in this community. In order to work towards these goals, we depend heavily on our students to create a pro- active, caring, and engaging community where they work towards their own well-being, and actively contribute to the well-being of others.

The demands of a programme of this nature are unique and multiple. The commitment, drive and energy required both of students and faculty are high. And these first few years of this programme are crucial for building the culture and values that can help translate the educational vision into practice.

On to another exhilarating year and adventures ahead!





Life at the University

THE STUDENTS' JOURNAL OF EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Postgraduate Programme

The Students' Journal of Education and Development was an initiative undertaken two years ago to publish and showcase some of the best work done by students and alumni of the University. For most students joining the university, publishing their academic research seems like a lofty goal best left to more established scholars. Their scribbles from field work and their observations from all across the country, which relate to a variety of issues in education and development, are displayed just once in a class presentation and wrapped neatly into a term paper or project report, awaiting the nudge of a faculty member who considers it publishable. We rarely think of our research as worthy, exposed as we are to the best academic writing in our respectable fields.

SJED was conceptualized to allow students to overcome their hesitation, to show them that there was a chance for them to get their work read by a wider audience than just their teachers and to capitalize on the hard work they had put into their field studies and independent research.

The journal was also designed as a learning experience for the students who wanted to be part of steering a publication. The Project Coordination team was given the immense organizational task of putting out calls for papers, seeking student paper nominations from faculty, distributing the papers for editing and collating the recommended papers into the final product: a tidily bound journal which belies the immense amount of effort taken to get it there. The student editorial collective has the daunting task of choosing papers that qualified as original, insightful, sharply-written and well-organized. Each paper is reviewed by at least two editors as part of a double-blind peer review process. Editors either recommend the paper for publication, recommend it

on the condition that certain changes be made to it, or decide that the paper is not a good fit for the journal. Papers are slotted into the categories of Research Articles, Perspectives and Practices, Notes and Classics Revisited.

Two years after the first issue was published, the Student Collective battles the many-headed

monster when it comes to the journal. Little does each new batch know that getting the journal together is a dynamic process fraught with uncertainty and deadlines.

We have experienced that first year students of the MA in Development or Education hesitate to submit their work as they do not have full-fledged term papers until the end of their first semester or later. Nevertheless, their contributions have been encouraged through the book reviews they write in their classes and their observations during the field immersion component of their courses. The second-year students of the Master's programs have done their research and term papers, yet we struggle to get them to drop the fruit of their labor into our inbox.

The papers that made it through student inhibition and editorial decisions, both individual and collective and through a plagiarism check have been great examples of student research and display their diversity of interests, approaches and lens. Besides serving as a treasury of knowledge, we think that the journal brings together the best of work from the field of education and development, fields which co-exist in their own compartments, but the learnings of which rarely cross over to 'the other side'.

As the Collective works to get students to start sharing, we also have to constantly steer our own processes out

of choppy waters and work out the kinks after a thorough post-mortem of the previous issue. This year, we are grateful for the helping hand of a faculty collective, which will help us shape the journal along the lines of professional publications. There are plans to get an ISBN number, propositions to accept entries year round, and proposals to work with the authors after the initial screening to produce the most lucid paper possible. All this while we ourselves work to understand the qualities of a good paper and what counts as relevant research.

The eventual idea is to get SJED to be considered a journal of caliber that will carry to academic institutions and organizations working in education, development and policy the ideas and efforts of students studying at Azim Premji University and other educational institutions. We are a work in progress, laying the foundation as we make our way to crystallizing that idea, and binding it between two covers.

DEBATING DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Postgraduate Programme

Debating Development Initiative is an open, judgement-free space co-created by students and faculty members to enable a deeper engagement with contemporary development issues and events within and outside the course framework. Through this, we aim to have enriching discussions by strengthening our knowledge on this issue, looking at it from various perspectives and developing skills of open dialogue and debate. Through DDI we have managed to create within Azim Premji University, a space for political expression, sharing of ideologies and an exploration of challenges in development. This has helped in deepening our understanding of the complex and interconnected ways in which development decisions play out in real life.

Last year, we started with an open series on Yakub Menon case, discussing various aspects behind death penalty, functioning of the criminal justice system and minority bias in death penalty cases.

This was followed by a scintillating discussion of the ongoing Bihar elections before the results, which involved an expert panel discussion on the topic by academicians, political scientists, journalists and election statisticians from Centre For Study of Developing Societies, along with student discussions on various aspects such as the caste dimension of the elections, and the role of media.

With a new set of recruits in November, we had

a series on 'Religion and the Modern State' that involved a student discussion and faculty debate on a deeper understanding of terms such as secularism, communalism, fundamentalism in the light of the tragic events of the Dadri lynching, beef ban and the attacks on rationalists.

A debate was held on net neutrality which focused on awareness building, and providing students with an opportunity to take an informed stand on the topic. The panel discussion explored net neutrality activism, policy explorations and theorization to put technology in a larger social perspective.

The last series of discussions was on the ethical, legal, psychological and moral consequences of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Act. We first understood the various facets of the bill and analysed the parliamentary debates that led to the act, after which we had a debate amongst the students on whether this was a needed change or a regressive move. Interesting perspectives were shared on the various ways we look at crime and how to understand a child's role in criminal cases.

We hope to have even more informative and engaging discussions on issues of development and through this space, give an outlet to students to express their opinion via nuanced debates and discussions.

I WANT TO RIDE MY BICYCLE

Undergraduate Programme

Cycling is a great recreational activity and also a green and affordable mode of transportation, especially for the undergraduate students of Azim Premji University who live quite inwards from Sarjapur town. Moreover, Sarjapur has scenic routes that are cycling friendly and are far away from the crazy Bangalore traffic. The cycling club of Azim Premji University undergraduate program aims to integrate cycling and bicycles into their daily lives of students by getting together to learn how

to cycle effectively and safely, how to maintain a bicycle well and how to ride in a group. It also looks forward to organising cycling trips twice a week. The UG Hostel currently has a fleet of six bicycles that are maintained and rented out by the Cycling club. The club also plans to train its members and seriously interested students to participate in long rides organized by various amateur cycling clubs all around the year in Bangalore. Cycling club membership

CREATIVE WRITING CLUB

Undergraduate Programme

The creative writing club has been prolific. Poetry, shortstory and screenplay writing and even drawings to illustrate what people have written have been the activities of some evenings or what people have shared in the club to get feedback. During the first semester what happened in the club was more loosely structured where participants wrote based on some very flexible prompts and entire meetings were sometimes spent on just sharing and

discussing what people had written or looking at the beginnings of published works. During the second semester the group became more cohesive and worked together to write a screenplay and illustrate it which is to be filmed by the college surveillance cameras. The club has been a place for all enthusiasts of creative writing to delve into the art regardless of whether they had done any before and has been warmly welcoming.

BIO CLUB

Undergraduate Programme

If someone is interested in the megillah of biology in a context outside a classroom the bioclub has always been a good place to go. Informal discussions and screenings abound. The club is dedicated to focusing on what people in it are interested in doing rather than what is prescribed by a curriculum. Students have talked about their own projects in biology, such as internships they had been a part of, and discussions of the scientific methods adopted and how

what they observed in their internships related to the ideas of biology were discussed. There have been discussions about the history of science and philosophy of organic farming which, although relevant, could not take place in class and screenings of documentaries on wildlife and the environment as well. People from various majors have dropped in at some point and this is an indicator of how fetching the club is.

ESPERANTO

Postgraduate Programme

Esperanto-Club Azim Premji University came into existence last semester. The Club aims to learn and use the easy and equitable planned language Esperanto. (Check it out on YouTube!)

Our Esperantists participated actively in the cultural life of the University. Sajal Bhateja was among the proposers of “Linguistic Diversity” as the theme of **Unmukt 2016**. In a multilingual campus like ours, the theme was readily accepted. Koundinya Dhulipalla (KD) and Sajal worked on the Facebook pages of both Unmukt as well as Esperanto-Club Azim Premji University. Kavya Chowdhry and Ujjwala Sharma organized an Esperanto-based “Ring-the-object” game. Our young Unmukt guests from Vimochana Nagar thoroughly enjoyed the language game.

The Club’s mentor Giridhar Rao conducted a “Language Express” -- Esperanto in 60 minutes. And finally, during the open-air performances of the cultural festival, Aditi

Bhande and Vaishnavi Varadarajan paired up and belted out multilingual versions of Bob Dylan and John Lennon – in English, Hindi and Esperanto!

In April, the well-known Esperanto-writer Dr. P V Ranganayakulu and his student Ms Ramya Jyothi (who teaches Telugu in a college) visited Azim Premji University from Tirupati. They spent time with some of our Esperantists.

The Club has begun to get the Esperanto magazines *Monato* (from Antwerp, Belgium) and *Kontakto* (Rotterdam, The Netherlands). Meanwhile our Library has acquired a few Esperanto textbooks, dictionaries and reading material. Do search “Esperanto” in our catalogue!

All in all, *tre bona semestro!* -- Interested in our Club? Send an email (even in English!) to rao.giridhar@AzimPremjiUniversity.edu.in.

THOUGHT CRIMINALS

Undergraduate Programme

Thought Criminals is the first society of the Under Graduate Programme Azim Premji University, run by a core committee of five students with a passion for voicing their opinion. The intention of this debate and discussion society is to overcome the barriers of language and prejudice and create a space for free expression of thought and ideas. The origin of the term 'Thought Criminals' is from George Orwell's novel '1984,' which describes life in an extreme totalitarian state, devoid of free expression, speech and well, thought. A thought crime is the criminal act of holding unspoken beliefs or doubts that oppose or question the superior power.

The result is the outlawing and repression of thought. "Thought crime does not entail death: thought crime IS death".

As thought criminals, we aim to move past the shackles of social, moral and political constraints, free our thoughts and express ourselves as openly we can.

The topics of discussion have covered a wide range, including the death penalty, creativity in education, the meaning of 'anti-nationalism' and the prevalence of caste in Azim Premji University Undergraduate Programme, to name a few.

POETRY CLUB

Postgraduate Programme

कविता की कविता

कविता क्या है ? मैं कविता क्यों नहीं कर पाती ? ये इतना अच्छा कैसे लिख लेते हैं ? ऐसे ही न जाने कितने ही प्रश्नों से तुम हर उस समय झूझते हो जब तुम्हारे कानों में किसी भी कविता के बोल पड़ते हैं।

कभी तुम्हें ये बोल तुम्हारे ही अंतर में स्थापित कर देते हैं तो कभी बहुत ऊँचे सपनों के आसमान में उड़ने की ताकत से भर देते हैं, परन्तु फिर भी प्रश्न तो बना ही रहता है, आखिर प्रश्न ही ऐसे हैं और तुम भी बस पूछ के रह जाते हैं।

चलो आज मैं कविता स्वयं ही अपने रहस्यों को खोल देती हूँ। जब तुम खुश होते हो तब जो शब्द तुम्हारे मन के पट पर उभरते हैं मैं वही हूँ। जब तुम व्यथित होते हो और तुम्हारे नैनों से अश्रुधारा बहने लगती है, उनसे जो आकृतियाँ तुम्हारे मुख-मंडल पर उभरती हैं मैं वही हूँ। जब तुम प्रेम में होते हो तब हृदय के अन्दर जो कम्पन शुरू होता है उस कम्पन से पैदा होने वाली लहर हूँ मैं। जब किसी से इर्ष्या में तुम अपनी आँखों को उसकी ओर से फेर लेते हो या फिर उसका विरोध करने के लिए आगे बढ़ते हो तब मैं ही तुम्हारा बल होती हूँ। जब तुम अपनी जीत पर गौरवान्वित होते हो तब मैं ही विजयभाव बनकर तुम्हारे मुख पर चमकती हूँ। जब तुम अन्धकार में प्रयास के लिए चिंगारी पैदा करने का प्रयास कर रहे होते हो या किसी लौ को जला रहे होते हो तब मैं ही तो उष्मा और किरण के रूप में तुम्हारा साथ देती हूँ। जब तुम प्रकृति के अनूठे खेलों को देख कर आश्चर्यचकित होते हो तब मैं ही विस्मय को अपने अन्दर समाहित कर तुम्हारे शरीर में दौड़ जाती हूँ।

मैं तुम्हारे साथ ही पैदा हुई हूँ और तुम्हारे हिस्से की मैं तुम्हारे साथ ही चली भी जाऊंगी।

मैं तो तुम्हारी भावनाओं के गर्भ में न जाने कब से हूँ बस तुम मुझे शब्दों की शकल ही नहीं अस्तित्व बनाने देते। हालाँकि जब तुम मुझे अपने गर्भ से निकाल कर बिखेर दोगे तब मैं तुम्हारे लिए भाव और दूसरों के लिए तुम्हारी रची कविता हो जाऊँगी। कुछ के लिए बर्फ में खिली धूप तो किसी के लिए तेज धूप में छायादार वृक्ष हो जाऊंगी। लेकिन मैं तुम्हारी भी रहूँगी जैसे चंद्रमा की शीतलता औरों को सुखद अनुभव देने से उससे अलग नहीं हो जाती मैं भी तुम्हारी ही रहूँगी। क्योंकि मेरी रचना तुमने ही की है मैं तुम्हारी ही हूँ, सिर्फ तुम्हारी। वरन तुम्हारे जैसे कुछ और लोगों ने मुझमें स्वयं को देखने का दावा जरूर किया है और वो मुझमें हैं भी क्योंकि वो तुममें भी हैं।

इस प्रकार तुम हर समय कविता करते हो और स्वयं ही ये भी कह देते हो कि तुम्हें कविता करनी नहीं आती। बस फर्क इतना है की तुम उसे दर्ज नहीं करते और जिस सुगमता से ये काव्यात्मक भाव तुम्हारे भीतर प्रवेश करते हैं उतनी ही सहजता से तुम उन्हें विदा भी कर देते हो। तुम चाहो तो मुझे शब्दों के अलंकारों से विभूषित कर औरों को अपने जीवन में झाकने की अनुमति दे सकते हो।

अब ये निर्णय मैं तुम पर छोड़ती हूँ।
तुम्हारी अर्धांगिनी, तुम्हारी कविता।

CELLULOID

Postgraduate Programme

For all the film aficionados, celluloid club of Azim Premji University gives them a reason to rejoice every Friday by screening hand-picked and critically acclaimed movies every week. A club full of cine buffs who want to devour the best of world cinema, and works hard to promote cinema among Azim Premji University students, initiating a special way to invite everyone for the screening by sending emails, and contacting people via social media as well.

With an aim to spread the culture of good cinema, it screens some of the greatest films, be it in comedy, romantic, drama, documentary, or foreign language

films, and even animation. The idea to start the club was to devise a platform for both amateurs and cinephiles who love to see films and make films. In the tenure of last year, they introduced a lot of new foreign language movies as well. They screened quite a wide range of movies under the theme 'city spaces', like 'The Factory, Bicycles Thief and Bari Theke Paliye. The screenings were generally followed by a discussion around the movie with the professors and students.

There is more to look forward this year, as the celluloid team will be organizing Azim Premji University's first film festival!

SPORTS CLUB

Postgraduate Programme



The Sports Club of Azim Premji University had organised several indoor and outdoor sports activities throughout the academic session. Basketball, Volleyball, Football, Chess, Cricket and Carrom tournaments were organised which witnessed enthusiastic participation from the students. One of the most looked forward events was the Cricket Tournament between the out-going batch and the faculty members of the University which turned out to be a fun-filled event for both the players and the audience.

PAHAL

Postgraduate Programme

Pahal- a club focused on initiating activities for a social cause, reflects the idea that the welfare of an individual is ultimately dependent on the welfare of the society

as a whole. The aim of our society is to inculcate the practice of social welfare, and to provide service to the society without any bias or discrimination. At Pahal, we give our volunteers tremendous scope to expand their

leadership abilities and develop as individuals. Our main idea is to inculcate fervor of selfless service in the hearts of our volunteers, without being enticed by any form of superficial gains.

Last year we conducted Independence day celebrations at the university for the people of Vimochana Nagar. We organized a blood donation camp with Sankalp foundation, and a Stem Cell Donation Drive with the help of Datri organisation. We also raised funds under the project 'Mission Tuhina' to support the treatment of a 12-year-old girl suffering from cancer.

Our ongoing initiatives in Pahal, planned for this year are as follows:

- Slum Improvement at Vimochana Nagar

- Education of Construction Workers Children
- Old Age Home visits
- Mission Tuhina (working with children suffering from cancer at the Kidwai Cancer Hospital)

We are welcome to ideas for new initiatives for this year.

There is no hard and fast rule about how you can help Pahal in its initiatives. Some ways can be by accompanying us to the field, through donations, by sharing your ideas, organizing workshops, everything is welcome.

To get connected with us, you can email us at pahal@Azim Premji University.edu.in

FOTONS: THE THEATRE SOCIETY

With the inaugural of the Fotons the past year, we tried to start a new theatre culture in our campus and shake things up a bit. This is a club which is open to all, and rather than taking auditions to select people, we conducted workshops to allow everyone to be part of the process of making a play. Along with the diverse and fresh talents of the students of Azim Premji University, we came together to understand theatre in different ways, which were witnessed through the various events that we organized, in and outside the college campus.

We started out with a series of short plays and improv sessions. As a reaction to the rising Hindutva forces and murder of rationalists like Dabholkar, Pansare and Kalburgi, we did a protest performance by using Muktibodh Kavita.

A Pash Kavita Manch was held with an interplay of words, lights and music.

Our very first play production, '30 Days of September', a play on child sexual abuse, written by Mahesh Dattani

and directed by Pankaj Tiwari, held three packed shows within campus.

Our second play 'Carnival: The Fest of Bodies' (on the violence on bodies), written and directed by Pankaj Tiwari, was a promenade production in which the audience travelled with the play, and it made use of different spaces in the university.

Members of Fotons also staged a performance of 'Macbeth' as a part of a theatre festival organized by Auroville Theatre Group, on the occasion of the 400th birth anniversary of Shakespeare. This we later performed in campus as well.

With the sapling of the bud sown last year, this year we have even bigger plans for the theatre society. Our productions are already underway, with performances planned in Hyderabad, Delhi and Bombay. We are also hoping to organize Azim Premji University's first theatre festival which will try breaking the boundaries of proscenium, and use different spaces for performance all around the university campus.

THEATRE SOCIETY of APLU
presents
Shakespeare's
MACBETH
DESIGN & DIRECTION
PANKAJ TIWARI
6 MAY 2016 - WISDOM TREE - 6.45 PM
ON - Vaidant, Mazhar, Pat
STAGE - MONIRA, PUCHI, KRIPA

THE FOTONS PRESENT

"the fest of bodies"
DESIGN & DIRECTION
PANKAJ TIWARI
21st FEB 2016
AZIM PREMJI UNIVERSITY





Events at the University



Life at Azim Premji University largely surrounds coming together to celebrate our successes, to debate and discuss our viewpoints and to showcase the wonderful things that we learn and see as a part of our educational experience. The following should provide a glimpse into what the past year looked like. While this does not span all the events that were organised, these certainly serve as a good representation of the highlights of the year gone by.

FRESHERS (14TH AUG, 2015)

The welcome for the batch of 2015-2017 consisted of small activities and tasks through Freshers week, culminating in an evening of celebration on **14th August 2015**. The week leading up to the party consisted of several small tasks like colour co-ordinating outfits or coming up with creative ideas to match a given theme.

In addition to this, the second years organised a treasure hunt to familiarise their juniors with the university, the campus and the people. The final celebration was an evening of fun and games, full of dancing, music and food, an event that left the first years excited for the year to come.

EID AND ONAM CELEBRATIONS

Staying true to form, the Cultural Club decided to celebrate the diverse identity of its student base by organising events for Onam and Eid in **August**. While the Onam celebrations saw the student body decked up

in white, red and gold to enjoy a hearty feast and partake in some traditional games, the Eid celebrations turned the girls' hostel into a stage for one night for performers who sang and danced with great enthusiasm.

POLITICS ON YOUR FOOD PLATE (4TH SEP, 2015)

Students organised an event called '*Politics on your Food Plate. Know Your Food*', a workshop where faculty who have extensively worked on genetically modified

food as well as organic food in Greenpeace, conducted an interactive session to discuss the issues around food.

NARENDRA DABOLKAR'S SECOND DEATH ANNIVERSARY (AUG 20-21, 2015)

On the occasion of Narendra Dabolkar's second death anniversary, a two-day drive titled 'Resisting Attacks on Voices of Reason' was organized by students on **August 20-21, 2015**, for raising awareness on the

dangers of superstitious practices. Movie screening, discussions, play, and poster presentations were part of the programme.

TRIBUTE TO DR. KALAM (7TH AUG, 2015)

As a tribute to the missile man, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam was organised by students on **7th August 2015**, followed by a screening of '*I am Kalam*'.

'MY WORK AND ITS INFLUENCES' BY DR. RAMACHANDRA GUHA (OCT 15TH, 2015)



An interactive session with Dr. Ramchandra Guha was held at the University on **October 15th, 2015** where he talked about his work and its influence on the world of social history. He touched upon aspects of his life (or 'accidents', as he liked to call them) which had pushed him towards writing and the social sciences.

QUOTATION QUEST

A quotation campaign initiated by the students was held at the University. It received an overwhelming response from the students across all the programmes. As a token

of encouragement and appreciation, the best three quotations among all were rewarded by the campaign team.

KATHAVANA (SEPT 9-11, 2015)

One cannot imagine the lives of children without the fantastic world of stories and a bunch of storytellers who lead them into that world. Teachers apart from parents and family are the ones who give children the first exposure to the wonders of literature. It is essential that the teachers are qualified to guide children to become good readers. Keeping this in mind, the theme adopted for Kathavana 2015 was 'Teachers as Readers'. It was

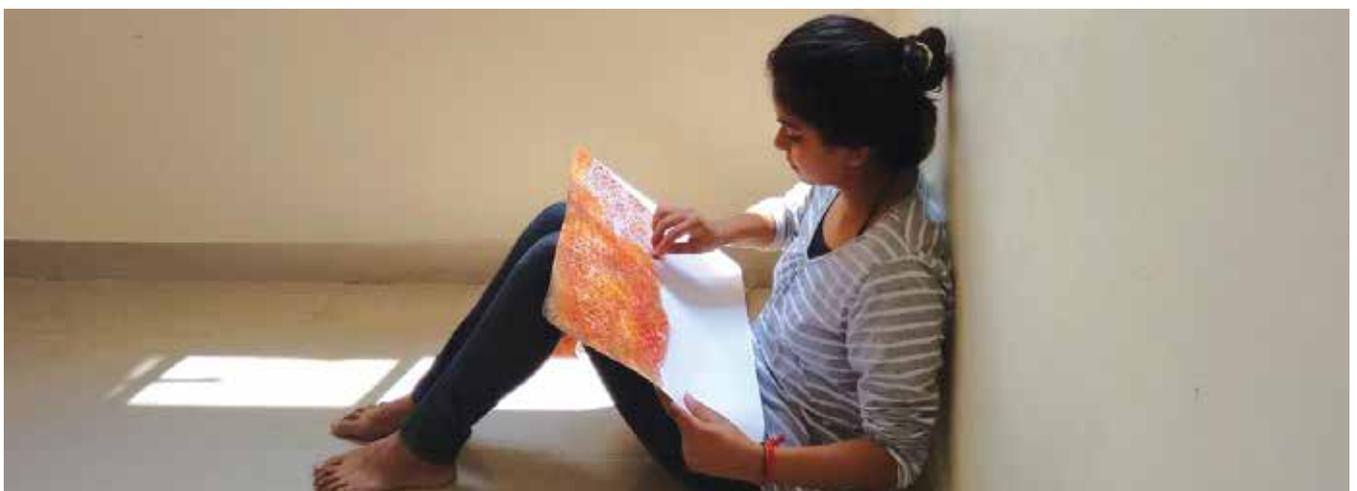
a three-day event organised by the University which enthused participation from government and private school teachers and children and organisations like Bookalore, Kathalaya, Bimba and Tarikita who along with the students of Azim Premji University participated to engage the students in the fun-filled activities such as storytelling, reading, puppetry shows, writing, painting and drama performances.

PUBLIC LECTURE BY PROF. JAN BREMEN (OCT 7-8, 2015)



Discussions about the burning development challenges have become a part of the lexicon of our everyday lives. The students were able to address these challenges even more deeply through an interaction with Prof. Jan Breman, Department of Sociology, University of Amsterdam before his public lecture on 'On Poverty and Destitution' as a part of the Public Lecture series organised by Azim Premji University on **October 8, 2015** at the Ginserv Auditorium, Bengaluru. Breman shared with the students, his anecdotes on his experience of working as a social anthropologist in India and the personal relationships he developed with the people in his area of research. The talk was based on Prof. Breman's forthcoming book 'On Pauperism', followed by a lively Q&A session.

CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS MELA 2015

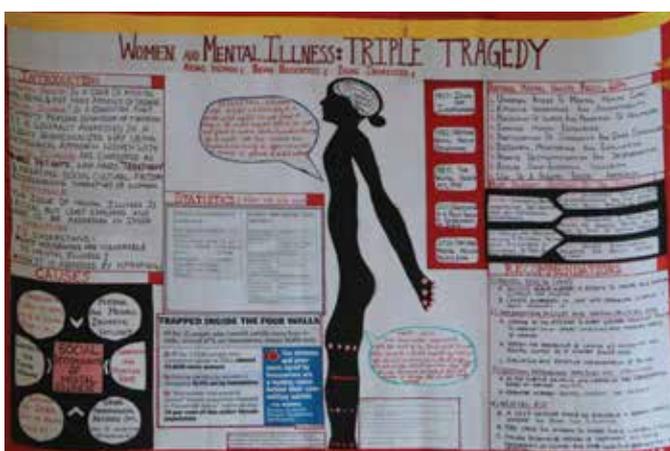




The Common Curriculum of the Undergraduate Programme of the Azim Premji University aims to engage students on multiple levels such as intellectual, affective, interpersonal and physical. As an integral part of the Common Curriculum, Creative Expressions seeks to nurture the capacities of mind and body through embodied art practices and physical activities. Workshops such as Woodwork, Clay work, Theatre for Dialogue and Change were offered in the first semester keeping in mind the need to bring about the students' creative and

adaptive strengths. The journey culminated with the Creative Expressions Mela, organized on November 17, 2015; a platform for the students to showcase the work they have done through the semester. It was also an opportunity for students to interact with their peers, those from workshops other than one's own and speak about one's process / journey in one's chosen Creative Expressions course.

MENTAL HEALTH DAY (OCT 9, 2015)



As a part of Mental Health Day event Health, Development and Society group at Azim Premji University organised a Forum play and a talk by Anando Chatterjee, Hank Nunn Institute, Bangalore on **October 9, 2015**. The students engaged enthusiastically on the complex issues of mental health through the form of forum play, infographics, posters and discussions.

POE CONFERENCE (JAN 10-12, 2016)

The fourth International Conference on Philosophy of Education was organised by the university from **January 10th, 2016 to January 12th, 2016**. Educationists and philosophers from the world over came together to discuss and debate such matters as the inclusion/

exclusion of culture and religion in school curriculum and the role of philosophy in shaping education policy. Attended by around a 100 people, the conference saw productive debate through panel discussions and paper presentations.

SPACE FOR SOLIDARITY



“In the dark times, there will be singing,
There will be singing in the dark times”

- Bertolt Brecht

With the recent attacks on universities, a few of our students came together on **February 17th 2016** to support the students in JNU and HCU who are being attacked by the state, and to understand the relevance of a university campus as a space for dissent. On this day, our campus space transformed through this platform, which allowed students to come together, discuss and engage in creative forms of dissent. Students and faculty members sat on the lawns, in between Pixel A

and Pixel B, had long discussions on various topics like sedition, nationalism, the relevance of a protest, sang protest songs, designed posters and wrote quotes and messages on the walls.

After which, the students headed to Townhall to show their solidarity at the Bangalore protest in support of JNU students and the attacks on universities.

POSTCARDS FROM BARDOLI AND MAHADEV BHAI (JAN 21ST- 22ND)

Two plays, 'Postcards from Bardoli' and 'Mahadevbhai' (1892-1942) were organised by the School of Development. The two performances were conducted by a Bombay based theatre group called 'Working Title'. They were written and directed by Ramu Ramathan and Jaimin Pathak respectively. The plays may have been

performed in the university cafeteria space but they transported the audience (some 300 of them) back in time and created a space for them to witness the changing socio-political contexts of education, development and policy. Actors Jaimin and Amol had an engaging interactive session with the audience thereafter.

REPUBLIC DAY (JAN 26TH, 2016)

Students and faculty celebrated Republic day at the university on the **26th of January, 2016**. The flag hoisting on University premises in the morning was followed by a

day of people sharing stories, memories and meanings they associate with freedom and the nation, singing inspirational songs and poetry recitation.

UNMUKT,

STUDENTS ANNUAL FESTIVAL (FEB 19-20, 2016)

Unmukt is an expression of freedom and we at Azim Premji University proudly associate it with the joy of being able to speak our minds, respecting each other's cultures and of creating a judgement free space, free from the pressures of competition, of winning.

Following a week of activities like wall painting, open air movie screening, and blood donation drives, the event was inaugurated on the **19th of February, 2016**. A puppet show was conducted highlighting the festival's theme of 'Celebrating Linguistic Diversity'. The next two days saw beautiful, colourful cultural performances, fun

games, delicious food delights, NGO product sales and the conduct of many fun and informative workshops such as those on Kathak, Puppetry Belly Dancing, Photography, Film making, Mask making, Meditation etc. The Drum Jam on the **20th of February**, where students and Vimochana Nagar kids played over a hundred drums together was one of the highlights of the event and was representative of our unity, of a beautiful rhythm arising out of diverse notes. The university alumni website was also launched in Unmukt, 2016.



HEALTH

PHOTO EXHIBITION (FEB 27-28)

Students from the Health and Nutrition Specialization organised a photo exhibition, 'At the Thresholds of Life and Death' on **February 27th and 28th** at the Metro Art Centre, M.G Road. The exhibition displayed photographs that told the stories of women from over seven different Eastern and Central Indian states. Whether from the Garos in Assam, Kandhas of Odisha, Muslims from

West Bengal, SHGs of Bihar or the slums of Bhopal, all photographs narrated the stories of struggles for health care access in public, private and domestic spaces. Ranging from students to health institutions, to women activists and academia, the event was attended by over 500 people in the two days.



CONVERSATION WITH NASEERUDDIN SHAH (FEB 24, 2016)



As a part of the open course on Theatre and Film appreciation, well known film and stage actor, Padma Bhushan Shri Naseeruddin Shah interacted with the students. In what was a room packed with excited

students, Mr Shah talked about the history of cinema, the changing face contemporary cinema, the differences between cinema and theatre and the challenges of performing in both those areas.

GENDER WORKSHOP

The axis of gender appears multiple times in multiple courses in the PG programs here at the university. While there is adequate exposure to the gender dimension in theory, the workshop was organised on Gender, Power and Sexuality to facilitate an experiential understanding of gender. The workshop, a part of a series of workshops, was conducted on the **2nd of March** by Enfold, an

organization working to spread awareness on sexual issues.

Akkai Padmashali took a session where she shared her views on how we understand gender and sexuality through her personal experience, struggles and her work with the transgender community

LAW AND GOVERNANCE

CLINIC EXHIBITION (APR 23RD-24TH 2016)

A 2 day public exhibition was held at the Rangoli Metro Art Centre, Metro boulevard, MG Road to present the work of the Law and Governance Specialisation Clinics. This was free and open to all, to present the work done over 9 months by the students working in the clinics.

Over the year, there were three clinics, which includes the following:

- i) Human Rights Clinic (Madhumita Chakraborty, Muhammed Jalaludeen Albakari, Piyush Kumar, Sarah Jacobson) working on the issue of death penalty with an emphasis on death row convicts in Karnataka.
- ii) Local Governance Clinic (Naveena Kruthiventi, Sanjay Kumar Jaiswal, Sree Harica Devagudi, Vikash Madduri) working on village subcommittees

in Nangali Gram Panchayat, Kolar under Section 61A of the Karnataka Panchayati Raj Act, 1993.

- iii) Land Governance Clinic (Jagjit Pal Singh, Radhika Oza, Amria Parulkar, Kharingyo Shimrah) working on the governance of common lands with a specific focus on Amrit Mahal Kavals in Challakere, Chitradurga district, Karnataka.

The three clinics presented the research and the work they did through pictures, infographics, detailed reports and documentary presentations. On the second day of the event, there was a panel discussion on 'Learning through Developmental Clinics' in which Atreyee Mazumder, Naryana, Sitharamam Kakarala shared their experiences as clinic educators, and the discussion was moderated by Abhayraj Naik.

AMBEDKAR WEEK (10TH APR-16TH 2016)

On the occasion of Ambedkar's 125th Birth Anniversary, some of the students came together to organise a week long program with the theme of 'Understanding and Debating Ambedkar's Legacy'. During the week, various sessions were organised with a host of panelists which included student activists from Hyderabad University, members of the the Ambedkar movement on youth and democracy, journalists, documentary filmmakers and our own faculty members.

The idea behind these sessions was to understand Ambedkar beyond the discourses that narrow him down to certain identities. Many of his ideas were discussed from different perspectives, and the students also tried to understand the relevance of his ideas in the current political rubric. Ambedkar was understood as a politician, economist, feminist, a dalit, a nationalist leader and in depth conversations occurred on understanding the role of caste within a university space.

BOOK READING AND DISCUSSION ON 'EM AND THE BIG HOOM' WITH JERRY PINTO (APRIL 07TH, 2016)

This was the last session of the Mental Health Conference organised in our campus. Along with reading out portions of the book, Jerry Pinto gave a delightfully raw talk about his personal life and the challenges of dealing with

mental health, and the anxiety and despair it arises.

During the event, he also released the Mental Health Directory curated by students of the Mental health course in Development.

TALK WITH RAVISH KUMAR (2ND MAY, 2016)

A conversation with the students and Ravish Kumar was organised and facilitated by his professor and mentor from college days, our very own, Professor Anil

Sethi. Ravish Kumar talked about his life, how he got into journalism, and shared with students his views on politics and democracy.

FAREWELL (29TH APRIL, 2016)

The final event on the Azim Premji University calendar was the Farewell, an event where the first years gathered to bid their seniors adieu. The second years made their grand entry in a tractor, an experience they are sure to carry with them as a fond memory from their college days.

While the entrance was an event in itself, the 'Gold Monk Awards' were surely special enough to mark the highlight of their night. All dressed up and ready to celebrate their life at Azim Premji University one last time, the seniors were treated to performances, speeches and goodbyes.

ARTWORK & PICTURES



ARCHANA KHYADI, MA Development, 2014-16



KOUNDINYA DHULIPALLA, MA Development, 2015-17





Arts Mela - 'Ullasada Humale (A Flowery Shower of Delight)' organized by the students of courses: Arts in Early Years Education, and Curriculum and Pedagogy in Early Childhood Years.
– NAZIA PERWEEN, MA Education, 2014-16



ARCHANA KHYADI, MA Development, 2015-17





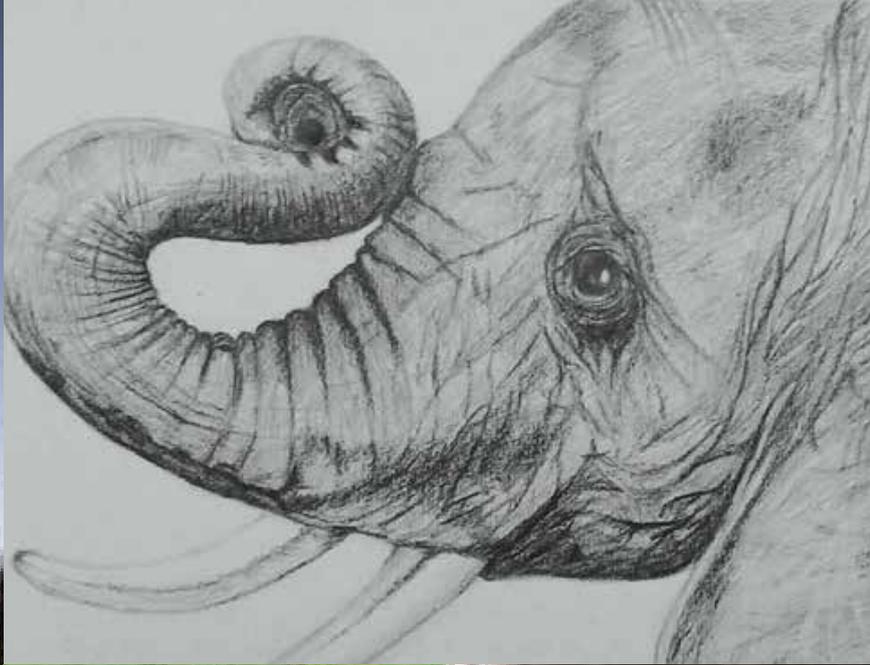
VISHNUPRASAD A R, MA DEVELOPMENT, 2014-16



Shivani Ronaki, UG



Three Musketeers
Ekta Dhankher, MA Education, 2015-17



Musings



FOR THE LOVE OF GOD

– Amritha Vellat, Undergraduate Programme, 2015-18

At age six, they first met,
seeing each other for the first time in the alleyway,
where one was on his way to the temple, another to the
mosque,
and carefully eyeing one another, they both broke into
a smile.

They were best friends in school,
in the afternoon one would watch the other pray on his
mat,
and would never leave the other's side.
In the morning they would stop by the temple,
in the evening they would chase each other home,
talking of cricket and football,
laughing all the way.

The vegetarian tried meat for the first time on Eid al-
Adha,
but he was willing to give it a try, this strange red meat,
that gave his friend the kind of courage he desired,
much against his friend's consent,
or so he thought.
They were welcome in both homes,
whether there were sari-clad women or women under
their burkas,
they were welcome, because they were brothers,
and everyone knew that.

They were sixteen, and out late from home,
sitting under the stars, drunk as can be,
talking of fantasies, taboo and not.
They spoke of women, two virgins shy of talking to girls
at all,
they spoke of ambitions, as if the moon they desired
was right above their faces,
they spoke of love, as if they didn't have it already.
Somewhere in the intimacy of their talks,
a romance bloomed,
a kiss was shared,
a relationship was born, the most taboo of all.

They sneaked around, glimpsing from side to side,
holding hands when no one was around,
two boys, two souls so merry in love,
kissing under the stars,
holding each other under the sun,
adoring each other even more than before.

As they reached the marriageable age,
they would prank the potential in-laws and make sure
they never come back.
they would sabotage each other's chances,
They would do anything to stay together.
But for how long?
They talked one night for hours and hours,
wondering if they can be one even if they married
another.

They talked of compromise, with tears in their eyes,
they talked of a way to be together, forever.

The year was 1992,
both had married, married women just for the name of
it,
both would meet under the stars to consummate their
love,
both were grown men, still merry in love,
and would hold each other close all night long.

So in love with each other were they,
that the world was lost to them.
The problems between their religions were unknown to
them,
they turned a blind eye to anything that could break
them apart.

But the world caught up to them,
and reality hit them hard in the face.
They were told different stories:
"They built a mosque on the remains of our temple."
"They want to demolish our mosque to make their
temple."
"They placed idols in our mosque as if they owned it!"
"This is Sri Ram's birthplace."
"Burn these Sons of Babar!"
"Kill these usurpers of our mosques!"
"Ram naamsatyahai!"
"Allahu Akbar!"

The hate consumed them slowly, painfully.
Their meeting under the stars was now a forum to
argue,
of who is right and who is wrong,
that this shouldn't have happened, that that should not
happen.

They argued and fought and argued and fought,
until their caresses became slaps and punches,
and they went home, bruised, bleeding, beaten, broken.

Alas, the mosque fell,
and terror ensued.

One killed another with God's name on their lips,
houses were burned saying that, that is the way of God.
God is the reason,
God is behind this,
God wants this,
so let it be.

Their neighbourhoods burned,
their families, destroyed,
and they ran on the streets,
one with a butcher's knife,
the other with a trident,
they ran and killed whoever they saw fit to kill,
and burned whoever they thought deserved to be in
hell.

This went on and on,
until they faced each other,

coated in blood and gore,
ash and dirt,
their faces streaked with the desire to kill
They saw each other,
and couldn't speak.
One cried, falling to his knees,
the other let out a wail and ran to embrace him.
They held each other once more, tired of the hate,
but they couldn't let go of their religion,
for that is what made them what they were now,
and there was no turning back.

Slowly, they kissed each other one last time,
and while gazing at the other,
one drove his trident deep into the other's heart,
the other gently slit the other's throat,
as the town burned completely,
and they died,
in each other's arms,
gazing at each other,
as they had wanted, forever.

The stars twinkled brightly,
consuming the lovers with it.

MY JOURNEY

– Jayaram Polaki, MA Development, 2015-17

What I am about to narrate is a true story. It begins in R.H. Puram, a remote village in the Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh. My family had four members- my father, my mother, my sister and I. We were a middle class family who did not have many problems. My relatives would often come home to celebrate all festivals with us. My father gave them saris and gifts. He was a very hard working person, who earned his livelihood not only through agricultural activities such as farming, but also by maintaining a coconut business. In the process of working, he would often forget to eat. He worked late nights and double shifts, which added to his tension and burden. Everything put pressure on him, but he worked hard and sacrificed a lot for his family.

I was enrolled in Arunodaya Model School. It is a private school about 5 kilometers away from my village. Things were going well until 2004, when my father faced some health problems. Since it was during the cultivation

period, he neglected his health and focused on work. Afterwards, he went to a doctor, who told him that his nerves were weak. He took medicines, but the problem was increasing day by day. He went to another doctor, but nothing helped. We went to different hospitals in Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Kerala, but things did not improve. To bear the health expenses, we sold my mother's gold. Finally, the doctors advised my father to take a lot of rest. My family was literally living on the road. My mother had two responsibilities- to take care of my sister and my father. There was no financial support for our family. After this incident, all my relatives maintained some distance from us because of the fear that we may ask for money from them, but in doing so, they had forgotten what they took from my family.

In those days, we did not have proper food to eat. I still remember that we had to only eat rice water with green chillis and onions. We faced pathetic situations. My life was filled with darkness. My whole family took

the decision to commit suicide. But my father gave us some motivation, and after that, we knew that something positive will come out of it. He told us so many failure stories. Finally, he concluded, "Death is not a solution to our problems." This gave me the boost to do something.

At that time I had two choices. One choice was to stop education at 5th standard and support my family. Another choice was to continue education while supporting my family. I chose the second option. I went to my principal and explained to him my situation. He was a very kind-hearted person. He allowed me to study in the school without paying fees or sometimes by paying only 30% of the total fee. That gave me strength to continue my studies in that school. Somedays I was unable to attend classes because of my problems, but he allowed me to continue studying.

Every Wednesday, the whole village would come beside the school to buy vegetables from me. After seeing this, my father gave me a business idea– he told me to opt to be a vegetable seller as a livelihood option. I purchased vegetables from the town and started selling them in my village. I got a great response from the village because I did not charge much compared to the town. I would charge one rupee for one kilogram of vegetables because I got vegetables at wholesale rate. I was able to earn some profits. That was useful for my dad's medicines and family's daily needs. I began to form strategies for selling vegetables. If my vegetables got spoilt, I increased the cost of other vegetables slightly to recover losses. I continued to sell vegetables in the mornings and evenings from home. After the morning sales, I would list out which vegetables are low in supply, then buy those vegetables on my way back from school. In the afternoons, if anyone came for vegetables my mother sold those.



Source: Google Images; Represents my life from 5th to 7th class

On one side, I was pursuing education and on the other side, I had a vegetable business. I was very busy with both. When I was in 7th standard, we were about to have public exams. The pressure of studying was increasing while my business was improving. I decided to sell my vegetables, while pulling a cycle rickshaw. For this, I purchased a second hand rickshaw. I would sell vegetables every morning for three hours and every evening for three hours. My business expanded to the surrounding six villages. On Sundays, I would spend a lot of time selling vegetables. During the remaining time, vegetables were sold at home. I went to school and continued my studies, and after school I took the vegetables home by cycle. It was a rotten life, but I passed the 7th standard public exam. After that I had a big dream to expand my vegetable business, but lacked financial support. I did not fulfill my dream at that time. I worked hard for it, but unexpectedly, my father's health took a serious turn, and we had to take him to the hospital. Then life came back to the starting stage. I took vegetables from a wholesaler on debt, because he trusted me to give some financial credit in return. I started purchasing and selling my vegetables that way, which allowed the rotation of my business. Then day by day, life came back on track.



Source: Google Images; represents my life from mid 7th std-8th std

In January, my village celebrated the Nilamma festival. For this, I got the chance to supply a huge number of bananas. I earned a lot of profit. During Sankranti I was able to supply soft drinks and other items. All these sales earned me some profits, which helped me financially. I was able to set up a shop during my 8th standard summer holidays. My uncle owned a liquor shop, but because of his drinking habit, he had many losses. He had to shut down his business, so I asked him to sell his shop to me. He agreed to sell me the shop for a good price. The liquor shop soon turned into a vegetable shop, and all my dreams came true. I was really happy because I achieved my goals and gained success. I started stocking

all items in my shop, and the villagers stopped going to town, and instead came to me to purchase the items. It was a plus point for me to be able to stand on my own feet. I had my own identity as a vegetable seller. The shop did not need publicity. There was a daily struggle to improve the shop day by day, but all the profits were spent on medicines for my father. When I was in 10th standard, I also had the burden of the public exams. I feared failure, so I began working harder. I would read in the shop when no customers were there. This is how I maintained the shop while studying. I even began selling rice and millets. I involved myself wherever there was profit, however small.

I got festival orders again that year during the Nilamma festival. A relative, who worked as a police constable came to see my father after five years. He asked me why I was sacrificing my education, and advised me to complete 10th standard, saying that my height was suitable for police or army positions. Until then I had only thought about my life as a vegetable seller. For the first time I began thinking about another kind of job. My heart told me to close the vegetable shop even though the villagers told me not to since it was so successful. But I had made the decision. I finally decided to close my shop on the 1st of February 2010. I gave the money to my family. Because of the hope of other opportunities, I left everything I had built.



Source: Google Images; represents my life from the 8th standard summer holidays to Feb 1, 2010

From here onwards the journey of my education truly started. I joined a hostel for two months. My friends supported and helped me a lot while studying. Two months were dedicated to studies. Finally, I passed my

10th standard. Soon after this, I came to know that for police and army positions, one needs inter (+1 & +2). My professor gave me one social book and told me about A.P.R.J.C (Andhra Pradesh Residential Junior College). After one month of working hard for this, I attempted the state level examination, where I got 75th rank. I got a seat in A.P.R.J.C, Nimmakuru state level college. It was the first stepping stone to success in the story of my education. I joined the college. The government provided free food and accommodation.

Initially, I struggled a lot with the studies, but soon, I got adjusted to the lifestyle. After this, I wrote the Andhra University and A.P.R.D.C (Andhra Pradesh Residential Degree College) exams. I got selected in both universities. I secured 15th rank, and got a campus seat. In A.P.R.D.C I got 3rd rank. I decided to join A.P.R.D.C, Nagarjuna Sagar.

Unfortunately, during my first year my father passed away. All the family responsibilities then fell on me. After I turned 18, I decided to attend army rally for selection. I successfully completed every stage, but I broke my hand in the process. I still fought for it, but unfortunately, I was rejected. My professor scolded me a lot, and asked me why I did those things without telling him first. I told him my problems with studying. Then he took the responsibility of supporting me in my studies.

After my degree, I cleared Hyderabad Central University, Tata Institute of Social Science and Azim Premji University. When I chose Azim Premji University, he took the financial responsibility during my interview. He has continued to support me by sending me the monthly expenses. I have found donors to continue my education up to now. The University has given me 70% of financial assistance. For 30% fee, I have been lucky to meet many generous people.

Now I have the responsibility to take care of my mother, and my sister's education. Even now, I am maintaining two responsibilities. All along the way, time has tested my willpower so much, but I have not compromised, I have not stopped looking ahead and stepping forward. I am fighting against every challenge, and am now standing at this stage. I truly believe that a smooth sea can't make a skilled sailor.

PRETEND PLAY

– Sahana Subramanyam, Undergraduate Programme, 2015-18

I picked up the piece of paper, analysed the mysterious writing, and made furious illegible 'adult style' notes in my handy-dandy notebook.

It was the peak of summer, but I still roamed around with a fleece invisibility cloak and my winter thumbprint analyzing gloves.

I went into my office (the dining room) to type my findings for the day

My super expensive, cutting edge and one of a kind laptop, made out of cardboard had specially designed secret buttons like the "explode button" -just in case I had to destroy top secret files.

I, the world famous, yet undercover detective, casually glanced out of the window, and with one swift move closed the laptop and breathed out the words, "activate invisibility".

The laptop disappeared just in time, as my mom called me for dinner.

Night time was the robber's friend... but it was also mine. I gulped down my secret diet which gave me my fantastic intelligence. I did some quick, yet incredibly complex mathematics in my head.

I decided to leave the spinach behind on my plate as a code for the government on my next move.

My mom, the government, wasn't too happy and I was force fed the lethal greens, before my flight took off to China, the 'dragon land'.

The airport in China was a beautiful parade of lights and dancers, and the robber was a very cultural man named Mr. Hu.

I knew he would be in the sword shop as he was planning to kill me.

Entering the shop, I saw the hooded Hu from the corner of my eye.

He recognised me from my trench coat. It's a well established fact that all detectives worthy of being one need to wear a trench coat, just like how all thieves need to be dressed in black and scary clothes to be taken seriously.

I picked up a beautifully crafted silver sword. He turned back with a look of utter shock on his face. Clearly, he had misjudged my skills. I pointed the lethal weapon at his jugular and quickly disarmed him.

He tried to run, but a powerful left kick from me, pushed him to the ground and woke me up from a shooting pain that happens when you kick the wall.

I cried in pain and woke up my furious mom. Little does she know the joy of being a detective and the wonderful world that a six year old lives in.

TALIM OF MY LIFE

– Srinivas, MA Education 2014-16

In this poem I have tried to consolidate my thoughts on Nai Talim for my dream school. These thoughts could be what sets the course of our lives in direction to make it more meaningful in itself. A life with some light could share the darkness of others by spreading it. Dreams of life never flourish alone in the darkness as minds of the ignited travel with speed destroying all.

Joyful and cherishing learnings
With peers playing all along the day.
We question, we discuss, we critique
The theories and we practice the truth of life.

We do and learn, learn how to learn
Learn for the essence of life with perseverance.
We create neo-theories for life of fair and equal
For humans and living beings on earth.

We share food, space and ideas
For the existence and never left alone.

We produce nothing out of greed
To conserve nature never for the wealth.

We hope to change ourselves not others
By embracing the differences of skin colours.
In thought and practice we may differ
But strive with the potentials of humaneness.

A Talim for the progressive lives
Challenge rote and rude, learning and teaching.
We excel with Nai (new) Talim
Spreading love and peace for lives.

अपन मतलबी

—धर्मन्द्र मालविया, MA Education, 2014-16

अपन तो मतलबी हैं, बस मतलब की बात कहते हैं..
भीड़ में जो चाहें कह दें,
हर एक बात का पक्का सबूत दे दें,
पर सामने आने से घबराते हैं,
बेमतलब की बुराई लेने से कतराते हैं।
पर खुद पर कोई इल्जाम न आये,
इस चतुराई से,
दुनिया को दोष देते हैं।
अपन मतलबी हैं, बस मतलब की बात कहते हैं....

लोग भूख से मरते हैं तो मरे,
अपना क्या जाता है?
अरे उनकी भूख से ही तो,
अपने घर राशन आता है।
अपन तो उनकी भूख भी, बाजार में बेच देते हैं,
बदले में हथियारो के व्यापारी से, पैसे एन्ट लेते हैं।
अब भी उनके पेट खाली है तो रहे,
अपन तो, अपनी भरी प्लेट में भी,
स्वाद पर जोर देते हैं।
अपन मतलबी हैं, बस मतलब की बात कहते हैं...

भाई, गंदगी अपने को पसंद नहीं।
नाक, भों सिकुड़ कहीं जाते हैं, जो देखले कही।
इसलिए तो, जनता को,
स्वच्छ भारत का, देते हैं अपन नारा,
पर अपना पैखाना खुद साफ करना, हमें नहीं है गंवारा।
पर पब्लिसिटी की खातिर,
सडक पर पड़ी दूसरो की भी,
गंदगी साफ कर देते हैं।
अपन मतलबी हैं, बस मतलब की बात कहते हैं

लोग गरीब हैं, तो वो नंगे हैं।
नंगा होना उनकी मजबूरी है।
अपन खुले विचारों वाले हैं,
तो अपना सब कुछ,
खुला—खुला रहना जरूरी है।
पर सेवा का प्रतीक तो खादी है,
और अपन तो दिखावे के आदि है।
सो जब करना हो जैसा प्रदर्शन,
वैसे तन को ढँक लेते हैं।
अपन मतलबी हैं, बस मतलब की बात कहते हैं...

जरूरी तो नहीं जरूरत मंद की, वाकई में मदद करना,
उनकी तकलीफों के लिए, हुक्मरानों से लड़ना।
अरे बस मीठी बातें करने से भी,
गरीबो का मन बहल जाता है।
और वैसे भी कुछ न करने से,
कुछ करना अच्छा माना जाता है।
वैसे भी हमें तो बस आत्म संतोष चाहिए।
और इसके लिए कही जाने में क्या बुराई है ?
इसीलिए कभी—कभी गरीब बस्तियों में यूँ ही टहल लेते हैं।
अपन मतलबी हैं बस मतलब की बात कहते हैं..

भाई अपनी कर्तुते तो, अपने को ही पता है।
अपने पर ध्यान दे
इतनी फुर्सद किसे यहाँ है?
अपन शरीफ हैं,
अपनी शराफत किसे पता नहीं ?
और अपने को बदल दे भला,
इतनी हिम्मत किसी में है कहीं ?
पर जमाने को बदल ने की तालीम अपन लेते हैं।
अपन मतलबी हैं, बस मतलब की बात कहते हैं...

THREE TALES

– Prahalad Saldanha, Undergraduate Programme, 2015-18

This is a review of three music videos: “*Routine*”, “*The Raven that Refused to Sing*” and “*Drag Ropes*”. Each of these animated videos is a little less than ten minutes long, and while the stories they tell are simple in plot, they are really moving. The first two are compositions by Steven Wilson, and the third is by Storm Corrosion, which is a band made up of two members: Steven Wilson and Mikael Åkerfeldt.

I chose to review these videos because I think that they are both worth watching. A good story should have some impact on the reader/listener/viewer to captivate their imagination, intellect or emotion. These stories all affect the viewer emotionally; the first one is very sad (it may bring you to tears), the second one is a demonstration of desperation, and the last one may be just a little haunting.

Also, I think the way in which these simple stories have been expressed is beautifully done; the combination of music with visuals is unlikely to get any better than these videos where they combine the two in a stunning manner. These stories are told with but a handful of verses which set the moods conveyed in the music.

Music can carry stories in ways, text cannot because it can convey meanings in very different, perhaps ambiguous ways- for example try just listening to “*Routine*” after watching the video, without the video. The song might not be as sad, but when it is combined with the visuals it can become more clear and can communicate what plain words cannot- take “*Khoon Chala*” from “*Rang De Basanti*” as another example.

All of these videos are easily accessible on Youtube- you just need to search for their titles and you will be able to watch them.

Routine

This video tells the story of a “*Routine*”, which as the video progresses you can see becoming more and more futile. The repetition of the routine and the expression of the woman’s face subtly start to suggest that something is not right. Like several tragedies you can begin to anticipate the grimness ahead in the narrative (like in John Steinbeck’s ‘*Of Mice and Men*’), and it comes in the climax with a burst of built up sounds where the protest against the bitter reality is expressed in the lines “*Routine keeps me in line/ Helps me pass the time/ Helps*

me to sleep” while the woman’s world is being shattered around her.

The song is from the album “*Hand. Cannot. Erase.*” which is a solo album composed by Steven Wilson telling the story, “*about a woman growing up, who goes to live in the city, very isolated, and she disappears one day and no one notices*” which was inspired by Joyce Carol Vincent who died in her apartment in the middle of the city and whose body was not found there until more than two years after her death. *Routine* is therefore a chapter in the life of Steven Wilson’s fictional character, but is also a story in its own right. There is also a blog on “*Hand. Cannot. Erase.*” which is like a first person narrative of the album which tells the entire story.

The video of “*Routine*” is without doubt one of the most beautiful, moving and sad videos I have ever seen.

The Raven that Refused to Sing

Trying to capture beauty for oneself, bleakness and dependence are the themes of this video. Whether one can capture beauty and try to keep it for them self is illustrated in this; sometimes when you try capturing beauty it does not shine as brilliantly; it is like friendship where you do not ask for miracles but where they sometimes appear giving the same feeling as winning the lottery. The man in this story tries to escape from something in the past, its paralyzing effect is expressed through the low piano chords, and he becomes dependant on a certain beauty in much the same way as in the woman in “*Routine*” is trying to escape though her chores. He becomes more desperate as the video progresses, pleading to the raven to sing all the while as he shares his insecurities with it, just as the number of instrumental sounds pick up.

The video captures the slightly abstract concept of bleakness in an appropriately visual manner. It creeps towards the man and he flees from it. The image clearly shows what the man does at the end of the video to deal with the raven and the darkness.

The song is from another Steven Wilson album called “*The Raven that Refused to Sing (And other Stories)*”. In the album Wilson tries to use the style of progressive rock bands from the 1970s and therefore chose not use many modern sounds for the album such as electronic ones.

Drag Ropes

Of the three videos this probably uses the simplest way of making an animated video, with its usage of a handful of stick puppets and painted backgrounds for visual appeal. The way in which the stick puppets tell the story is eye-opening; you probably would never have guessed how much you can tell with just the limited number of ways you can bend stick puppets' bodies. The body language of the puppets and their actions convey the plot while the song conveys its mood and meaning.

The interesting thing about Storm Corrosion's approach

to music is that they try to create brutal songs without using heavy metal sounds. This has not been explored as much as heavy metal, and is hence, a creative way of conveying fear, something the puppets were used for extensively to tell the tale.

The plot is dark and involves misguidance and betrayal of friendship. However, what is really creepy about it is that death seems to lurk around every corner and the answer to everything is death. This is a video to save for when you are alone late at night in a dark room.

जिंदगी

-प्रभात कुमार हिमांशु, MA Education, 2014-16

आहिस्ता चल जिंदगी, अभी कई कर्ज चुकाने बाकी है ।
कुछ दर्द मिटाना बाकी है, कुछ फर्ज निभाना बाकी है ॥

रफ्तार में तेरे चलने से, कुछ रूठ गए कुछ छूट गए ।
रूठों को मनाना बाकी है, रोतों को हँसाना बाकी है ॥

कुछ रिश्ते बनकर टूट गए, कुछ जुड़ते –जुड़ते छूट गए ।
उन टूटे –छूटे रिश्तों के, ज़ख्मों को मिटाना बाकी है ॥

कुछ हसरतें अभी अधूरी हैं, कुछ काम भी और जरूरी हैं।
जीवन की उलझी पहेली को, पूरा सुलझाना बाकी है ॥

जब साँसों को थम जाना है, फिर क्या खोना ,क्या पाना है ।
पर मन के जिद्दी बच्चे को, यह बात बताना बाकी है ॥

आहिस्ता चल जिंदगी, अभी कई कर्ज चुकाने बाकी है ।
कुछ दर्द मिटाना बाकी है, कुछ फर्ज निभाना बाकी है ॥

MINE NO MORE

- Gunjit Kaur, MA Development, 2015-17

This poem depicts the monopoly of a few over the wind energy in the Attapadi region. Mother Nature laments the loss of her own produce, and narrates how much money has become important.

Carrying her was glee
Light burden for long.
She sprung out full of life,
Slight murmurs of existence.
She was great at giving
Joy, energy and sweet nothings.
I loved her more than life,
I gave her all I had.
The sun, the moon, the stars
My life rose there and set too.
And then I see her drifting away
Pulled, snatched, grabbed from me.
I tried so hard, held on tight
I saw my life going past my sight.
I cried, I wept, I bled
But in vain;
All the energy in vain
All the rights of claim in vain.
Sold her to the highest
Money did it once again.
High demand for her at present
No true love whatsoever.
They eat out of her result
They leave no stone unturned.

सौदागर

– शुभांगी सैनी, MA Education, 2015-17

बैंगलोर में सबसे दूर, अपने घर और खासकर बचपन
के अपने दिन याद करते हुए मैंने यह कविता लिखी
थी। एक तस्वीर भेजी गई

थी मुझे जिसमें कुछ बच्चे खेल रहे थे; उसी गली में
जहाँ मैं खेलते हुए बड़ी हुई। बस, फिर क्या था, यादों
का कारवाँ चल पड़ा और

आँसुओं का भी | फिर कलम से निकले ये शब्द...

कोई लौटा दो मुझे वो बचपन के दिन,
और बदले में ले लो यह सयानापन, इस उम्र की
सौगात को।

पहुँचा दो मुझे उन गलियों में जहाँ पूरी शाम,
गुज़र जाया करती थी दोस्तों के संग ।
याद आता है मुझे आज अचानक से वो
बात बात पर झगड़के, दोस्तों के मनाने का इंतज़ार
करना ।

और वो दिन तो खासा याद है मुझे,
जब गिरी थी साइकिल चलाते हुए,
कोहनी और घुटने छिले थे,
खून भी निकला था, कई आँसू भी गिरे थे,
वो चोट आज की भागम भाग से ज़्यादा प्यारी
लगती है।

निशान बाकी है उसके आज भी घुटनों पर,
घाव गहरे थे वो भी,
पर दर्द इतना नहीं दे पाए जितना
दे जाती हैं आजकल लोगों की महज़ बातें हीं!
हाँ, निशान दिखाई नहीं देते हैं इनके;
अपनी हँसी में दर्द छुपाने की कला जो सीख ली है
हमने!

बचपन आता है याद मुझे
बिकते देखा है क्या किसी ने कहीं?
बता देना वहाँ का पता भी कभी।

THE TRUTH OF US

– Mathew M George, MA Education, 2015-17

Every day we wake up with an aim,
An aim to study. Impossible.
We come, we go and nothing happens,
Our aim remains a dream for tomorrow.

Classes are like a drama without story,
And we are just violent spectators.
Some of us sit making castles in the air,
Most of the others making a merry time.

We know, we pass through the hardest time,
Yet we walk in careless attitude,
Is it fair to continue this walk?

No, we ought to have a story for us,
It may be too late for us to rethink,
Still, we have to change the track,
Or continue in this disastrous path
And sink our ship in this competing world.

शहरीकरण पर राजनीति

- हीना परवीन, MA Education, 2015-17

खाली बंजर ज़मीन पर प्लॉट बनें, फिर घर बनें,
गलियाँ बनीं,

इलाके बनें, नगर बनें फिर एक शहर बना,
और ये सिलसिला चलता रहा... बढ़ौतरी होती रही...

सड़कों पर भी पुलों की इमारते बनने लगीं,
और वो गलियाँ अपार्टमेंट में बदलते हुए ऊँची ऊँची
इमारतों से देखी जाने लगीं।

छोटी दुकानें डिपार्टमेंटल स्टोर्स और मॉल में तब्दील
हो गईं ।

देखते ही देखते लोग आवागमन की नई नई चीजों
से रूबरू होते गए और उन के आदी हो गए ।
और सड़कों पर बनी इमारतें कम पड़ने लगीं !

है वंदन,

अभिनन्दन इस विकास का

– रानी राय, MA Development, 2015-17

लोगों के आवागमन के लिए समूह यात्रा प्रबंध हुए,
सुविधाएँ बढ़ती गईं ।

इन सब के साथ साथ कदम से कदम मिलाकर
अन्य सुविधाएँ भी चलती रहीं.....

शिक्षा बढ़ी, उनकी इमारते बढ़ी,

चिकित्सा सुविधा का क्या कहना, वो भी पीछे न रहीं ।

समस्या तब खड़ी हुई जब पेड़ों ने चीखना शुरू किया,

“ज़मीन न खोदो, न खोदो!” के नारे लगाने लगें,

पक्षी शहर छोड़ कर जाने लगे, और इंसान

जो इन सब का भोगी था वो भी रो दिया !

इस बढ़ने-बढ़ाने की जंग में एक इंसान दब गया,

जो इन सब को सहन न कर सका ।

ज्यादा दुख तब हुआ जब उसे अपने ही घर से बेघर
होना पड़ा,

क्योंकि एहमियत उस पुल या सड़क से कम थी जो
अब बनने जा रहे थे ।

चौंकाने वाली बात तो यह थी कि,

जिसे हमने चुना उसने हमें न चुना, न सहारा दिया ।

पहचानने से इंकार कर दिया और बेगोरा कर दिया ।

अब इंसान में आक्रोश उठा ।

फ़साद हुआ मगर कुछ हाथ न लगा,

और चीखता चिल्लाता वापस हो लिया।

ये सुविधाएँ बढ़ती ही गईं,

मगर बढ़ौतरी अपनी ही चाल से चलती रही,

परिणाम यह हुआ कि समाज वर्गों में बँट गया !

अमीर अमीर हो गया और गरीब गरीब हो गया ।

लोगों की सोच ने उड़ान भरी और ज़मीन
को भूल गई !

इंसानियत को बेड़ियाँ लग गईं और हैवानियत
जाग उठी!

यह तरक्की का मूल मंत्र बन गई ।

वो इंसान जो दब गया था अब उसी में खुश
रहने लगा,

अपने आप को समायोजन सिखाता रहा !

और इसी को ज़िंदगी कहने लगा ।

है वंदन, अभिनन्दन इस विकास का,
जो बदल रहा है सपनों के भारत को ।
सदियों से है कर्ज़ में उसके संसाधनों का खाना,
नदियों का पानी और जंगलों का ठिकाना,
है वंदन, अभिनन्दन इस विकास का ।

कि उसकी नदियों के जिस्म पर सुलगते हुए
शोषण की चिनगारी ने बना दिए
कई बेघर बस्ती, बेरोज़गार मज़दूर,
कि उसके जंगलों के जिस्म पर बना दिए इन
मशीनों ने हिंसा के कई निशान
कि आज सूने पड़े हैं वो किनारे जहां चहकते थे
कुछ इंसानों के जीवन ।

अब कर दिया बंजर इसे विकास के प्यासे
शिकारियों ने

है वंदन, अभिनन्दन इस विकास का ।

कि बड़े आसान से लफ़्ज़ों में फरमाते हैं,
इन संसाधनों से है अस्तित्व हमारा,
इन पर पड़ रहा है आदिवासियों का साया ।
वह लाचार है, असहाय है!

है वंदन, अभिनन्दन इस विकास का ।

यह भारत है इंतज़ार में,
किसी सूनामी तूफानों के,
किसी भूकंपीय उद्गारों के,
किसी ज्वालामुखी के अंगारों के,
जो करे हिफ़ाज़त द्रवित नदियों की धाराओं की,
मरहूम जंगलों के घरोंदों की,
फीके पलाश के रंगों की,
अपनेपन की महक की,
है वंदन, अभिनन्दन इस विकास का।

THE BEGGING BOWL

– Jamsheer Khan, MA Development, 2015-17

The path I walk everyday
And I return the same way.
The sufferings of those I see
I try to erase,
Arrest my attention again.
Every day a new portrayal of life appears
And disappears replaced by another.
Looking at this life become prevalent today.
From morning till evening, he lies sedate
Clenched in despair and hunger.
But how many
Will feel their sufferings in wilderness?
They dare not! As their pulse begins to faint
In loneliness they lie on the footpath
Looking up they discover joy in stars.
Someone is up there to look after
Tomorrow is a familiar gesture in the mind.
The sun rises, the bowl emerges to beg
The begging is done in their unique way.
Lame physically or economically, they are idled

Seeing few coins spread before them.
At street corners, churches,
Mosques, temples, etc.
They stand in a row, with their
Hands on their empty stomachs.
Look at this life of self-mockery and self-pity!
That has become a routine every day.
A voice emerges as a conscience;
I am your leader, your fighter,
Your Crusader, Your Protector.
None can snatch your rights as their own.
I am carrying your future
The destiny is not far away
The wayward path
Await's for your destiny.
Till then,
Carry your bowls...
Carry your bowls...
Carry your bowls...

प्रकृति: एक सर्वश्रेष्ठ प्रदर्शक के रूप में

– Sumeet Gardia, MA Development, 2015-17

(प्रस्तुत वृत्तांत प्रकृति के साथ, मनुष्य एवं बाकी प्राणियों के रागात्मक सम्बन्ध को बयाँ करने की कोशिश है, और कागल की खूबसूरत स्मृति को शब्द देने की लालसा की उपज है, और इस लालसा की पूर्ति हेतु विलियम वर्ड्सवर्थ की कालजयी कविता 'डेफोडिल्स' से प्रेरणा ली है। अतः वर्ड्सवर्थ और हिंदी में उस कविता की संदर्भित व्याख्या करने वाले अनभिज्ञ व्यक्ति को विशेष धन्यवाद का अर्पण है। मूलतः ये रचना संयोजन का वह स्वरूप है, जिसमें जीवन के बहाव को आप महसूस कर पाएँगे।)

प्रकृति हमें अपने जादुई अंदाज से हमेशा रोमांचित करती है। अंदाज़ जिसमें वह जीवन सँवारती, बचाती और छीन भी लेती है। जीवन एक वयवस्था है जिसमें

कोई स्थायी भाव नहीं है। यह एक तालमेल है, मधुर संगीत है - मिलने का, बिछड़ने का, जीवन को जीने का। और इस जीवन को जीने की कवायद में हर जीव का अपना खुद का अंदाज़ है और इस अंदाज़ का निर्धारण करना ही प्रकृति की जादुई कार्यशैली का प्रमाण है। ये मनुष्य की जिज्ञासु आर्खें हैं जो पश्चिमी घाट के पर्वतीय भूदृश्य को पिछले कुछ दिनों से निहार रही थी। इस क्षेत्र में गुज़रा हमारे जीवन का हर क्षण इस मधुर संगीत के साथ तालमेल बैठाने की निरंकुश कोशिश में था। यह उसी कोशिश का हिस्सा है जब इन्सान पहली बार अपने आप यह पूछने के काबिल हो जाता है कि वह कहाँ से और क्यों आया है। वहीं से आविष्कार के सुरूर यानि जाँय ऑफ़ डिस्कवरी की शुरुआत होती है।

इस अंतहीन प्रकृति को खोजना मनुष्यों के लिए सुखदाई होता है | यह वृतांत उसी लम्हे की अनुभूति का वर्णन है जब हम श्रीमान आदम के साथ सूर्योस्त के दर्शन हेतु पहाड़ी यात्रा के बाद पार्श्व नृत्य करती खूबसूरत घाटी में पहुँचे। वहाँ पहुँचने पर जीवन का मधुर संगीत हम सभी को सुनाई देने लगा | उस वादी ने हमारी चिंताग्रस्त मनोस्थिति पर बाज़ी मार ली थी | उस दृश्य को देखकर मुझे विलियम वर्ड्सवर्थ की एक कविता याद आ गई | वर्ड्सवर्थ प्रकृति के कवि के रूप में प्रसिद्ध हैं | उनकी कविताएँ काफ़ी लोकप्रिय हैं | उस छोटी सी कविता में कवि उस दिन को याद कर रहे हैं जब उन्होंने 'डेफोडिल्स' से भरा एक मैदान देखा था। ये वैसी ही स्मृति थी जिससे लगभग हम भी गुजरे थे और जब भी हम आने वाले जीवन में दर्द और खालीपन को महसूस करेंगे, अतीत की ये खूबसूरत स्मृति चिंता और खालीपन को दूर कर देगी !

वर्ड्सवर्थ के शब्दों में Daffodils:

घूम रहा था अकेला निरुद्देश्य, एक मेघ सम
जो तैरता है, ऊँचाई पर, घाटियों और पहाड़ियों पर!
जब अचानक देखी मैंने एक भीड़,
स्वर्णिम कमल जातीय डेफोडिल्स पुष्पों की।
झील के बगल में, पेड़ों के नीचे,
शीतल मंद पवन की तरंगों में,
पंखों को फड़फड़ते और नृत्य करते

अंतहीन तारों की तरह जो चमचमाते
और टिमटिमाते आकाशगंगा में
अंतहीन पंक्ति में फैले थे, वे
सर्वत्र खाड़ी के किनारे-किनारे!

क्योंकि बहुधा पर्यक पर लेटता हूँ जब विचार शून्य या
बोझिल मनोदशा में।

वे एकाएक चमकते हैं, मन की आखों पर, जो परम
सुख है नितांत एकांत का!

और तब भर जाती है, हृदय में उमंग और मन नृत्य
करने लगता है, उन पुष्पों के संग!

सार यह है दोस्तों जब कभी-भी जीवन में हम अपने
बिस्तर पर दुखित अथवा चिंतन शील मानसिक अवस्था
में खोए होंगे, उस घाटी की खूबसूरत स्मृति हमारी
कल्पना को जगा देगी और सारी ध्यान आकर्षित करने
वाली चिंताएँ दूर हो जाएँगी | बस विश्वास रखिएगा
कि अतीत की यह खूबसूरत स्मृति भी आसानी से
और स्पष्टता से याद आती रहेगी जिस तरह विलियम
वर्ड्सवर्थ 'डेफोडिल्स' को याद कर आनंद विभोर हो
जाते हैं, बस उसी तरह शायद हमारा मन भी उल्लास
और आनंद से भर जायेगा | बस विश्वास रखिएगा
अपने होने पर, विश्वास रखिएगा रचयिता के होने पर |

धन्यवाद !

SEEING LIKE A SQUATTER

– Vidya P S, MA Development, 2015-17

Globalization and urbanization have brought a different angle to citizenship. The state, which is a captive of capitalist powers, has failed to address the concerns of people who are evicted from their dwellings to give way to capitalistic developments. The people, who are left to walk alone in their struggle for living, bring forth the question of who are the citizens and what are their rights? Who created squatters and how it feels to walk in search of food and shelter as squatters, far... far away from the quest of the meaning of life.

I walk on,
From my shoddy tent,
Into to the wild dent.
I carry eviction stamp,
Politically inflicted dump,
To be a squatter.

I walk on,
To live anywhere,
To use anything.
Owning the whole sky above,
Yet only foot space below,
To live with fetter.

I walk on,
To relieve myself,
In the public shelf.
Scorching dirt,
Unwanted guilt,
To find my gutter.

I walk on,
My 'agency' is at seal,
I am let free to steel.
My currency at conceal,
I am left with an empty creel,
To end up in clutter.

I walk on,
Selling my rights to wrong,
In return to belong.
Buying my sleep,
From wounds so deep,
To bury my mutter.

I walk on
In front of glories, built
Not finding culture of cult
Find my share in scrubbed drum
Quenching my thirst in that brim
To outlive my jitter.

I walk on
Not talking on my walk
Battling with my talk
No tunnels in this walk
Who will light my talk?
To enable my twitter.

I walk on,
Hiding my shadow,
Beside closed window.
Seeing like a squatter,
Feeling like a matter,
To survive like a fitter.

विजयी विश्व तिरंगा

- अमरीश राय, MA Education, 2014-16

बहुत हो गया खेल हमारा अब होगा तीन-रंगा,
सबसे ऊँचा सबसे प्यारा और साथ में नंगा |
नास्तिक भी आस्तिक भी, संधी भी वामी भी,
मिलके करेंगे दंगा क्योंकि लहू है एक-रंगा |
लाल न होगा काला न होगा ना होगा अब नीला,
अब तो बस विजयी विश्व तिरंगा |
रंगा-रंगा, बिरला, टाटा, अंबानी या ठाकुर-ब्राम्हणया
चमार खान-पठान, सब होंगे इकरंगा,
यह दौर जो चल रहा है केसरिया एक-रंगा
बात पते की, -देशद्रोह या देशभक्त अब होगा
ये तिरंगा?
उठी है बात पर ना होगा खाक तिरंगा !
क्योंकि विजयी विश्व तिरंगा |

लगेगा हर मंदिर, मस्जिद, गुरुद्वारा, शिक्षण संस्थान
में यह तिरंगा,
अस्मिता की अग्निपरीक्षा ने ले ली है अंगड़ाई,
लगती है यह बात बड़ी बेढंगा |
बिरसा- फूले-गांधी-सावरकर सब अपने में रंगा,
नाम अलग है, बात अलग है, राग अलग है पर,
एक बात है भैया विजयी विश्व तिरंगा!
रात बची है, लहू बचा है,
लाल करने को चल पड़े हैं,
करना है कुछ बेमिसाल क्योंकि हाथ में है तिरंगा |
अब तो न चरखा ना तो हसिया बस एक तिरंगा,
आखिर में विजयी विश्व तिरंगा |

UNITY IN DIVERSITY?

– Viraj Kumar Negi, MA Development, 2014-16

We all know that student diversity is an important feature in Azim Premji University's Admission policy, which make us stand out but also comes with a set of challenges. Viraj tries to tackle the learning challenges that students may face in Azim Premji University and gives pertinent suggestions for the university to consider.

Azim Premji University gives considerable importance to the diversity of the students. One can find students from each and every state of the country in the University. According to world web dictionary, Diversity is “the noticeable heterogeneity, which has qualities of non-comparable kind”. Diversity can be beneficial because it gives us an opportunity to learn from, and interact with many different students. In addition to this, diversity also allows us to know about different cultures, traditions, languages, dialects, festivals, religions and geographical locations. This process of knowing various cultures and traditions enrich our knowledge and experiences about the country and the world we live in. However, despite its advantages, diversity also brings a lot of problems. Students from different background, enter into the university, with a lot of enthusiasm and expectations. But some of them, due to diversity and differences, face some difficulties in the university. This essay will discuss some of the major challenges faced by the students of the Azim Premji University due to diversity. The essay will also discuss the possible ways to deal with the problem, in latter part of the essay. According to me, the major challenges are-

1. Problems of Medium of instruction and examination- Language
2. Examination and Assessment Pattern
3. Differences in Cultural Capital- linguistic capital and Institutionalized cultural capital
4. Work Experience

The essay systematically deals with all these challenges and their implications on the student's morale, self-confidence and performance in Azim Premji University.

Learning Challenges faced by students in Azim Premji University due to diversity

1. Problems of Medium of instruction and examination - Language

Because of university's preference to the diversity in the admission policy, different students from different parts of the country are taking admission in Azim Premji University. The medium of instruction and examination is English, in the university. However, many students have done their schooling and even graduation in other regional languages. Because they are not so familiar in attending classes and writing exams in English medium, it becomes very difficult for them to cope with this change.

Whether it is a question of understanding the readings and lectures, class participation, writing for examinations and assessments, at all these places, they face difficulties in understanding the concepts and expressing their thoughts. Many of the times, even after knowing the answer of the questions, they are not able to construct the proper sentences and articulate in the appropriate manner. As a result, it directly affects the morale of the student, and this will be reflected in the form of non-participation or poor interest of the students in academic activities.

In addition to this, because English was not the medium of instruction in their earlier education, some students will struggle to understand the new terminologies, new words and sometimes the whole sentences of some readings and lectures. Many students find it difficult to speak and write grammatically correct sentences, which will directly results in wrong meaning and perception of their sentences.

The Academic Reading and Writing course effectively tries to help students to deal with these challenges by enhancing their reading, writing and comprehension capabilities, but there is also a greater need of involving more grammatical and vocabulary strengthening exercises, more presentations and practice sessions, in the ARW Course. This will help students to improve

their oral and written English Communication which may directly results in increase in the self-confidence and performance of those students in their academic activities.

2. Examination and Assessment Pattern

The way many students had their examinations in their previous education is very different from the way they have in the Azim Premji University. The Assessment of examinations like Term papers, Response papers, essays and book review demand understanding of the main and sub-arguments of the readings provided, critical evaluation of the readings, summarizing the articles and articulation of their own views and comments of the students on the given topic. Many students who are not familiar with these kinds of examinations, find it a difficult task to achieve.

Also in case of group presentation and group report submissions, the difference in capabilities of the students to give presentations, their participation in group presentations or in writing different parts of a group report will affect the assessment. Some students may lag behind due to lack of these capabilities. The causes of these differences in student capabilities may be due to their background, the level of education they received and the area they belong to

3. Differences in Cultural Capital

As far as the cultural capital is concerned, it is all about non-financial assets which promotes social mobility beyond economic means like education, intellect, style of speech and dress (Source- en.Wikipedia.com/cultural capital). Different people from different background have different cultural capital which will easily get reflected during class participation and group discussions. When a diverse group of students participate simultaneously in the same class and discussions, some students feel inferior or less capable due to comparatively less amount of cultural capital. This inferiority complex in students, will further restricts them to participate, take initiatives, learn new things and also hampers their creativity and potential to perform well in many academic and extracurricular activities. The major cultural capital difference among students can be observed in following-

A. Linguistic capital- Some students are more capable of expressing their views and articulation of their ideas as compared to others. In that case, some students starts comparing themselves with other students, which in turn diverts the concentration of the students from academic learning, self-observation and improvement.

B. Institutionalized Cultural Capital – In the university, different students have different previous academic credentials or qualifications from different educational institutions, where they have got different kinds of the education such as in central or state universities, different subjects, state or secondary boards of secondary education. This will directly get reflected into familiarity of some students in particular subjects, and also the familiarity with rigor of the program vice versa. So, because of this difference in previous educational qualification and familiarity, some students are finding it difficult to learn much.

4. Work Experience

Azim Premji University's PU admission policy encourages those who have got some amount of experience in any field for taking admission in the university, which is actually a significant element of. But despite its benefits, some students may have just passed out from their graduation or have very less experience, and thus they may lack the knowledge that comes from working in the field, in comparison to those who come with work experience.

How can the University Deal with these Learning challenges

The University's commitment to the diversity is unquestionable and really adding value to the programs and courses of the Azim Premji University. But the challenges comes with the concept of diversity must be addressed, for making this more useful and efficient. At present, The Pathway workshop and Academic Reading and Writing course are working efficiently to bridge the existing gap among the students. Following are some more suggestive measures which can help the University in best dealing with these learning challenges.-

- a. Organizing training sessions for building English vocabulary and grammatical understanding
- b. Organization of participatory workshops on building self-confidence, morale and inculcating motivation
- c. Involving and giving more opportunities to the students for oral presentation and group discussions
- d. Organizing more practice sessions like debate, speech and group activities on academic readings

As one can conclude that, despite many advantages of diversity, there are some challenges which must be taken care of for gaining maximum benefit from the available diversity at the university.

ट्रेन में एक दिन: असलियत से सामना

– आकाश कुमार, MA Development, 2015-17



“ए हक मेरे सैलानी अल्लाह पीर के बाबा, किस्मत खोल दे इनकी”..... ४ साल के बच्चे के साथ २५ साल का नौजवान अल्हा के नाम पर चादर फैलाये पैसा माँग रहा है तो ४० साल की औरत अपनी दोनों अंधी आँखों को लिए खाना खाने के लिए पैसा। १५ साल का लड़का अपनी शर्ट उतार के ट्रेन के फर्श को साफ़ करके पैसे माँग रहा है। ८ साल का बच्चा रुपेश करतब दिखा

के पैसे माँग रहा है। १२ साल की सुमोला ५ साल की अपनी बहन सायालू के साथ छोटे पत्थर के धुन पर हिंदी गाने गा के पैसे माँग रही है। दो औरतें हाथ में अस्पताल की रसीद लिए हुए अपने बीमार बच्चे के लिए पैसे माँग रही है। ५० साल का बुढ़ा खाने के लिए पैसे माँग रहा है। दोनों पैर से विकलांग अपनी अक्षमता के कारण पैसे माँग रहा है।

अरे जनाब, कहा खो गए? ये कोई भीख माँगने का बाज़ार नहीं, भारतीय रेलवे है! जयपुर से बेंगलूरु की दो दिन की यात्रा ने कमाने और भीख माँगने की विविधता के बारे में बहुत कुछ सिखला दिया। कई इनकी परिस्थिति पे तरस खाकर दो-चार-दस दे देते थे तो कई नहीं देते थे क्योंकि उनका मानना था की उन्होंने इसे अपना पेशा बना लिया है। पर ये तो मानना होगा कि वो भले ही भीख माँग रहे थे मगर अलग-अलग कलाओं का प्रदर्शन कर के! वो भीख माँगते हुए भी अपने टैलेंट को बेच रहे थे। २५ साल का नौजवान अल्लाह को बेच रहा था अपने पीर अंदाज़ में, ४० साल की औरत अपनी इन्द्रिय कुशलता को, १५ साल का लड़का अपनी मेहनत को, रुपेश अपने करतब को, सुमोला और सयालू गाना गाने की कला को, दोनों औरतें समझाने की कला को, बूढ़ा अपनी हालत को, तो विकलांग अपनी मेहनत और अक्षमता को।

एक महत्वपूर्ण बात यह है कि ये सिर्फ ट्रेन के उस हिस्से में ही सफ़र करते हैं जिस हिस्से में इनके ही जैसे या सामान्य श्रेणी के लोग बैठे रहते हैं। ट्रेन के उन हिस्सों में इनका प्रवेश नहीं है जिनमें १४ बोगियों के बराबर समृद्धि वाले लोग होते हैं। अरे! मेरा कहने का मतलब वातानुकूलित श्रेणी में बैठे लोगों से है।

आखिर क्यों ये ट्रेन और स्टेशनों पर भटके? क्या हम इनके लिए एक ऐसी जगह या बाज़ार न खोल दे जहाँ ये स्थायी रहकर अपने टैलेंट को बेच सके? जहाँ पर लोग समय-समय पर जाकर इन्हें देखें, अपना मनोरंजन करें | है न पते वाली बात? किसी को भी भटकना नहीं पड़ेगा! सोच रहा हूँ बाज़ार का टैग क्या होगा? क्यों न ये हो “ एक छत के नीचे, देखिये कईयों को जीते”. या ये “इज्जत ले लो, बुढ़ापा ले लो, सपने ले लो, मजबूरी ले लो, रही सही कुछ न

मिले तो इन भूखे इंसानों को पूरा का पूरा ले लो” है ना एक बेहतरीन आइडिया? अब कोई मुझसे कहेगा क्या बकवास कर रहे हो? तुम गरीबों का मज़ाक उड़ा रहे हो! अरे जनाब, अब इन्हें कौन समझाये ट्रेन या स्टेशनों पर ऐसे भटकने वालो को कोई इज्जत नहीं मिलती है, वहाँ भी वे मज़ाक के ही पात्र होते हैं।

अब आप को क्या लगता है? जब सुमोला और सयालू ट्रेन में गाना गाते हैं तो उन्हें इंडियाज़ सिंगिंग स्टार के जैसी इज्जत मिलती है क्या? नहीं | उन्हें बस मिलते हैं हमारे-आप के करम से दो-चार रुपये! अगर छुट्टा न होतो वो भी नहीं। अरे मैं तो सिर्फ उन्हें एक जगह छत देने की बात कर रहा था जहाँ वो अपने परिवार के साथ रह सके, जहाँ रुपेश को एक महीने के लिए पढाई और अपने माँ-बाप को न छोड़ना पड़े, जहाँ सुमोला और सायलू को पढ़ने और रहने को मिले।

छोडिये ये तो आम लोग हैं पर हमारी सरकार, जिसे हम माई-बाप कहते हैं क्या कर रही है? केंद्र सरकार के आंकड़ों के अनुसार पुरे देश में ४,१३,६७० भीख माँगने वाले हैं। पर यदि हम २०११ की जनगणना देखे तो करीब ३,७२,२१७ भीख माँगने एवं घुमक्कड़ की श्रेणी में आने वाले ऐसे हैं जिनकी उम्र १४ वर्ष तक ह। जिनके लिए थोड़ी बहुत योजनायें बनाई गई हैं जिनमें से किसी में भ्रष्टाचार, तो कसी में घोटाला किया गया है। प्राथमिक विद्यालयों में संख्या बढ़ाने के लिए मिड-डे- मील योजना लागू की गई है परन्तु बच्चो को खाने में मिलता है दो कलछुल चावल नमक के साथ, ठंड में शेल्टर होम के नाम पे टिन की छाया, कम्बल बिस्तर कहाँ है कुछ पता नहीं | विकलांगो के लिए सामाजिक न्याय एवं अधिकारिता मंत्रालय के वेबसाइट पर ४० से ज्यादा योजनायें हैं, पर लाभ कौन उठा रहा है पता नहीं!

MY FELLOW COUNTRYMEN

– Ganesh Pol, MA Development, 2015-17

Do you remember me, my fellow countrymen!

Someone was calling for me from the mountains of the Himalayas.

His uniform was damp, his hair was wet, there was snow all around him.

He said, “We were defending Mother India in the Siachen glaciers, the world’s highest battlefield.

And a huge wall of snow engulfed my sāthis and I”.

I heard Mahesh, he shouted, “Sāthi ab toh Himālaya se bhi upar milenge...”

I said, “Jaroor milenge sāthi”.

Everyone was laughing, except me. Because,

When I left from home the last time,

My younger daughter asked me, “Papa will you come to see my dance?

At the school gathering this year?”

I said, “Yes, my dear”, and I promised her with a heavy heart.

She didn’t know her father was lying. She said, “Come back soon. I miss you Papa”.

I choked, bidding her goodbye.

My wife! My love was angry, I had not spent enough time with her.

She refused to kiss me this time, but she couldn’t control her tears.

This time even I cried. I don’t know why.

When he saw me crying, he smiled and said,

“Don’t cry mere sāthi, *bas yeh masalā hal karo aur kisi ko Himālaya ke itne bhi upar mat bhejanā ki woh usase bhi upar jāye aur fir vāpis nā āye...*”

The moment I moved to hug him, I woke up from the dream, before the dawn

शिक्षा का हम अलख जलाएँ...

– जावेद नेहाल, MA Education, 2014-2016

आओ चलें, शिक्षा का हम अलख जलाएँ,

आओ चलें अशिक्षा को हम दूर भगाएँ

हम हैं बच्चे इक्कीसवीं सदी के,

हम हैं बच्चे प्रगतिशील सदी के,

रटने और रटाने से दूर, तर्क और विवेक की

एक नई राह बनाएँ,

डर और भय से दूर, शिक्षा की

एक नई ज्योत जलाएँ,

खेल खेल में शिक्षा की एक नई उमंग जगाएँ

सीमित साधनों में भी, शिक्षा की उम्मीद जगाएँ!!

आओ चले शिक्षा का हम अलख जलाएँ...

नन्हे-मुन्हे, बूढ़े और जवान

धनी, निर्धन, मजदूर और किसान

सब को हम एक नई राह दिखाएँ

अपने और उनके सपनों का... २

एक नया विवेकशील संसार बनाएँ,

आओ चलें शिक्षा का हम अलख जलाएँ,

आओ चलें अशिक्षा को हम दूर भगाएँ!

स्तुति

– प्रभात कुमार हिमांशु, MA Education, 2014-16

कृपा की न होती, ये आदत तुम्हारी ।
न घर -घर में होती, इबादत तुम्हारी ॥

न हम होते मुजरिम, न तुम होते हाकिम ।
तो सूनी ही रहती, ये अदालत तुम्हारी ॥
कृपा की न होती ...

न हम होते बालक, न तुम होते माता ।
तो सूना ही रहता, ये आँचल तुम्हारा ॥
कृपा की न होती ...

न हम होते सेवक, न तुम होते स्वामी ।
तो सूना ही रहता, ये नाता तुम्हारा ॥
कृपा की न होती ...

न हम होते भिक्षु, न तुम होते दानी ।
तो सूना ही रहता, ये दरवाजा तुम्हारा ॥
कृपा की न होती ...

न हम होते धागा, न तुम होते मोती ।
तो सुनी ही रहती, ये माला तुम्हारी ॥
कृपा की न होती ...

LET ME FEEL THE MORNING BREEZE

– Akash Kumar, MA Development, 2015-17

Let me feel the morning breeze,

After the long, cold night.

Let me feel the sunshine,

After the long dark storm.

Let me breathe heavily,

After a suffocated past.

Let me take my time,

After a long unstoppable rush.

Let me survive in my own way,

After looking out for others.

Let me become strong,

To recognize my own potential.

Let me sink into my life,

So I understand what I want.

Let me roam around,

To realize.

Let me live alone,

To feel affection for myself.

Let me do what I want,

Let my mind be free.

To come and go from every thought, expression, and
perception I have.

10 HADITH

– Jamsheer Khan, MA Development, 2015-17

Through these messages the author wishes to convey the need to integrate ecologically sound practices and thoughts in our every day lives.



A believer is like a growing tree

The example of a believer is that of a plant; from whatever direction the wind comes, it bends it, but when the wind quietens down, the plant becomes straight again...

– Abu Hurayra, Bukhari



Plant a tree even if it's your last deed

If the Hour (the day of Resurrection) is about to be established and one of you was holding a palm shoot, let him take advantage of even one second before the Hour is established to plant it.

– Al-Albani



Planting trees is a renewable source of reward

If a Human plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as a charitable gift (sadaqah) for him.

– Imam Bukhari



Conserve resources even when used for routine rituals

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, happened to pass by a Companion, Sa'd, as he was performing ablution (wudhu) next to a river. At this, the Prophet said, "Sa'd what is this squandering?"

Sa'd replied: "Can there be an idea of squandering (israf) in ablution?"

The Prophet said: "Yes, even if you are by the side of a flowing river."

-Ibn Majah



Keeping the environment sanitary maintains the community

Beware of the three acts that cause you to be cursed: [1] relieving yourselves in shaded places (that people utilise), in a walkway or in a watering place.

– *Mu`adh, hasan, by Al-Albani*



Thus, Prophet Muhammad said about street clean-ups

Removing harmful things from the road is an act of charity (sadaqah).

– *Abu Dharr Al-Ghafari*



Say no to over-consumption (or at least reduce it)

Abdullah ibn `Abbas reported that the Prophet said, "The believer is not he who eats his fill while his neighbor is hungry.

– *Al-Albani*



Eat a little less every day

Nothing is worse than a person who fills his stomach. It should be enough for the son of Adam to have a few bites to satisfy his hunger. If he wishes more, it should be: One-third for his food, one-third for his liquids, and one-third for his breath.

– *Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah*



Consider recycling and fixing before buying new items

When asked about how the Prophet used to live in his house, the Prophet's wife, `A'ishah, said that he used to repair his own shoes, sew his clothes and carry out all such household chores done without complaint or want for more.

– *Al-Albani*



Animals should be cared for

"A man felt very thirsty while he was on the way, there he came across a well. He went down the well, quenched his thirst and came out. Meanwhile he saw a dog panting and licking mud because of excessive thirst. He said to himself, "This dog is suffering from thirst as I did." So, he went down the well again, filled his shoe with water, held it with his mouth and watered the dog. Allah appreciated him for that deed and forgave him." The Companions said, "O Allah's Messenger! Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?" He replied: "There is a reward for serving any living being."

– *Imam Bukhari*

BE YOU

– Roopal Bakshi, MA Education, 2014-16

Learn to be fearless, and be all that's you
Grow up through your mistakes; and be ready to learn
things new
Let not the world lend you their eyes to see
Build your own vision that looks beyond the sea.

Pave your own path of wisdom and enlightenment
That lights up your journey ahead...
And let not anyone else downplay your containment.

Life is what you make out of it, said someone wise
Take a stand on the decisions that make you rise.

This world will hold you by the clutches of your
judgments
But it's time
Stand up to a world that seeks encroachment.

So now is the time for you to decide...
Do you still want to listen to others?
And continue to abide?

Think Think Think...

Life is yours, and so is your choice
Listen to your heart, and follow what's right
Walk on the pavement that sets you towards your goal
And let you achieve
Your dream that satisfies your soul...

This is what is called to be one among the few;
Without giving up on yourself
Continue to be you!



Deeper Introspections

DISSENT:

THE NECESSARY EVIL

– Riddhi Gyan Pandey, MA Development, 2014-16

“ Yeh humara sabse shaant, kehna manne wala bachha hai. Kabhi ladaai nahi karta. Baaki dono bahut badmaash hain.” (She is our most quiet and compliant child. She never argues. The other two are the problem creators.) This is how my parents would talk about me, while comparing me with my two sisters in their conversations with our extended family and other acquaintances. I believed them. And I cherished this special affection that was bestowed upon me as a reward for being the docile, obedient and conforming child, one who never raised her voice or argued or created any conflict. On the other hand, my sisters were more independent minded and vocal about what they thought. They dissented quite frequently. Obviously, this was not appreciated or encouraged by my parents. As a result my sisters got frequent doses of scolding, which were generously sprinkled with instances of my supposedly exemplary compliance.

Obedience as a virtue is forcefully taught to us from a very young age. This teaching follows us everywhere- at our homes, in schools, in summer camps, in sports grounds, in excursions, in picnics- all spaces that a child can possibly be in. We are taught to believe that there exist these well-meaning authorities which are superior to us and at every point in time know what is best for us. We are expected to comply with the choices and decisions that they make for us. And if this is not enough, the next level of conditioning forces the belief that any form of resistance or questioning of these all-knowing authorities can have terribly detrimental effects in our lives. Not complying with their will, will ensure that everything in our lives that could possibly go wrong, will go wrong.

But what is interesting to note is that our adult lives are not very different from those we lived when we were young. Indeed, the authorities that we are expected to obey change. However, their *modus operandi* remains

remarkably similar. At our workplaces, our bosses decide what job we're suitable for, how much pay we deserve and how we must conduct ourselves. In our colleges and universities, the administration not only decides what we can learn, but in some instances even interferes with how we dress up during our time in those institutions. Our law determines who we can choose as our intimate partners. Our ruling Government regulates the kind of food and beverages that we can consume. The list of examples where some arbitrary authority imposes choices on us is endless. And we're expected to continue the legacy of obedience which has been indoctrinated in us from our childhood.

As a result of this systematic conditioning over years, most of us become habitually compliant. We forget that each one of us is potentially a thinking being with the ability to question and reason. We give up our right to be critical and to dissent against the various social injustices. The authoritarian machinery encourages this tendency of avoiding dissent. Through its various punishment and reward mechanisms, our paternalistic State reinforces compliance in us.

However, the problem with this culture of avoiding the much needed disagreements and dissent of any form is that it strengthens the culture of unconditional compliance to authorities. This leads to a very dangerous situation, where more and more individuals give up their autonomy and choose to follow the authorities blindly. The powerlessness that is attached to this kind of compliance is something we must all be wary of. And the only way that we can avoid the spreading of this dangerous culture, is by actively dissenting against all injustices, big or small, that we come across. Each one of us has an important role to play in doing this. It would be unfair to leave this burden on the shoulders of the few who already face much repression for voicing their dissent from time to time.

PROFILE OF A PROTEST

– Ishan Banerjee, MA Development, 2015-17

This is the first part of the quasi-fictional series on Ahmed Akash- the time-traveller, perpetual flaneur, and poet. This part is the starting of his journey from a satellite. In this one, Ahmed Akash was witnessing HokKolorob (Jadavpur Student protest, 2014). Which considerably the starting moment of 21st century's student movement against the images of autarchy in this country. With Akash the reader can become the part of this journey, which is still the same from where it was being started.



1.1 Ahmed Akash gets injured while watching a film inside a cinema hall. He had to pay only 47 paisa for the show. When the film nears intermission, one of the walls inside the theatre collapsed onto Ahmed, who was seated in the last row. Anyways, Akash's parents take him to the hospital in Barasat and are told by the doctors that their son has very little chance of coming out of coma. They are also informed that further contact with him would only ensure their own imprisonment because this isn't their municipal precinct and therefore, they have broken the law by coming to Barasat and choosing to have their son treated there. The parents are forced to abandon their son and return to their village, where the mother soon develops agoraphobia and father becomes a systematic abuser of the female inmates of the small mental institution where he works. The boy, Ahmed wakes up in a city he doesn't know, alone in a room in the middle of the night. A mysterious red light

streams in through the window. He thinks, 'I guess I am dead.' His phone beeps. 'It is 3:45am, what an odd time to wake up', he wonders to himself. Beep, goes his Nokia Asha 210, a broken phone; broken, like the republic, or a system, or security? He checks his phone – it is a notification. A friend has sent him a video message: a 30-second clipping of a campus at night, students being attacked by uniformed cops. Around the twelve-second mark, the camera tilts down to show a girl being kicked silly by a cop who wears flat slippers. But here's the real story: the girl is shielding a boy from the police lathi.

The video is captioned rhetorically: 'At midnight, JU is on fire'. Nice masthead. It reminds me of a poem.

You have always been childishly impatient, you know, Trying to embrace pain. We were given too long a life, Trotsky, And too many cares, Sometimes so many that cares of the revolution, began falling

short, Shame brings the revolution, Trotsky. Wait for it.

This was written by Sammya Mukhopadhyay, a former student from Jadavpur University and one of the most relevant Facebook activists from the University. Her name reminded me of Soumya Achariya, a student of the same University. It's a question of a letter or two in English, but in Bangla, the distinction is critical. I thought of a time when the walls of the University were littered with graffiti that translates to, 'Let us go ahead in the name of our comrade Soumya Achariya'. This was 1967, maybe 1968 – about the last time the community in Kolkata yearned for a collective engagement with international transpirations. Think back to slogans like, '*tomar naam, aamaar naam... Vietnam, Vietnam*' (my name, thy name, Vietnam, Vietnam), or '*Sorbonne theke Jadavpur Songramer eki sur*' (from Sorbonne to Jadavpur, the struggle is the same).

Two communist-factions split like an atom and a third emerged; in an interview with Solanas, Jean-luc Godard exclaimed, "We must use the camera as the Vietnamese use their cycle against the Americans in the war." It was also the decade when the subcontinent was marred by a war centered on the concept of a 'mother tongue'. It was the 70s, the '*doshok*', so to say when Bengalis held onto their last remaining vestige: Bangla, for the last time (perhaps everyone would rather continue to live in that era). It was a period where forces motivated by religion opposed those motivated by a language – several educated intellectuals were brutally murdered by a regimented force inside campuses across the state and across the border. No, no records exist of the event. No footage, or documentation, which can be used as historical evidence that may implicate the past in the future.

1.2 Ahmed Akash is dizzy as hell. When he looks at the image of this girl being kicked by the cop, he thinks of 1971. In his mind, the two events begin to mix. One becomes a memory of the other. It is 3:45am. He stumbles out of his room, walks down holding his bandaged head to the reception, signs his own release form and leaves this damned hospital behind. He hails a taxi and is surprised to actually find one. He asks the driver to take him to Ballygunge. In his childhood, his father told him about this place – he said it's as big as the world, and that's why they call it '*biswa bangla*'. But when he reaches there, it isn't as big as he thought it would be – it's a thin island, like an arrowroot biscuit.

Britannia. The jingle plays in his head along with a million other voices.

He observes the film posters stuck to the wall in front of him – a few for upcoming Hindi films, the others of releases in Bangla. He is slightly perplexed. The faces on the Bollywood posters are all laughing or cheerful, but those for the Bangla films seem to be afflicted with major sadness. 'This is confusing', he thinks to himself, 'before the wall fell on me, I'd heard that Bengal was on the verge of its third freedom, that the end of the dictatorial regime was near. Why are the people in these films so sad then? Where is their hope? Aren't they on Facebook?' But there are more questions on his mind. Why did his friend send him a video, which contained an assault on a woman? Why specifically a woman? Ahmed thought of the recent video from Bangalore: a woman assaulted on the side of the road. Why did people shoot and then transmit it? What scandal did they locate in the particular image of the woman at the end of a slipper held aloft by the havaladar that September night? I think of how December 2012 made the society evaluate its relationship with a word. 'Rape'. The challenge of living in India is within the realm of socio-political and obviously, the financial, but here is a problem that is philological. A minister in the Mamata Banerjee government says, 'I will call my boys and they will rape you', and there is outrage. Outrage, similar to the person who sent the video with the woman and the policeman. A word as image, image as word – but also, an image as all of its meanings: harassment, humiliation. An hour has passed. Ahmed is walking back to the station after having been turned away by the security guards at the Max Mueller Bhavan for being an outsider. 'Interesting', he thinks to himself, looking at the wall in front of him. 'These aren't the same, sad posters as before.' The film has changed, but the posture of the actors in this new poster is the same. He takes a step to read the title but is accosted by policemen who slap him silly. They accuse him of being a protester. He says he is not and they let him go, so he decides to join the protests anyway – how will they punish him twice for the same offense? He visits the university and witnesses a sight he hasn't seen before: girls smoking ganja in the open balconies. He looks around and finds various posters on the wall. There is one with the three monkeys, which he likes, and others that discuss vague political ideas. The security guards reappear to him: 'Outsider!'

He is not special. He is definitely not the only outsider here. Those fighting in the jungles against organised

state violence are also implicated in cases of gender violence. 'Well', he thinks, 'at least an English magazine from Delhi will write about them.' But the revolutionaries at Vishwabharati weren't really as fortunate. The protests at Jadavpur became famous because of the images that the melee yielded, but there were no cameras at Vishwabharati, no artists to sketch the scenes, no songwriters to depict them in verse. Maybe that's why there is no memory of the protests at Vishwabharati. Akash's head felt funny.

1.3 No one knows what transpired on the day of the Freshers. No video of the event has been issued or circulated. But there was word in the air, 'a molestation', 'a molestation in the compound.' Molestation? And as always, 'why?' As if there is a reason that may explain it. Apparently, the girl was alone with her boyfriend, dressed in 'nontraditional' clothes. This riled up their seniors, who decided therefore that she deserved to be molested. 'Molestation or rape is always a matter of power', said Mala Hashmi to me in an interview. Power, but also negotiation and access. The parents of the girl in question were active supporters of Trinamool Congress, the ruling party. When the ensuing protests were in a complete swing, a minister and a student leader came to the girl's house, made promises of money (in other such cases, the collateral can be money or employment) and asked them to withdraw their complaint. Withdraw their complaint, take their grief and mourning and anger and render it impotent. But the fact is that a large number of sexual offences in the country are never talked about or discussed openly, because they are termed as '*gharelu mamla*' (an affair of one's house) – not open to social scrutiny or comment. It constitutes therefore, a non-image. The negation of an image, of the truth itself. The police assault on protestors inside the Jadavpur campus is on the other hand, an image, a record of the events that transpired on the sixteenth night of September. Is it possible that the protest may have

had such a large political fallout, if not for those who were sentient enough in the middle of the melee to not pick up a weapon, but a mobile phone? Perhaps, but perhaps not. On the other hand, when Mamta Banerjee discredits the protestors by rejecting the human spirit inherent in their demand and instead, laying thick upon them the accusation of being in collusion with the communists, she rejects the image. Because you see, the video recordings and the photographs from the night do not chronicle political affiliation, but policemen raining down blows on students. It's there, it is on record.

1.4 On the second day of a film festival in Ashoknagar, a suburb in Kolkata, I met Kasturi, a member of the Cinema of Resistance, the cultural front of CPI-ML. As part of the festival, they organised the celebration of the Jadavpur protests in collaboration with the local All India Students Association (AISA) leadership. Kasturi documented the event. They screened three films: AFSPA 1958, Ranchi-Lohardaga Mail and finally, Kasturi's own film, 'Bishe September'. A series of images, video recordings and *vaux-populi* from the protests, Bishe September is now iconic – not in the popularly understood meaning of the word, but in how it encapsulates the protest desires to be seen: polish, organised, meaningful. I am thinking of Rajbhawan and the million students – like Ahmed Akash - who will stand in front of it, protesting, screaming slogans passed down to them, inherited, secondhand. But why is self-preservation no longer a concern for them? What is it that brings them out, even in the heavy rain? Yes, I have been told as well, 'this is a movement for equality'. For men, women, girls, boys, transsexuals, gays – but it isn't only that. It is also the fact that revolution is such a rare event that the simmering of one cause lets another boil over. Perhaps this is why when the police arrived at the scene of the Jadavpur protests and applied Section 144 to it, as the protesters began to shout, 'Occupy Dharamshala' in unison.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE PATRIARCH

– Sanjana Santosh, MA Development, 2015-17

A poem on misunderstandings, or the inability to converse a feeling that could change over time. This poem is merely a story from classroom experiences and also elsewhere, where the author finds it difficult to convey how terrible she feels when she is not able to discuss opinions with her peers without assuming opposite views, and how there is a general sense of dismissing of opinions on feminism and other ideas without due consideration.

Our obsession to distinguish between right and wrong is so strong,

Our obsession to define what we are by what we are not, so strong

Our obsession to create binaries, well, strong is an understatement-it's like an animal instinct.

I'm a vegetarian – I'm a non-vegetarian

It's sense – It's non-sense

black – not a black

Masculine – Feminine

Nationalist – Anti-Nationalist

Feminist – Anti-Feminist

We are ready to overlook the politics, the real differences only to perform false divisions.

I know Sultana's dream scares you; the thought of Ladyland haunts you,

Well many have been living the nightmare, living the fiction of false divisions set by some patriarch.

I fight not you, because you are not significant enough, you are busy following your 'MANKIND'

I fight those divisions, fictions, binaries to unburden you of a 'MANKIND' in which you 'men' don't have a say what it should be, as you stand under the shadow of the patriarch himself.

I see him because I'm trying to stand in opposition; trying to stand in the scorching sun squinting at the giant, and you ask me, 'Why should girls have all the Sun?' Irony is an understatement.

It's cute to see you complaining of reverse misogyny by using misogyny to empower you. You say 'Men' are exploited with responsibilities. Well privilege hurts, you see! Let's demolish these poles where you are masculine and I'm feminine, for one can't bind spirits and bodies into categories.

And when we challenge these false divisions, by going out wearing what we want, studying, choosing our partners, sometimes by eating, screening films, screaming slogans, asking questions, doing anything that challenges the fictionalized ideal dictated by a patriarch we, are violently reminded of breaching these boundaries.

But when we will ask questions, challenge constructions and see fiction as fiction, it won't seem like breaching boundaries but like a demand for equality.

So you might ask me what do we want from all this rant? Hum kya chahte hain? –Azadi

Freedom from the fiction of these false divisions, freedom from performing an ideal, freedom to fight so that I can stop fighting you.

THE WILD ONE

– Gunjit Kaur, MA Development, 2015-17

This poem is an ode to the women who work in Kudumbashree in the Attapadi region of Palakkad. Women have been having changing roles in rural India and are being empowered more and more as the years go by. It is their sense of determination that urge them to take control over their lives and continue their beautiful struggle despite the obstacles, which is an inspiration to this poem.

She was always the wild one.
She glides with the gust of wind
That rustles all the leaves above.
She's the creator and the creation,
She breathes life into one.
She is the well kept secret,
The one that keeps people together.
She's the envoy of love and peace,
That the hills echo far and wide.
She's an eccentric mess of a being,
The sweet cacophony of the cicadas alike.
She is the protector, caring of hers,
Damp soil, with still so much warmth.
She perseveres relentlessly,
Brick by brick, grain by grain.
Her love is like the river glorious,
The lifeline that sustains her people.
She gives what's hers; Oh! So selfless,
Kith and kin, and even beyond.
She strives to rise, up and above,
And succeeds ever gracefully so.
She is the wild one; roars of wisdom,
The life of the forest, glory of the mountains.
Her crescendo reaching far and wide, her grace
Inspiring multitudes!

WHO IS THE VILLAIN ?

– Himani Gautam, MA Development, 2015-17

The main theme of this poem deals with the recent spurt of farmer suicides and the need to understand this as a serious issue.

She screamed again and again,
But her tensed voice went in vain.
With heavy steps she walked towards the field.
Having no clue what future is going to yield.
Those wheat fields were no more green,
To find Baba and touch his feet she was keen.
The dusk was not in her favor,
As Baba was no more going to call her;
Gudiya, laali aur laakdi.
The words echoed in her mind,
Too many feelings she had to bind.
In a span of few hours she grew up too much,
The world for her was nothing more than a hutch.

A DIFFICULT QUESTION

– Lakshmi Hariharan, MA Education, 2014-16

A story from Shrishti Arts & Communication Center, from their campaign on Meena – Girl child education in Karnataka

“ Miss, what can I do now? How can I continue my studies?”, asked Lakshmi, a class 9 student from a Government school. My namesake from Nagarala Village, Mudhol, Bagalkot, had called me to ask this question. The call left me speechless. The voice was without any hope. It wasn't even expecting an answer. What answer should I give her? Do I have an answer? Can I ask any other person to help me answer her question? Lakshmi's question triggered off a number of questions in my mind, to which I had no clue where I could find answers.

This question came from Lakshmi, after a gap of 2 years. She had earlier called me to ask me a similar question, “what should I do now?” There was eagerness in her voice and she was looking for an answer, a solution to her problem. There was hope and she sought an urgent action. I too had an answer. Her family had decided to send her to “gandana mane”, husband's house, in the summer holidays when she was in the middle of preparing to get her first stamp of being educated, i.e. class 10 board exams. She did not want to go. She wanted to continue her education, and wanted to know from me what she should do.

Lakshmi was a student studying in class 9, from a village in Bagalkot district of Karnataka, a far away remote village, when I met her along with 11 other girls. These children, studying in a Government school were in the range of classes 3 to 10. They had one thing in common, which was that they had been married off at childhood but were still coming to school. They were well aware of the sword held by a thread that was hanging over their neck, ready to drop anytime and cut their freedom and make them wear the cloak of responsibilities of housewife. Lakshmi was one child who I had met during one of the girl child education campaigns that were being conducted, in Bagalkot. I vividly remember her eyes sparkling as she talked about her aspirations of completing her education and becoming a teacher. There was a lot of determination in her voice as she shared her master plan with me. Instantly my heart too prayed and wished that all her dreams would come true. Lakshmi was married when she was in class 5 and it was decided by her family and her husband's family that she would complete her education, which was 10+2. She said her husband was very supportive of her getting educated.

The reason why she called now was to find a way for her to complete her 10th exam, which was 9 months away. Both of us were in the frame of mind to find solutions. I

offered to talk to her family. She asked me to talk to her in laws, her husband and a close relative, her uncle. The problem was resolved. She was given the permission to continue schooling and complete her 10th grade. She was happy and so was I. She valued this opportunity to continue her schooling.

In the month of May, the following year, Lakshmi called me again to share both a happy news and sad news and confronted me with the same question, “what should I do?” She cleared her 10th exam with 1st class marks, but her family had decided that she would have to go her husband's house as her mother-in-law was not keeping well. There was moral and social commitment to go to her “gandana mane”, and she did. My response to the question was that she could still pursue her dream with her husband's help, as he had encouraged her to do so. There was still a possibility to do +2 privately or from a nearby high school near her husband's house. Lakshmi found the courage to keep her hope alive – of becoming a teacher.

“What should I do?” the question which Lakshmi now asked me after a gap of two years left me speechless. She explained that the situation at home demanded all of her time. Her mother-in-law was not well and the burden of entire household fell on her. All Lakshmi could see was only a long dark tunnel in front of her, and her dream to be a teacher, lost in the darkness of the tunnel. She sounded helpless and I felt helpless too. This dilemma can be called a common feature of every educated, career woman's life. Their pain and struggle may be similar to what Lakshmi was going through. However, the difference is that the modern woman is empowered, with the education, access to psychological help to handle the mental trauma, and physical support of family, women's' support organizations, social media etc. to seek other alternatives for pursuing her career. But Lakshmi is all alone. No one can understand her trauma, her dreams. Soon even she may not understand her own dreams. This was evident in the voice I heard on the phone, which had lost all its exuberance. What could I tell her? Am I to advise her to take a rights based approach and seek her right to education, and divorce herself from all family ties at a vulnerable age or should she give in to the demands of family and community and sacrifice her educational dreams? Is it the responsibility of this young girl to fight for her right to education or is this responsibility of all of us and the State?

ANGER: THE EMOTION OF NEO LIBERALISM

– Vanisha Narendrakumar Tiwary, MA Development, 2014-16

All metro places give you a life of comfort, a life where everything is at your doorstep from your laundry to groceries, from your coke to chai, and what not. Neo-liberalism has very cleverly tapped every need and desire of middle class people. Be it going to office in a nice AC car, and not having to struggle with the scorching heat, overly crowded buses and metros or having “maa ki thali” at your doorstep when you are missing nice North Indian home-made food when you live alone in Bangalore or Chennai, we have got it all.

I must say that somewhere these needs are created by neo-liberal institutions through social media, hoardings displaying houses where there is good connectivity to all amenities and displaying a child asking his mom, “Which mall are we going next?” or Sonam Kapoor standing in the lavatory with a tagline “curves are important”. The list is endless.

These needs are not only generated in urban settings but in rural ones as well. In many villages there is an intense competition to grow more and more cash crops because they are needed for global consumption. Hence, every farmer has started installing motor pumps to increase production. For this they start taking money from the money lenders to buy these technologies, which later generally end with them being under the burden of heavy debt which takes them a very long time to pay off. All these processes of competing with the fellow villagers in a race of generating more and more income leads to anger, frustration and tension among the family members and sometimes this comes at the cost of sullyng the relationships. Interestingly, those who don't have land generally migrate to the city and become part of the manufacturing and service industries which contributes to country's GDP and global productivity and provides various kinds of services to these emerging middle class at the cost of the exploitation of their labor. In this

scenario also, we can see the struggle and anger that lies behind each of the smiling faces of your domestic help, your delivery boy, your cab driver, the lady who works 12 hours to stitch garment for some global brand which she is not aware of and who then goes back home after travelling for 2 hours or more and then fulfills her family's needs and demands as well.

This neoliberal monster looks so generous as if it is someone who is increasing productivity, giving jobs to the unemployed, illiterate, emancipating women from the gender norms which confine them within the four walls of their houses. However, we turn a blind eye towards the cruel face behind this generous looking monster, who snatches land from the tribal or marginal farmers and forces them to become laborers, who Forces women to move out of the house, but at the same time doesn't change the gender roles but instead creates new institutions where these existing gender norms will fit in. Such as the IT industry (women are working at the bottom level in a closed cubicle where physical work is not required and failing to make it to the top hierarchy), garment Workers, domestic help, receptionist, babysitter, cheer girls etc, as the one who breaks the community bonding into small nuclear families, who takes away the beautiful wilderness from nature to create scientific agriculture, for construction purposes for the growing needs of an ever-growing population and their desires. The list goes on.

This is how the giant Neo-liberal monsters with the help of governmental and international agencies sneak into the common man's life and tells the state “let me do my job of making money and you just be there like a watchman who should just keep a watch on my actions but not dare to interrupt me. Let these people run behind money and end their days with a hope for some light the next day”. Thus, all these emotions of frustration, failure, agony, leave a very important emotion of ANGER.

IT'S TIME

– Akshith Patnaik, MA Development, 2015-17

This short piece aims to reach out to all the women in this world who have had their voices suppressed, who have faced discrimination or exploitation of any kind. It's to tell them that there are people in this world who are there to help them. They just need to break their silence, which is the only way for them to help themselves. It also touches upon the state of affairs in society today, i.e., how we are treating the women in our society.

This is a tribute to the women in my life, who have faced such discrimination and exploitation and fought against it all. It is a mark of respect for all the things they had to go through, to how they have fought by raising their voices. The piece aims to inspire women to act against the wrongs they have faced, to find their voice and to break their silence.

A tribute and appeal to God's own creation, one he couldn't himself understand,

God created them to maintain the balance of this world.

God created them as equals.

Men and women were always meant to be at par with each other.

Sadly, being a woman in today's world is different from what he must've intended.

Starting from my childhood I have been taught how women are the pivot of a family and consequently of the society.

I have been taught to treat them with respect.

But the society we live in today doesn't seem to be on the same page as I am or my peers are.

They say women need to be treated like delicate flowers, yet men and society are the first to go, run and pluck them.

Crumple them up and throw them away.

Society worships its cows and protects them with new laws, and here the existing laws seem to fall short to protect our women.

The same women we used to run to when we were in tears, the same women we run to even today.

Why this silence?

Why this ignorance?

A lack of representation seems to cripple all efforts to help women.

When women raise their voices, the so called pillars of society subdue these voices.

We come as agents of change; we come as agents of hope.

Trying to fight against these pillars,

Trying to help women find their voices,

Fight against the discrimination and the inequality.

Be it on the road or in the room,

We are there to listen.

It's about time we understand how we would be incomplete without women.

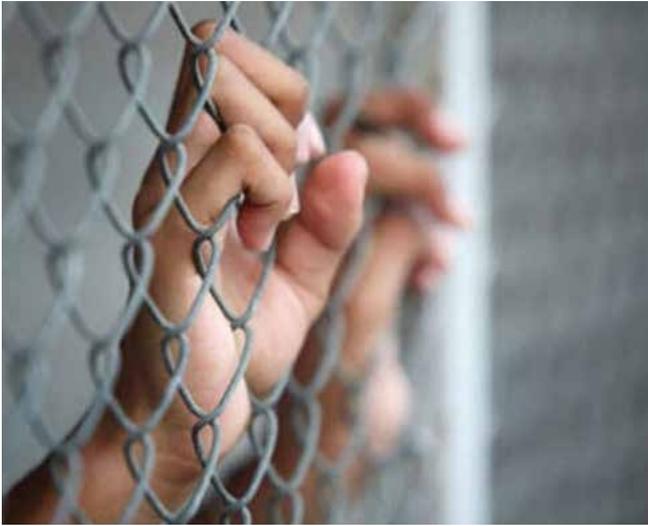
It's about time we give them the respect they deserve.

It's time women raised their voices.

"It's time to break the silence".

MONOLOGUE: 'TOUCH?'

– Pritha Bannerjee, MA Development, 2015-17



The following is the author's attempt to creatively respond to the infamous Mathura Rape Case incident. There was an incident of custodial rape in India on 26 March 1972, wherein Mathura, a minor and orphan Dalit girl was allegedly raped by two policemen on the compound of Desai Ganj Police Station in Chandrapur Azim Premji University district of Maharashtra. Mathura and her relatives threatened to burn down the Police Chowky if they were not allowed to file a police complaint. The judgment of the case in the Sessions Court found the defendants not guilty by stating that, Mathura was "habituated to sexual intercourse" and thus her consent was voluntary. The Supreme Court in their judgment on Tukaram vs. State of Maharashtra acquitted the accused policemen on the grounds that Mathura had raised no alarm, there were no visible marks of injury and that she might have incited the cops since she was used to sex.

As theatre is a place that allows her to experience and represent different people, situations and emotions, through this piece the author wishes to completely immerse herself into Mathura's shoes and explore a first hand experience of being her.

Stage Directions

Curtain opens. The stage is dark. Suddenly, spotlight falls on the centre of the stage. Mathura walks in. As she does, her footsteps can be heard. She stops short of the spotlight and puts only her hands in the lit up area, thereby creating a huge shadow of her hands on stage.

Mathura: Here, hold my hand? C'mon, why won't you? Well, it is just my hand; please do not shy away from it. Here, touch it! You really wouldn't, would you? Ahhhhh... I see. I guess I might end up compromising your purity? Your power? Your soul?

Stage Directions:

Mathura now quietly steps into the spotlight, looks around and continues with her monologue.

Mathura: I have no rights, and that is your right to decide? But you see, love needs no right, it just engulfs you, knowing no boundaries of purity or pollution. Yet, you claim to have the upper hand even over love and thus, you took it upon yourself to reach out to the custodians of law. Oh, you poor thing, little did you know that they would be the ones to voice out my rights, they would be the ones to display my forever invisible face, they would be the ones to break the notions of my impure touch.... Heh (shrugging). They would be the ones ...

Stage Directions

Stage turns red, creating a tense backdrop

What are they saying? Why is he making me stay back? Didn't we finish giving our statements? What more do they want now? Wait... Where did Meshram, Ashok and Nushi go? I don't like that hand on my shoulder, it does not feel right.... Lights??? Why did the lights go off??? Ahhhhhhh.... "Please, Please I m begging you stop, STOP! Nooo Please don't...Pleeeeeeease Stop!" I shrieked till that authoritative rod was thrust right in my screaming mouth and he said with his gritted teeth, "We will throw your slutty cunt behind bars along with your lover and his aunt without any bail if you so much as whimper!" I couldn't ... I couldn't let that happen.

Down came my underwear, standing in a latrine behind the station, a flashlight staring into the folds of my 'untouchability' ... you plundered and plundered into it, consumed by your desire and thirst, or no... it was the establishment of your power, your authority, your khaki!

Stage Directions

Mathura walks towards the audience, the spotlight follows her and she continues with the climax of her monologue.

Mathura: So here, now you will hold my hand? Wouldn't you? Well, it is just my hand; please do not shy away from it anymore. Here, touch it! Feel it! Own it! You really wouldn't, would you? Ahhhhh... I see. I guess I might still end up compromising your purity? Your power? Your soul? Well, don't you worry, I was habituated to sex and I did not scream!

Stage Directions

Mathura looks around, strips and exits parading through the audience.

कौन है ?

– प्रीति खुराना, MA Education, 2014-16

कौन है ?

वह कौन है ?

कौन है जो मेरी रूह को एक नई आवाज़ दे रहा है ?

कौन है जो मेरे विचारों को गहराई दे रहा है ?

क्या मैं वही हूँ जो पहले थी ?

या कोई मेरी इच्छाओं को नए पंख दे रहा है ?

एक वो थी,

जो बस उड़ने के ख्वाबों को बुनती थी,

पर पता नहीं कब उन ख्वाबों का रंगीन तना बन गया,

और लगा के जैसे दुनिया बदल सी गई !

आस्मां जैसे बाहें फैलाए उसका ही इंतज़ार करने लगा,

ख्वाबों के दरवाज़े की जैसे चाबी सी मिल गयी!

हर दिन जैसे एक नया गीत गाने लगा,

खुशी की सीमाएँ जैसे लुप्त हो गयी |

शायद खुशी भी उसके संग हो गयी...

ऐसे लगा के जैसे ये वक्त रुक सा गया,

पर फिर भी जैसे चलता रहा |

उसकी दुनिया में टिक टिक की आवाज़ का संगीत भरता रहा...

A POEM ON CASTE

– Jayaram Polaki, MA Development, 2015-17

Note: The translation from Telugu to English has been provided in the end. However, feelings and thoughts are sometimes better expressed in one's own mother tongue. The same may often get lost in translation.

ఓ ఆధునిక మానవుడా ! అజ్ఞానాంధకారన్ని వదిలి
చుడూ.....

కులం నేను కులం నేను

కులం పేరుతో కలత రేపగలను నేను

కులం జాడ్యం కులం పిచ్చి

కులం లోనే మనిషి చావు, బ్రతుకు.

కలతులెందుకు కులం కొరకు

కులం ఇవ్వదు మనిషికి కుడూ, గుడూ

కుడూ పెట్టని కులం కొరకు, సాటి మనిషికి వీడినావు
సాటి మనిషిని చూడకుండా ఇంటి నుండి తరిమినావు.

జగతి లోనే ఏది లేదు

కులం కన్నా హీనమైనది

నిజం మరచిన పిచ్చి జనులు

కులం తోనే బ్రతుకుతుండ్లు

నిన్న కాలం రేపు కాలం

కులంకెప్పుడు అంత్యకాలం

మనిషికైతే నూరు ఏళ్ళు

మరి కులంకైతే ఇంకెన్ని ఏళ్ళు....?

కులం లేదు కులం లేదు

ప్రేమపెళ్ళికి కులం లేదు

పంచభూతాలికి కులం లేదు

ఈ సంత్యంబు ఎరుగని పిచ్చి జనులు కులం

గజ్జితో ఎగురుతుండ్లు.

కులం వద్దు కులం వద్దు, కులంతో ఆ బ్రతుకు వద్దు.

Translation of this poem

Oh, modern man!
Leave your blind knowledge behind to see caste for
what it is...
I am caste
In the name of caste, I create conflicts
I am a disease, a madness of the people
Because of me, humanity is both living and dying
Why do we have caste conflicts?
Does caste give us food and shelter?
If not, why did you leave your fellow men and women?
Why did you push them out of your home?
There is nothing in the world more insignificant than
caste
You are ignoring this hard truth
You are still living in the madness induced by caste
Over the course of time, nothing is permanent
If so, when will this caste madness ends?
There is no caste for water, fire, land, air, blood, nature,
love
Why don't people realize this fact?
Why do people still live for caste, care for caste?
That is why, I don't want a life with caste.

KNOW- L(ED) – EDGE

– Zahra A Kayyum, MA Education, 2014-16

An era of Swaraj, defunct today.
Manual work no longer valiant.
No longer worshipped in its principality.
It was a period of cooperative community.
Synergistic elements of indigenous culture.

Quietude past envisioned blooming Swadesh.
Where, integrated knowledge was worshiped.
Manor, labor was flavored with sweat,
Of experiment, discovery, support and synchronicity.
Local craft thrived in its citizenry boundaries.
For practical education in a large country.

But this residential pond slowly flowed,
From Nai Talim Sangh,
To the river of Industries.
Colonization and migration overflowed.
Nuclear families swirled currents,
Of marketization and alienated workmanship.

Swaraj scattered with dreary local gears.
The oceanic circle arose at force,
Circumflexing the future of denizen.
Self-aggrandizement monopolized,
Alienating intra-generational equity.

Immersed a bursting machinery age.
Submerging village economy.

Burgher at rise.
Commercializing without morality.
Marched with the world's capitalism.
Aliened soils, left parched and unattended.

The Interior locals tied in captivity,
Of loafing unemployment;
To unprecedented chimney harrows.
Was this Gandhian tomorrow?

Richness materialized copper for few,
Paupers sorrow grew to cold stoves.
Penny-Penny saved by village communities.
Withstood drought of sustainability in their vicinity.
Was this what Chacha Nehru wanted?
Was this the retina of Nehru's envisioned India?

Maybe, maybe not.
Industries with its toddling steps
Voiced for proficiency and efficacy.
It was then, a voice for the unrecognized
Spoke for the oppressed.

Ambedkar was he, extending Nehruvian sight
Envisioning Higher education for the poorest.
Education did reach many,
But yet unemployed youth
Chuted into chimneys,
Of vacuumed local crafts and arts.

Cottage industries, greased locks.
Rusted and layered dust.
Was this industrial revolution?
Or a pathway for polished educated
To cross the Indian periphery.

Sustainability did sustain, yet unattained
Men wore suits and gowns,
Propelling with degrees in Law,
Medicine, Architecture and Engineering.

Man's ability to work with hands, heart and head,
Diminished while learning to work with pen.
In this era men have forgotten to hold a pen.
It's the electronic age of today.

Pen was once a sword,
 But it has cut through the umbilical cord
 Of Swadeshi and Swaraj.
 Pen is pointless! Aimless! - Where,
 Unpracticed handwritings understands typing.
 Keyboards knuckles and click at a command.
 It's all about the demand.
 Crafts are now highly priced at exhibitions...
 Exhibiting the bygone era.
 Motherland is sinking in- hinterland.

Hindering progress, a diverse wonderland.
 Home schooling to Basic education,
 Alternative education to alternated education.
 Education is forever altering, molding, reshaping,
 In the current, currents of globalization.

Today, Globe need to sustain, with a vision of
 Sustaining, not just Indian soil but the soil of world.
 May be Gandhi's vision coughed to turbulence,
 But His essence and presence always remains.

BABU BHAI

– Ribhu Ranjan, MA Development, 2015-17

The objective of establishing models of Local Governance and Panchayati Raj institutions was to enhance participation of citizens at the local level of governance. The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments represent the local self government in rural and urban areas respectively. Both amendments are aimed at decentralizing the political powers and awarding local bodies such as Panchayats, Municipal Corporations with limited executive powers. These bodies do not possess legislative and judicial powers. Legislative powers are vested in the hands of politicians, and executive powers with the bureaucrats. Hence, the true nature of democracy and participatory involvement can't be traced. There have been instances when politicians and bureaucrats with the involvement of authorities, industries, etc have coerced people for personal benefits. Those benefits have indirectly stemmed exploitation and have marginalized them further.

The Poem 'Babu Bhai' represents such a scenario. Here, fed up of not being considered, people are trying to organise themselves so that their voice can be heard. They are raising their voices against the corrupt rule which is exploiting them. They are demanding for the freedom to access their fundamental rights. They are fighting against illegitimate authority as it promotes coercion. They are fighting against the wrong-doings of bureaucrats and politicians. The word 'faceless' in this poem is used as a metaphor to represent an authority which is illegitimate. People are demanding for the powers not to be vested in wrong-hands. For example, a corrupt bureaucrat.

We're on a mission for representation
 We're on a mission for legitimacy
 On a mission for upholding democracy

On a mission for our rights
 Come forward my people, Come forward united
 We have to face the Faceless!

Babu Bhai, you took an oath, by which you swore to uphold
 To work for people, to give our humanity a fighting chance
 But what have you done?
 We will remember, we will not forget!

Babu Bhai, speak up if you got it
 Accept the sins you committed
 Or run if you have to
 But watch out for yourself
 We will remember, we will not forget!

'Babu Bhai' is true to only the love of power
 Takes our gold, sells us whiskey
 Destroying and enslaving both our young & old
 We will remember, we will not forget!

'Our' humanity is at stake
 Let us give each other some hope
 Let us not betray each other for once

Come forward my people, Come forward united
 We have to face the Faceless!

Oh! My people!
 The time has come
 To destroy, to annihilate, to bring an end
 To the ills, to the wrath

We'll see the dawn, only if
 The power of 'Babu Bhai' doesn't fall in wrong hands!
 Come forward my people, Come forward united
 We have to face the Faceless!

THE TALE OF AN EPIPHANIC BUS RIDE!

– Theertha Menon, MA Development, 2014-16

The journey from my dingy hostel room to serene Aizawl started a bit later than I wanted it to as I had a couple of unavoidable errands to finish before catching the bus. The longing for eating 'biryani' was making my stomach sing burp operas. I had been urging myself for a long while to be patient till the time to relish this treat finally came. My gluttonous stomach could not wait any longer. Around twelve noon, when I reached the restaurant and ordered a 'Veg Biryani', the look on his face was as if I had asked for a UFO spaceship! It was not any different from the looks I have been getting to see in the past couple of weeks for asking for vegetarian dishes in Guwahati. The much awaited steamy biryani arrived and as I indulged in it, my phone rang. It was one of my closest friends wishing me luck for the 20+ hours bus journey that was to follow. Much to my dismay, the biryani was nowhere near my expectations. However, thanks to the conference call, I did not pay much attention to the food and just gobbled it up like a ritual.

Although the conversation traversed through varied topics such as deciding which saree to wear for a wedding reception, to helping my friend finding a passion in life, the back of my mind was still fixed on the journey I was about to embark on. I could not wait to travel around the north east, as this held the topmost position on my bucket list. As usual I arrived earlier than the prescribed time and waited in the depot for the bus to arrive. Unable to make out whether it was the biryani or the afternoon heat, I was feeling very sleepy. Sleep was looming heavily on my eyelids, just as a random person called out, 'Aizawl ka bus'. I woke up from my semi-sleep and to my shock saw a tempo traveler. The thought of traveling in this small vehicle for 20 hours was making my head spin. The lack of a better option and the burning desire to travel pushed me to turn a blind eye to the inconvenience and walk towards the traveler in steady steps. As I moved closer, I noticed two girls about my age, looking at me with curious eyes. I also noticed that there was a lady, an elderly man and a handsome boy, who I figured to be a family member, though that did not stop me from secretly wishing that the boy would be traveling to Aizawl; obviously because it was a long

journey, and I thought it would be nice to have company. Then again pouring water over my secret desirous fire, it was the elderly man who ended up traveling in the end. I immediately reassured my folks and friends that I had boarded the bus and was safe. To my relief, I came to know that the main bus terminal that my present vehicle was only to be used for 40 minutes, and not the entire journey. After twenty minutes of waiting at the terminal, we were ready to board. Excitement filled me as I was prepared to engage in the experiences that came with this unknown land. I found myself next to a migrant Bihari who worked for some electronic company. He told me that he had no idea about this place we were headed to, and not much about Guwahati either as it hadn't been long since he shifted his base here in search of a job, like several others who travelled to far off lands in search of destined opportunities.

Why has migration of labour escalated into a global phenomenon? My friends from the North East had mentioned during a casual conversation that they found it difficult to take a positive approach on this migration pattern as some fear that the opportunities of indigenous people may get affected. With many illegal migrants from Bangladesh and business men from Marwari community crossing the border, this phenomenon has become their main concern. These profound thoughts (and monsoon winds!) left me saturated, and I comfortably slipped into a deep sleep that I woke up from only 50 kms before Shillong.

The landscape of Meghalaya reminded me of the hill ranges of my native state Kerala. I felt a sense of familiarity. I was transfixed by the captivating beauty of Shillong and its hills. Mother Nature has truly endowed them with the best! I made a mental note to come back to this beautiful hill station to soak up as much of its beauty as possible. My usual sense of pride in owning an extraordinary camera phone failed me as the pictures I took on them could do no justice to what my eyes witnessed. A quarter of the journey was done within no time. I had stocked my bag with biscuits and eatables so that I would not have to get out of the bus for dinner or lunch, dutifully obeying orders of my mother! Primarily

also because being a vegetarian has raised more eyebrows than a girl traveling alone in north east. As the night grew darker, the rains lashed out on us, soaking my seat and my entire right arm as water droplets dripped down. Conversations with my co-passenger continued along the rhythm of rain.

I would like to talk about general perceptions people have about men of Bihar and UP. To be very frank, I didn't know any better until I started interacting with my classmates who were from that part of the country. They have become my closest friends in the journey and have aided to end the prejudice and my tendency to stereotype. I understand now that humans in general, come in many shades of grey and need not be classified to groups based on moralistic outlooks or the region they belong to.

I was still wide awake owing to the lengthy and rejuvenating afternoon nap. As my eyes kept staring out into the dark nothingness, I started wondering how these drivers see where they are going! The muddy roads and hilly terrain had absolutely no street lights. Their jobs are difficult and dangerous. I braced myself for the worst, fearing that they did not really have any idea, and were just driving along anyway. Out of nowhere my phone rang, interrupting me from my stream of thoughts. It was around midnight, and my mom was calling to check on me, to see if I was fine. I explained to her that I had nowhere else to be except the bus.

This conversation happened in my native mother tongue, Malayalam. The uncle who sat right in front of me, turned around and asked, "Malayali aanale?" (You are a Malayali!) It was more of a proclamation than a question. I have often been told by my non-Malayali friends, in jest, that we are an infestation, found just about everywhere. This just proved their hypothesis, I guess. What are the odds that I found a fellow Malayali in a bus that was leaving to Aizawl from Guwahati? For a state that looks like a banana and acts like banana republic, the ubiquitousness of its people is just unbelievable.

The duration of the journey now seemed more bearable as I had another new friend to share my journey with. In the wee hours of the following day, we reached Mizoram to find that my co passenger had vanished. I was a little disappointed that he left without so much as a goodbye. In life we have no power to control who comes or leaves.

My new Malayali friend was a doctor and he was a "Neuro-Neonatologist", who was doing exceptional work among newborns to prevent or curb genetic diseases

in the early stages. I couldn't help but think about how we pass by all sorts of people who do exceptional work which has a huge impact on the world, and we know nothing about their stories. As he shared his stories and experiences, I realized how much we learn from just listening to someone. If only we listened more!

The topography of Mizoram is mainly hills and deep valleys. To see how locals have conquered their adversities and built their lives is awe-inspiring. The houses stand on bamboo poles perpendicular to the hills and sometimes have two-three stories. I have grown up in concrete jungles, and I detest the sight of buildings of cement and metal. This sight was a breath of fresh air.

I had already traveled for 21 hours straight, and still had two hours left. The difficulties of traveling long distances in buses, especially for women include going to toilet, due to which my water consumption levels had dipped to two gulps. The weariness of the travel was getting to me, but I was still quite excited. To believe that this place too belongs to India was difficult to digest as it is so far away from the mainland. The idea of belonging to a nation just seemed to be a faraway reality, as the Mizo land is an entity on its own, secluded and isolated in the middle of nowhere. But then I realized that is the case for all, the fights for different states, countries and boundaries are all defined by the underlying need for recognition. It is a bizarre idea, this India, the diversity, the languages, the cultures, the facial features. Yet it's the sense of belonging together to one nation that binds us together, regardless of the colour of our skin, the language we speak. It is the identity of 'Being Indian' that unites us amongst all these diversities.

With half an hour left, just when I thought that my tedious journey was about to end, the bus suddenly stopped. The driver's side-kick said that the road is blocked for two hours. Again, I found myself face-to-face with yet another adventure. Doctor Uncle and I went searching for people to share a cab with us to go Aizawl city through a different route.

And so, I got a glimpse into an entire different life through that journey. I wouldn't have wanted it any other way. While parting, Doctor Uncle expressed his concerns, and also shared that he was mighty impressed that for a girl from Kerala was traveling through these rough terrains of North East alone. He called me courageous.

I was left wondering whether he would say the same to a boy of my age! But that's a conversation for a different day.

NATIONALISM: A HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INTERPRETATION IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF MODERNITY AND SYMBOLISM

– Shadab Alam, MA Education, 2014-16

In this piece, the author explains how the idea of nationalism has emerged through cultural interaction, language and symbolism in modern state apparatus.

Introduction

After the reformation period in Europe, the Bible got translated from Hebrew to Latin and then much later to English (By John Wycliffe, during 14th century). Major changes have taken place since then in the European societies. What caused this, is a fair question.

Before Renaissance, European Societies were dominated by the Church and the Pope, and it was because of two reasons. First, notion of sacred language of the Bible, which was Hebrew. It was only supposed to be read and explained by the Pope and church authorities. It (Hebrew) was not a medium of interaction with each other. Thus, there was monopoly of church and the Pope on the Bible and its language. As a result, they misinterpreted the text and scared the people in the name of religion. Second, it was the collaboration of ruling dynasties from the church. They were interconnected to each other as per the need of the hour to rule the society.

But, after the translation of the Bible, from Hebrew to Latin and then English; the truth (knowledge) conveyed to the Europeans was in a very systematic manner. Meanwhile, the printing press had been invented. It provided momentum for the 'democratization of knowledge' to the whole world. Now, not only was religious knowledge spreading across the globe but also literature, science and various technological ideas knowledge were circulating among the global societies. Now, instead of being religious, people became rational and scientific to look beyond their socio-economic issues. In this discourse of time, the hegemony of the church had declined and the rule of dynasties became a subject

of question for the people. Thus, in latter period, this rule got converted to democracy and especially sovereignty.

Thus, a large number of people came on the common platform of the society to re-think about themselves. As a result, the platform was the common language (English and other languages), historical and cultural background (they were all exploited by church and feudal system) and it was their psychological makeup which manifested their belongingness to all these indicators. As a result, they felt, psychologically connected with each other, although in reality they were not gathered at one place to connect to each other physically. In the course of time, they developed the feeling of belonging towards each other, in a given territory (although not necessary always, because before 1948, Jews were not residing in a given territory to form a state but they were feeling and thinking like a Jewish nation). Further, the mentioned discussion happened about the 17th and 18th century (except example of Jews). Here, I want to point out that the feeling and thinking about the spirit of nation and nationalism is very modern, which came to India during Indian National Movement.

Modern National State and Nationalism

The idea of nationalism a purely cultural product based on the prerequisites mentioned above. This is entirely based on the symbols, language, media and technology. All these characteristics belong to 'modern national state'. Before, the concept of modern state, the notion of nationalism was not there. For instance, the presence of

various princely states in India, indicates that there were lot of countries, including India.

But, in the modern times, the idea of nationalism gained momentum in order to deal with socio-economic problems in particular societies. For instance, the spirit of nationalism during the Indian national movement for independence. Here, needless to say that Indians were being exploited by the British.

But the question is why exactly did the idea of nationalism emerged in the late 18th century? And why not before or after it? We can find its answer in the modern state apparatus, which is a precondition for nationalism. In other words, it requires virtual interaction through symbols or language, and can be done with daily newspapers, T.V. news channels, books (novel and literature etc.). It requires 'political technology', symbols like 'param veer chakra and 'veer chakra' for army people, tombs of unknown soldiers, national flag, national anthem, national songs and national emblem, army's uniform etc. Here, I want to make a point that all these things are characteristics of the modern nation states and not characteristics of ancient and medieval states.

Explanation and justification of above mentioned characteristics of nationalism

To begin let's understand it through the example of newspapers. Hegel observed that newspapers serve modern man as a substitute for morning prayers, which is paradoxical. It is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull.¹ it means, at a certain time, on certain dates in the calendar, thousands of people shaped their ideas about nation or related to the idea of national. Hegel describes it as a mass phenomenon. In the same manner electronic media is also doing the same thing either through news, movie (like Border) and daily tuck shops

Further, whenever any incident happens in a country, let's say large scale earthquake or bloodshed of army people in danger zones, when we come to know about these incidents through print or electronic media, first we feel sad, later we gather for a condolence meeting.

What is the rationale? Because we feel we are victims of these disasters, which belongs to nationals. Later, it produces the feeling of nationalism.

In addition, symbols like 'param veer chakra' and 'veer chakra', are awards, related to the army. Army people get these awards when they do a great job during war, external or internal threat. Further, in my childhood I remember seeing a person from my village who get 'param veer chakra', posthumously. When I asked my grandfather why his family received the award, I got the answer that "*Isne border par ladte hue pure desh ke logon ki rkasha ki hai islye sarkaar ye samman de rahi hai*" (he fought at the border to protect our nation, so the government is honoring him). Now, we can observe how these awards connect with the nation, which is also a modern phenomenon. Before the emergence of the modern state, this was not the case.

In case of the national flag, the national anthem and the national song, we understand the 'importance' of these symbols through the current debate on nationalism in India, specially focusing on the issue of JNU. Now, the discourse is that whoever sings the national anthem and the national song, will be considered as a nationalist. Those who hoist the national flag, will be nationalist and they respect Indian institutions like army, judiciary and constitution. The remaining population is considered 'anti-national' (according to a certificate distributor), or if you question about the validity of these symbols and institutions then you will be categorized as 'anti-nationalist'. Now, we can see how the idea of nationalism is converting into different views and directions, which is extremely new, modern and also very disappointing.

References: 1- 'Printed materials encouraged silent adherence to causes whose advocates could not be located in any one parish and who addressed an invisible public from afar. 'Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, 'Some Conjectures about the Impact of Printing on Western Society and Thought,' *Journal of Modern History*, 40: 1 (March 1968), p. 42.

POTTY CULTURE: LOOKING INTO THE CULTURAL ASPECTS OF TOILET USE IN INDIA

– Akshit Patnaik, MA Development, 2015-17

"I am known to be a Hindutva leader. My image does not permit me to say so, but I dare to say. My real thought- Pehle Shauchalaya, Phir Devalaya (Toilet first, Temple later)".

– Narendra Modi

This quote was taken from a speech which our Prime Minister gave in October 2013 before he became Prime Minister. This brings in front of us the problem or the connection the Hindu religion makes with toilets. How it is considered an impure thing, how even talking about a toilet with a temple is something that would threaten the image of a Hindutva icon like Mr. Modi. This piece aims to look into this connection of toilets with Indian culture, the ways in which the idea of using toilets is seen, and the reason why these ideas came about.

"Ending open defecation would bring immense benefits. Some 130m households lack toilets. More than 72% of rural people relieve themselves behind bushes, in fields or by roadsides. The share is barely shrinking. Of the 1 billion people in the world who have no toilet, India accounts for nearly 600m." This part taken from the economist highlights how important the sanitation issue is on a global level.

The solution to this problem with respect to India is not to just build more toilets, but to convince people to use them. This has a connection to cultural aspects, which vary among the various religions practiced in India, and also regionally we see a variation in this culture of not using toilets. Talking about toilets, if we see the current situation after our Prime Minister launched the *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*, which aims at bringing about a hygiene and sanitation revolution in India, the number of toilets have increased. Most schools in most states now have separate toilets for girls and boys. This is just the beginning of things, most people would think. In the last two years at least **3-4 lakh** toilets have been constructed in order to help achieve complete eradication of open defecation by 2019. All these initiative are being taken up in good spirit, to help its citizens, and the Government

is trying its best to achieve the target but in all this they forget about the larger issue which is in-front of them- the issue of ritual purity attached to the act of excretion, the problems which arise out of the lack of understanding about the need of these toilets etc. What happens now is that, even if people got toilets built, they would still prefer to go in the open. (This is not always the case. South India has a different aspect which will be talked about it in the next few sections) There are stark differences in the reasons for open defecation in the rural and urban context which need to be looked at separately as they are related to reasons other than religion or caste.

The people first have to be informed about the reason why they need to use the toilet rather than going in the open. According to them, going in the open is a sign of a healthy rural lifestyle. For them having a toilet in the premises of their home is polluting their space, their house. They do not understand the implications of open defecation, the outcomes of it, the contaminated soil, contaminated water table, the risk that the people, particularly children, face from exposure to parasites, the various diseases which happen because of this and the severity of the risk. These things need to be communicated first, before just providing the people with toilets. The ideas of purity attached to toilets need to be changed, like what Mr. Modi tried to do by putting temples after toilets. People also need to understand that it is not impure to have a toilet in their houses. In fact it's a sign of sanitation and cleanliness which actually is purity.

This sort of an idea is something that is prevalent in mostly North Indian villages, majorly among the Hindu population. It is interesting to see that the Muslim populations are open to the idea of having toilets in their homes. They generally tend to use them as well, unlike other cases where people have toilets but still go in the

open. This, I think, is because they do not associate the idea of sanitation with that of impurity. This form of an abandonment of toilets is not seen in the Southern part of India. This brings up several questions: **Why is this so? What makes people in the north shun toilets? What is so different about the people here?** These questions can be answered only if we go and look into the histories of both the regions, the connections they make with the idea of filth, dirt, and how they relate those ideas to the act of defecation. This will show a stark difference in how people in the North and how the people from the South think about the need for toilets. **Why is there a regional divide?**

The whole idea of not using toilets has a lot to do with the fact that only the low castes are associated with handling filth and dirt, the dirty work of the society, cleaning human faeces etc. The reason this was brought up was because now the toilets which are made at home

for the rural population have septic tanks which need to be cleaned from time to time depending on the size of the tanks. The argument provided by the people is that when this tank is full, who will clean them? Who would want to do the a disgusting and filthy act of handling faeces? This shows how caste is firmly associated with the work one does, and we can see the question arising in the minds of the people: How can an individual from a high caste do the work which is typically supposed to be done by the low caste people?

To conclude, I would like to point out that the ideas attached to cleaning and sanitation in India vary from region to region, and from religion to religion and one must look into this to understand the various reasons behind the problem of open defecation India faces

DIGNITY OF A DEVELOPER

– Akanksha Behera, MA Development, 2015-17

“They are illegal to the courts, inconvenient for the authorities, necessary for parties and unions. Thus they are seen as categories – construction site workers, agricultural labourers, mining laborers, scavengers, street vendors, manufacturing industry workers, domestic child labourers, hawkers, beggars, divested of history and identity and hence of rights and needs.”– Aweek Sen (quoted with a bit of modification).

A large percentage of India's workforce is in the informal sector. Around 64% female and 72% male were employed in the informal sector in 2012, leaving the agriculture sector.¹ The figures for informal employment are likely to be even larger because enterprises identified as “employer's households”, which account for employment like the provision of domestic services, are excluded from the definition of the informal sector.²

The informal sector is in reality, the developers of the Indian Economy; hence I would not hesitate to refer to them as the city makers. It is the invisible work of this sector that makes the so called formal economy flourish and make high margins of profits. The idea of looking at the informal sector with the lens of formality causes most of its problems, ignoring the nuances and beauty

of the informal sector as an independent entity. It's worth giving a thought to whether can the workers who constructed lavish towers afford to live in them? Can even the farmer who produces food be assured of safety from a drought or famine? Also, can a highly qualified person work carefree and contribute to the economy if there is no domestic help to take care of their children and the house?

Few of the various problems of the informal sector are: Workplace and the space issues, working environment/ conditions, poor skill and technology, migration, unequal distribution of money, low wage rate, gender discrimination in wage, lack of security, indebtedness, bondage labor, child labor, etc. The informal sector labourers are mostly looked down upon because the kind of work done by them is considered menial. To elaborate more on the kinds of issues they face, I strongly feel that visuals like photographs will speak more for themselves. I have tried to create a kaleidoscopic image of the

¹ Statistical update on employment in the informal economy ILO - Department of Statistics June 2012

² <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/columns/Chandrasekhar/indias-informal-economy/article6375902.ece>

various issues through these different photographs. The motive is to generate series of thoughts among the increasingly ignorant educated readers about the dignity of the laborers and respecting their profession.



Picture Courtesy: Sudhakar Olwe

We all create waste. But lack the basic ability to take care of it in humane manner. Do we have the moral right to look down on them as secondary human beings?



Plight of the city makers...

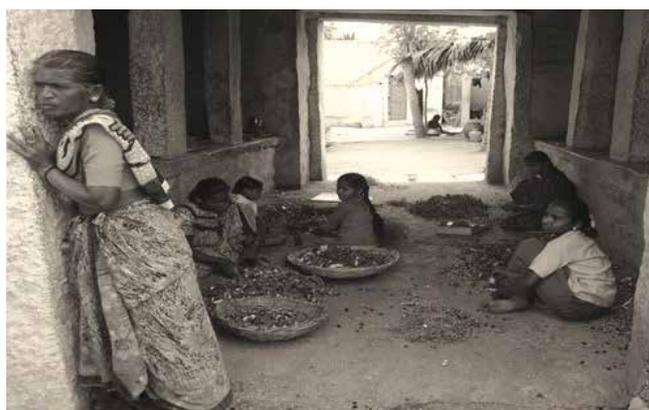


Migrated with dreams of better life?

Picture Courtesy: Boban Baby



Invisible work force- sustaining society and market economy!



I did this throughout my life and it passes on. Where is the development of the developers?



Inviting slow and early death as a payoff for getting livelihood.

The sustenance of the formal sector is highly dependent on these informal laborers. Yet it is interesting to see how the concept of invisibility is used to alienate the informal sector and leaving it to sustain itself, including the exploitation part of it. The least we can do is to give respect to them and add value to their social status and dignity.

AIR CONDITIONED EMPATHY

– Ankita Redkar, MA Development, 2015-17

Me and You
Us and them,
Men and women,
Normal and abnormal,
Rich and poor,
Brahmin and dalit,
Erudite and uncultured

I called it caste,
I called it class,
I called it gender.
I called it Sir, Madam
I called it servant, maid.
Walls between You and I that we built,
But I called it Fate.
So now, let me think for you.
Pretend we empathize with them.
Let's solve their problems for them.
For they are illiterate.
They are wild.

I will make decisions for you that will turn your life
around,
Make you civilized, bring you in the mainstream.
Make you normal enough to live amongst us.
For I am your Messiah!
Worship me, pray to me.
I saved you from savagery.
I ripped away the insanity.
I stripped you off of the absurdity that was you.
Your identity, your culture, your beliefs,
I saved you from you.
Don't sell your body for that is beneath a Lady.
You needed to make ends meet, But how dare you?
I will advocate for you.
Don't sell your labor, my child, for only education is the
answer.

You say your Parents can't send you to school?
I will put them away for the rest of their lives, away from
you.
Don't sell your herbs, your oils, your indigenous
medical miracles,
For there is only Allopathy,
I will call it Science.

I built skyscrapers on your shoulders,
Made millions from air-conditioned fortresses off your
blood and sweat
I was luxuriating in the villa,
While you toiled away your dreams, ambitions for two
meals a day,
Cleaned my drains, my streets, faeces and dead
carcasses.

I am the Man, I am the Brahman, I am the Baron,
I am the Knowledgeable Other.
You are the ladder to my success.
In your oppression, lies my freedom.
But, You are Me and I am You.
Flesh, bones and emotions meshed together.
We gave birth to them and they succumbed to us.
Or did they?
All for my convenience, I made you into me.
This Me who will soon rise too, usurp our privilege and
use it against us.
Could We blame them?
I should've celebrated our uniqueness, our differences,
Our colors, our shapes, our cultures,
Our weirdness, our strangeness,
For that is what makes us so beautifully Human.
Or what else is left of us?
Assembly line products.



Tales From the Field

EDUCATION AND HOPE

– Kunal Kumar, MA Education, 2015-17

I am sharing my personal experience of visiting Marathwada region which shall leave an indelible impact on my memories for years to come. Turned off ovens (chulhas) where no food cooked for several days, few utensils and one box with few tattered clothes, dried and cracked agricultural lands with dead standing crops and dried water wells and also tears rolling down the emaciated cheeks of old mothers and widows whose sons and husbands committed suicide, children with sunken eyes and protruding collar bones due to malnutrition and hunger, gathered around our vehicles. They were the refugees in their own motherland. Widows were showing photocopies of torn aadhar cards and election cards to us and women were standing with folded hands behind the doors (chaukhat) while we were talking in an open veranda. One or two goats at home were their only wealth. and one or two goats at home were their only wealth. The villagers greeted us with smiles and always arranged tea for us. After getting back to my car, I was unable to control my emotions. I was unable to have my dinner in the hotel as the hungry faces of children always kept appearing before me. However, at the end of the internship, I had seen happy faces of these children in WREC which I will be explaining in the succeeding paragraphs and finally I got some assurance about their care and concern.

Marathwada is in Maharashtra which comprises of eight districts including Beed, Latur, Osmanabad, Aurangabad, Hingoli, Jalna, Nanded and Parbhani. Marathwada is a terribly drought-hit region and in recent years this has deteriorated the farmer's economic condition drastically. I had an opportunity of visiting 30 households in Nanded district where farmers have committed suicide from the period of January, 2016 to December, 2016 due to drought and no production of crop leading to financial crisis. We covered 5 villages under Nanded district which are Kandhar, Nanded, Loha, Hadgaon and Mukhed. Farmers had taken loans from the banks or from the money lenders and were not able to pay back. I was part of a team where we were convincing families to send their children to WERC (Wagholi Educational Rehabilitation centre). WERC has been started under the umbrella of Shantilal Muttha Foundation (SMF) for providing free education and shelter to children for 8 years from class 5 to class 12. WERC is a project which is dedicated to help children who are from disaster prone areas.

Male heads who were the breadwinner of these households had committed suicides leaving behind female members to fend for all the survivors. I have observed that the houses are left with the females, children and the old people. Females, owing to their limited educational background, limited exposures and social taboos were not coming out of the houses to interact with us except the old ladies of the families. These women were also not much informed about the amount of the loan which their husbands had taken from the bank. However, one of the ladies, aged 65 mentioned that her 27-years old son committed suicide because he was unable to repay a loan amount of Rs.30, 000/-. These female members of the community have great aspiration for their children's education and they want their children to get the best education so that it will improve their financial condition.

Due to family crisis, the most vulnerable people are the children. The gloomiest part is that children have to leave their education so that they can earn to support their families. This is a cataclysmic change in the life of a child. Children are staying at home and carrying the emotional baggage of the death of their father or brother and financial crisis leading to depression, anxiety, aloofness and lack of confidence. Many a times family members, especially children, during conversations burst into tears which was very hard for me to face. Children and woman talked with us in a somber mood which was clearly depicting their emotional turmoil.

I stayed in WERC (Wagholi Educational Rehabilitation centre) and did an observational analysis of how the children, brought from villages, participated in various preventive interventions. Painting is a tool of self-expression. These children were very happy to show their creativity and painting their ideas on the paper which is in fact developing their cognitive and affective skills because they are learning to use color, shape and size of objects. They participated in inter school painting competitions. Every evening, there is a colossal gathering at a drawing room where children watch television together. Initially, these children were quiet. However they soon started interacting with other children. Watching television together works as a cementing force and builds a kind of solidarity between the isolated individuals which was remarkable. It is opening up vistas of opportunities to mingle with the other children of different villages and cultures leading to social development. These children

participated in yoga session and the main motto was to create peace in the mind of the child for a moment so that a child lives in the present and their past no longer troubles them. Present moments have an infinite power. It is a process of cleaning of the mind. These children seemed to be enthralled and relaxed after doing yoga.

A cordial relationship between the teachers and the students was eloquently reflected on the eve of Christmas as they were working together in decorating Christmas tree. These children enthusiastically danced on the occasion of Christmas Eve. They put laudable effort in learning dance from the senior children. Clapping from a huge gathering and appreciation from teachers made it a gala day and it was an everlasting experience for them.

Once in the morning, when there was water scarcity in hostel, I observed that a senior child helped one of the children who had newly joined, in carrying the bucket of water for him. I have seen the same remarkable practice in the evening during group study where this newly joined junior child helped another child in building English vocabulary. Thus, children are learning to help each other in difficult situation. I have observed that they do group studies very seriously. They are serious about their studies. According to one of the children, they do not get this environment of study at home. Another child mentioned that after studying hard, getting job and

earning money, he would like to go back to his village and start some factory. These beliefs of the children are very optimistic. Finally, I have observed that these newly joined children made new friends and always preferred to be together while studying and dining. These children also started learning patriotic songs in a group to participate in daily school assembly. This increased team building qualities and removed seclusion from children. During Pune Darshan, one can clearly observe ecstasy of happiness among these children through their body language, talk and glittering eyes.

In the light of my observations, the menace of drought at Marathwada region, tormented souls of the members of destitute families and prolonged despondency is highly affecting our future generation in all aspects, educationally, socially, emotionally and economically. The need of the hour is that the government should take devised action in association with NGOs like SMF to speed up the work of rehabilitating members of these families especially children, women and old people. There is an exigency of removing our tendency of giving wishy-washy responses in terms of policy implementation. It will be a paralyzing situation if our help reaches to these aggrieved families after another suicide. It's now high time to separate grain from the chaff. It is a time to save our own children from economic crisis. It is the time to give them a dignified life through education.

कागल सर्ग

– Sumeet Gardia, MA Development, 2015-17

(प्रस्तुत लेख में लिए गए नाम और अनुभाव कागल में हमारे सर्वे के दौरान हमारे अनुभवों पर आधारित हैं, और प्रस्तावित तर्क-वितर्क का कुछ हिस्सा हमारे समूह चर्चा पर आधारित है, अतः पूरी इमर्शन टीम को धन्यवाद और हाँ ! असहमति आपका अधिकार है, जिसकी रक्षा के लिए मैं कटिबद्ध रहने की कोशिश करूँगा)

उत्तरी कर्नाटक का तटवर्तीय इलाका, जो पश्चिम घाट के अभिभूत करने वाले जंगल और खूबसूरत समुद्री तटों का निरुपम संगम है, यूनिवर्सिटी के तरफ से मैं और मेरे कुछ साथी वहाँ अपने पहले field immersion के लिए गए हुए थे। “Immersion” जैसा

कि हमको बताया गया था पुनर्निर्माण की एक प्रक्रिया है, जिसमें वस्तु या तत्व एक परिवेश से किसी दूसरे परिवेश में अपने आप को निहित कर लेता है। अरब सागर के तटवर्तीय क्षेत्र की जीवन माला में हमारा ये immersion या पुनः सर्जन जीवन के सबसे यादगार और कीमती अनुभवों वाला एक पक्ष रहा ! एक तरफ तो अरब सागर की उछलती और अपने सुरुर में रहने वाली लहरें हमारे कदमों को छू रही थी वहीं दूसरी ओर पश्चिमी घाट की जैव विविधता और वहाँ के जीवन यापी लोगों से सराबोर दूसरी लहरें, हमारे मस्तिष्क को ज्ञान के दूसरे सागर से नई सूचनाओं और नए आयामों के साथ विसर्जन की प्रक्रिया को चरितार्थ कर रही थी।

इन दो उद्धृत लहरों के मध्य हमारा immersion श्रीमान आदम जाधव और उनके साथियों के सहयोग से बखूबी अपने अंजाम तक पहुँच रहा था। और कुछ देखी गई बातें जो आपके समक्ष प्रस्तुत कर रहा हूँ, उसे शायद आप “ क्रिटिकल अर्नैलिसिस “ का दर्जा ना दें लेकिन यकीन मानिये आप उसे नजर अंदाज़ भी नहीं कर पाएँगे | हमारे immersion का सबसे महत्वपूर्ण भाग था हाउशोल्ड सर्वे | धरातल की सच्चाई के साथ संपोषित विकास की संकल्पना करना एक बहुत घुटन भरा एहसास था ! यह भी सच है कि किसी भी गरीब मच्छुआरों या किसानों से बात करते वक्त उनसे ये पूछने की हिम्मत नहीं हुई की आपको कैसा विकास चाहिए। पर सच यह भी है कि सर्वोत्तम विकास वह होगा जो स्थानीय प्राथमिकता पर आधारित होगा और उसे तय कौन करेगा | निश्चित ही स्थानीय लोगों को ही करना चाहिए पर अगर लोगों से पर्यावरण संरक्षण करने के लिए कहें जो संपोषित विकास का महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा है, तो? अब्दुल रहमान जो की एक गरीब मच्छुआरा है, वह तो यही कहेगा कि बड़ी मुद्दतों के बाद उसके आँगन में थोडा सा उजाला हुआ है और अब कुछ लोग कह रहे हैं कि अंधेरा होने वाला है! !! और तो और वही अब्दुल रहमान, अपने रत्नागिरी

पलायन करने की मजबूरी पर यह कहेगा जहाँ उसके कहे अनुसार वो उन दिनों में 3-4 घंटे की नींद ही ले पाता है, की कभी किसी रोज चिलचिलाती धूप में किसी पत्थर पर पानी डालकर तो देखो शायद तुम्हे हमारी प्यास का अंदाजा हो जायेगा!

निश्चित ही हमारे देश में आर्थिक मोर्चे पर काफी विषमता है | इसी विरोधाभास के साथ यह कहना चाहूँगा कि हमें आज़ादी को वरदान के रूप में ग्रहण करना होगा | और यह भी सुनिश्चित करना होगा कि आज़ादी संविधान के पन्नों से निकलकर केवल चंद महानगरों की कुछ विशेष गलियों और “स्मार्ट” शहरों की मेहमान बनकर न रह जाये ! बल्कि कुछ दिन वहाँ भी जाकर कुछ समय बिताये जहाँ आज भी जीवन अच्छी सड़क, बिजली और पीने के पानी से दूर है।

बंद करिए अपना वाद-विवाद और चर्चा लोगों की मूलभूत आवश्यकताएँ निर्धारित करने के लिए क्योंकि आज भी शकीरा को पीने का पानी नहीं मिलता, आज भी मुक्ता के पास अपने परिवार के साथ रहने के लिए अपना घर नहीं है और आज भी शिवराज के घर तक पहुँचने के लिए अच्छी सड़क नहीं है! धन्यवाद!

WHEN SAVING LIVES BECOMES A DAILY ADVENTURE

– Anjali Mariam Paul, MA Development, 2015-17

There is something magical about watching a woman breastfeed her newborn for the first time, especially when it is in one of Assam's sand bars, where infant and maternal deaths are just as common as fevers and colds. The Auxiliary Nursing Midwives (ANMs), who have along with the boat clinics, just coincidentally come to this particular sand bar on their routine monthly visit, a day after this baby is born, instruct the mother as to how she should feed

her baby, burp her, when and how to bathe her and how to gently hold her, supporting her neck and head at all times. The baby weighs about 3.3 kg and the mother is highly anemic but a few hours into the delivery, both are looking healthy. Not many women in Assam are as lucky as her; that being said neither are many babies as Assam has the highest Maternal Mortality Rate and Infant Mortality Rate in the country, and it has been this way since the late 1900s.

As a student of development, with no background whatsoever in the health sector, the past few weeks with C-NES's boat clinics has been a dumbfounding experience. In preparation for my 6 week internship here, I read as many articles, papers, state reports and basically any piece of literature I could lay my hands, be it fiction or nonfiction about Assam as this was my first trip to the North East and I wanted to be prepared. Little did I know that no amount of literature would even come close to defining the destitution that I would witness on these forgotten islands, known as *saporis* or *chars*, which would pierce my soul and keep me awake into the wee hours of the morning.



The mighty BrahmAzim Premji Universitytra, framed by the majestic Himalayan ranges of Arunachal Pradesh in the background as we sail along the sand bars in Assam's Dibrugarh District

Over the past few weeks, as I traversed along the mighty BrahmAzim Premji Universitytra, gulping in the fresh air and the exquisite view of Arunachal's hills draping the river on one side while I was in Dibrugarh and the Naga Hills when I was in Jorhat, sleeping under the starlit sky, never would I have dreamt that there would be death, destitution and deprivation lurking close by. Yet, that was the reality that would be unfolded to me in a few hours when Maternal Mortality Rates and Infant Mortality Rates wouldn't be just numbers but suddenly have names, families and now what remained, fond memories. I was privileged to spend 2 nights with the Dibrugarh and 5 nights with the Jorhat team of miracle workers, where I faced a mighty storm, leeches, unbelievably huge spiders, incessant rain and last but not the least, an unfortunate tumble out of a moving truck to actually see first hand what is happening in these islands which are excluded from the mainland, both physically and socially.



Damayanti Das, an Auxiliary Nursing Midwife who has been with C-NES's Dibrugarh Boat Clinic since 2008, effortlessly gives a child a required vaccination

I silently observed the boat crew as they set up a tent in a few minutes on the mainland, as soon as we docked and how methodically, the team of ANMs, GNM, Medical Officers, Laboratory Technicians, Pharmacist and the community workers set the tables up, with the required equipment, waiting for the patients to start trickling in. In Jorhat, the community worker set up a megaphone on the boat and informed the residents who stay in the interior areas of the islands (due to the fear of erosion) that the doctors have arrived. In addition to this, the ASHAs go around on their cycles, to the tenements in the islands to remind the women who are due for their routine antenatal checkups and to bring their children for their vaccinations and Vitamin A drops. I accompanied a community worker as he went to a makeshift government school (the school building got washed away due to the erosion caused by the raging BrahmAzim Premji Universitytra) to ask the teacher to send children who were suffering from cold, cough, fevers, skin irritations etc. to the health camp happening near the shore.

As the monsoons are just setting in, most of the patients suffer from respiratory issues, skin irritations and seasonal colds and fevers. The Medical Officers inform me that nearly 30% of the patients who come to these health camps are fake patients, who have come to hoard up on medicines, for when they might actually need them. Wouldn't you, if you knew that these boat clinics came in once a month and were giving away free medicines? There is so much that I want to say and it has taken me forever to pick the right story which will give you an essence of what life is like for the Medical Officers and ANMs on board the boat clinic and the lives they touch and sometimes are forced to let go of too early, because of the ignorance and lack of seriousness that prevails in these islands.



Medical Officers in Jorhat spend countless hours patiently dealing with the patients as they counsel them along with prescribing them medicines

During my night trip in Dibrugarh, the presiding ANM, Damayanti Das who has been working with C-NES's boat clinics since 2008, painfully narrated a story about a young girl in one of these *saporis*, who got pregnant at

a young age of around 16 and during an ANC, was found to have a weak heart. The presiding Medical Officer, Dr.B.C.Borah, along with the ANM, Damayanti attempted to convince this young teen to have an abortion as it was highly critical to her and the baby's health. Her husband and in-laws were contacted and advised about the same but they refused to terminate her pregnancy. The doctor even referred her to a doctor in the Dibrugarh Medical College, who advised the same course of action and finally asked her to be admitted a few weeks prior to her delivery, to be monitored closely. The pregnant girl and her husband didn't take this issue seriously and waited till the last minute to be admitted, leading to her demise a few hours into delivery. Her newborn died a day later. The death of this pregnant girl marks the first and only maternal death in the islands of Dibrugarh since they started work here in 2008.

This medical team of Dibrugarh's boat clinic spend days conducting health camps on these islands, spreading awareness of family planning methods, immunizations, vaccinations, the right age to get pregnant, regularly attend their antenatal and postnatal checkups, eat nutritious food, maintain hygiene etc and yet there are situations which are beyond their control. That being said, most of the women I spoke to explained how it cost them about Rs.3, 500/- to reach the mainland from their sand bars, which even the Rs. 1,400/- paid by the government for institutional delivery, through the Janani Suraksha Yojna scheme didn't cover.



Rijumani, who is a recent entrant to the Dibrugarh team as an ANM, knows most of the patients by name and carries out her duties as a nurse flawlessly, while she is strict with pregnant women about being regular with their ANCs and absolutely friendly with the children who come to get their vaccinations and Vitamin A drops

I remember the torturous, sleepless night which followed reading about Rakku, a fictional character who symbolized the state of poor maternal and infant health care in the rural areas of Tamil Nadu, in the 1970s. I remember the discussion in class and how it all seemed too distant and here I was in the midst of it all, listening to women talk about the death of their children, husbands talking about their wives dying as though it was a normal occurrence. I then remembered the number of people attending these health camps, going back with medicines for their illnesses and the faces of those dedicated and passionate miracle workers... doctors, nurses, laboratory technicians, pharmacists, community workers, ASHAs and the boat crew who knew these patients by name and smiled, knowing that all hope isn't lost... not yet.

NOSTALGIA:

UNFORGETTABLE HIMACHAL

– Das Antoni Samuel, Jayesh Khairnar, Mayank Porwal, MA Development, 2015-17

“The gladdest moment in human life, me thinks, is a departure into unknown lands.”

– Sir Richard Burton

Prelude

In what were the most remarkable days of our lives, a rare opportunity knocked our doors with true triumph to learn, share and cherish the unforgettable memories of our experience in Aavishkar. According to us the exposure and experience in Aavishkar, paved a way to unlearn & rethink the meaning of life as a journey and the ultimate

goal should be sharing happiness with others. Travel is one of the best ways to live life in a different way for the well being of the society, and the fellow brethren around us. As we sat in corner of our desk to discuss and pen down the incredible thoughts about our stay in Aavishkar, it was an awesome reminiscence.

Voice Unheard in the farthest place

Before the commencement of our practical experience in Aavishkar, we had a different opinion about the organizational working process and the procedure. The moment we reached the destination, we realised that our preconceptions about Aavishkaar were wrong, since their teaching styles and methods are entirely different from the olden ways of tutoring girls. The subjects taught are mathematics and science. They don't stop just with subject knowledge but make them realize importance of education for survival, and it's about "voice"! Voice of the depressed! Voice unheard. Because of the social background of the learners, Aavishkar equips them with the emotional courage and motivates them to be bold, optimistic minds and psychological support to the best level provided for the students.

Enchanting and Enlightenment Days of Stay in Aavishkar

It was very interesting to learn how subjects like mathematics and science can be connected with our life. It was indeed a new conception of the whole teaching learning setup implemented by the organizers. Where the teacher is not just a teacher of external appearance but more than that of personal relationship as they call them as Didi/elder sister. We got an opportunity to work with them and observe their alternate education model, and also the practical techniques utilized to teach and train the students. We had very productive discussions with Mr. Sarath and Mrs. Sandhya Sarath, who are the founders of the organization. We discussed the overall education system, no detention policy, the elections in India and a lot more to equip their ability to think and learn and make use of the intellectual gifts provided to us. The girls who came from Bihar to attend the camp taught us lot of things which were precious and valuable for us, in our journey towards working for the society.

We learnt what kind of struggles, especially girls, have to undergo in a community where literacy rate is hardly two percent. We got lifetime of learnings and memories at Aavishkar. To best of our interaction with those girls, we explored and found out they are extremely creative. It will not be an exaggeration if we say they gave us the required space for self-introspection.

Epilogue

In the debate over reservations, we frequently hear comments like - the socially disadvantaged section of the society lacks in meritocracy and they get pushed only because of the reservation. Naari Gunjan and Avishkaar are perfect examples for these people aid and educate them. When this section of the society gets exposed to proper education they will be no less in a meritocracy because a human is a human, social borders are a human creation. The day of our departure left us blank and immersed in lot of questions about their future life. With unending questions and a heavy heart, we departed.

Someday, there will be a way to repair the broken roads by straightening it in a proper way with the tool of "EDUCATION".

We would like to thank the institution and Aavishkar for entrusting us to climb the ladder to strive, and to achieve our dreams.

"Traveling – it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller." – Ibn Battuta

Organization - Aavishkaar: Center for Science, Arts & Technology

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GROUND ZERO: INTRODUCTION TO REALITIES

– M S Mahala, MA Development 2015-17

Can you imagine what these people are doing here? These are Mazdoors, the so called labor force who are bought everyday by contractors, industrialists and by elite classes to do their work without any terms and conditions such as little or no minimum wage, no quality working

conditions and no basic rights. Yes! This is the reality of most of rural India and we're talking about Vision 2020 or Digital India. But this is the reality; these mazdoors (labors) don't have work to feed their families and if they find any, they have to work in such conditions where



there are no rules and rights. We talk about technology, education, international relations and policy changes but are we concerned enough to discuss our own internal relationship with these people? The difference between poor and rich and their access to resources? Are we planning effectively to develop our community relationships? Do we demand that the government servants deliver public services on time? Do we have any kind of governance model for the grass root levels? We reduce the wages of an MNREGA worker if he/she did a little less than allotted work to them. Yes that's the best way to get paid for what you had done BUT do we have the same law for our government servants or officials? This is what "Jawabdehi Yatra" wants from the government.

One law for accountability.

Zindabad!

MY FIELD EXPERIENCE

– Maddirala Sai Praveen, MA Education 2015-17

As a part of one of my field visits, I went to Ranchi Brambey.

It is the place where education was nowhere in the list of priorities in the community. Education was a dream for the children who are residing in that area. A school named H.H.High School was established in 2010 to fulfil the dream of those children who are orphan child labours who works in nearby garage or shop and some go to Ranchi to work as construction labour.

Now I am going to explain to you the story of a kid in the tribal area who started studying with the help of his grand Mother and is now studying well by paying his own fees and looking after his grandparents and family.

Parents of children in a tribal village don't bother to send their children to school and instead encourage them to work and support the family. They also say, "If I send my child to school,he will not get anything by evening, but if I send him to cotton field, by evening we get Rs. 70 which are useful for us to feed the family". But

the child were pretty interested in going to school. He told the same to his grandmother. As a part of promoting education in rural villages, a campaign named "Reach to Teach" was conducted by the high School. With that support, she started sending the child to the school.

Since the child was from a rural background, he wasn't aware of the proper etiquette that was followed in schools. A small example: This kid went to the washroom and eased at the corner of the washroom and came out. Noticing this, servant complained this to the teacher. Then the teacher asked why he did that. In a smooth voice he said "Ji, who itna saaf hai, mai usko kyun gandha karna?" (It is so clean, why should I make it dirty). The teacher just gave a smile sent him back to class.

We all believe in a pre-conceived notion that people know basic etiquette like behaving with teachers, washing hands etc. I really felt that when someone is dealing at root level one should unlearn and be away from such notions. Unlearning is very important to start from the rock bottom.

With the support from teachers and friends, the kid is doing well in academics as well as in sports. As usual, his grandmother who sells some stuff at a wine shop in Brambey came to pay his school fees. This time, she slowly picked out the money from her pocket and kept on the table. There were 10 rupee notes and twenty rupees notes crumpled, and one and two rupee coins were scattered on the desk. She said, "Ji ye hai mere bachha ka school fees" [Sir, this is my child's school fees]. After looking at her dedication towards sending her kid to school, Shadab Ji (school headmaster) came to her, bent on one knee, kept that money in her hands and said: "Ji aapka bachoon ko mei free mei padaunga" (We provide education for free to your children). This clearly shows there is always someone to help when you work with dedication on a task.

When the kid reached 7th class, he also started to work in evenings and pays the school fees. He is now good in managing his schooling in the morning, and work in the

evening. After knowing this, the kid's parents started to take care of his grandmother who showed the path to the child to get a life of education. "Age doesn't matter to inspire and motivate people. My grandma is too old. She didn't go to school but she encouraged me and inspired me. She is my role model. my grandma is too old, she didn't go to schooling but she encouraged me and inspired me she is my role model," says the kid.

Now he is studying in X class and is interested in Science. With his education, he wants to become a doctor, to serve the poor for free.

I often listened to the success stories of people who struggled in life to achieve a greater position. My experience with these kids really showed me how many kids struggle in rural areas to get basic education.

This looks very simple but when it counts, it will make a great impact on the lives of the people.

AGASTYA KUPPAM VISIT

– Sriharsh Chandak, MA Education 2014-16

5 3 students from Azim Premji University started their journey from the university to Agastya, 172-acre Creativity Lab, Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh (approx. 110 Kms) on 16th April 2016. It was the first time University supported a fully student led trip which included students from different programs (MA Education, MA Development and PPG) of different Years (14 and 15 batch). We thank our University and Agastya International Foundation for making it possible.

Special thanks to Team Agastya which includes Ajith Basu Sir, Tapasya Ma'am, Balakrishna Sir and Our University Faculty members Rajashree Ma'am, Manoj Sir, Ananth Kamath Sir, for their full support. Whatever I write, words have their own limitations to put down our excitement, joy, learning which we had experienced by the magic of Science, Art and nature, of which we will cherish the memory for a long time





THE STORY OF RAMKAILASH YADAV

– Nikhil Kinhekar, MA Development, 2015-17

This is the story of a villager called Ramkailash Yadav who lives in Khanpura village, Sehore District, Madhya Pradesh. He was born and brought up in Khanpura. He completed his schooling 5 years ago till 9th grade. His livelihood fully depends on tailoring and agriculture. From tailoring he earns Rs.100 a day, but this amount is not sufficient to fulfill the basic needs of his family, of which he is also the sole breadwinner.

One day, he met some amazing people from an organisation that promised to put an end to the troubles in his life. They gave him the task of conducting a survey in his village. These people, he learnt, belonged to Vrutti Livelihood Resource Center of Tehsil Rehti district, Sehore, Madhya Pradesh. They asked him to work with them on a trial basis. Though he initially resisted, they were able to get through to him over time.

In initial stages, the organisation gave him some basic tasks, like conducting a primary survey of the village, which included aspects like finding the numbers and mean earnings of the farmers in village, classifying them as rich or landless, etc. He grew to like his work. As time went by, Vrutti offered him the role of a Business Development Service Provider (BDSP). The organisation was going to pay him an amount of Rs 500 Rupees a month against his services to villagers.

His work now included conducting meetings to spread awareness about organisation, and pass on information

on improved and advanced agriculture practices, to farmers. In these meetings, he discussed basic issues with the farmers like cost reduction practices, issues surrounding proper production methods in farming and investment, how to do seed treatments, traditional farming etc. Before the intervention, people used to sow 50-60 kg of Soya bean seeds in one hectare. After receiving proper training, they started sowing 30 kg in one hectare, but with proper systems to increase yield with minimum input. Likewise they were given the platform to discuss small issues of farming and find solutions with the help of Vrutti. Ramkailash Yadav was both learning and teaching.

Personally, this experience has been very good for me, and while doing this, I truly enjoyed myself and learnt so many things from both this village and the villager, Ramkailash Yadav. I have learnt from their struggles in life, the kinds of problems they face, government interventions, how villagers deal with their lives when compared to city folk, varied lifestyles, etc, and they have all been fresh experiences that I have gained from. By using natural resources, they are able to sustain their livelihoods. There are a number of things which are very good, and there are some things that are very painful; about good things, there is no need to worry, but when it comes to the painful things, we really need to think about it.

I personally think that revolution starts from within ourselves, not by waiting for others.



Turning Back the
Wheel of Time



I am in neither of these pictures, but I absolutely love them. These are from our very first field immersion to Gulbarga. This was the very first opportunity we had to explore and understand grass root realities of children and schooling in India. These two pictures capture our entire time at Gulbarga and Surpur as our days were spent with the children alone who taught us so much and took us back to days of innocence and glee.

George Eliot has rightly said in her book 'The Mill on The Floss' - "We could never have loved the earth so well, if we had had no childhood in it..." I hope someday education becomes such a beautiful journey for each of these children and the society is more egalitarian so that each of them has a chance to experience an unadulterated childhood.

– Adithi Manohar
MA Education, 2014-16



"Indeed there are bad people in this world, but you don't need to fight with them. You just need to make yourself strong enough."

"Education which reduces people to mere labor is no education at all."

– Deepjeet Kumar
MA Education, 2014-16



For us the field practice was a true learning experience. From choosing our own topic to the site of study, everything was decided by us. While the project was of our interest, an equal amount of enthusiasm from our

faculty was what kept us on our toes. For us as students, to see our ideas conceptualizing on field was heartening. In the hills of Kumaon, with the misty rains coming in, I fondly remember how we went for our community visits. Each house that we visited provided us a hot cup of extra sweet tea which gave us the energy to go from one village to the other. But most essentially the experience provided us with an insight. The ground realities were revealed to us and we remembered all our discussions in class ranging from policies to problems in implementation. We realized how an act on the paper can make a simple dream of going to school a reality for many. It changed something inside us, it made us humbler.

– Garima Awasthy and Varun Khimani
MA Education, 2014-16



This photograph depicts one of the many fond memories that I have had at Azim Premji University.

– Garima Awasthy
MA Education, 2014-16



“Orientations galore,
Readings to Scroll, sorry for
Spamming, do Not Reply
to All.”

– Harshwardhan Sharma
MA Development, 2014-16



These two years have made me a better person. I have grown as an individual and become more patient. It has taught me how to work with people by understanding and not judging them. Everyone is moulded by their experiences and act accordingly. The key is to

know where they are coming from and then work together- the result will be a combined learning experience.

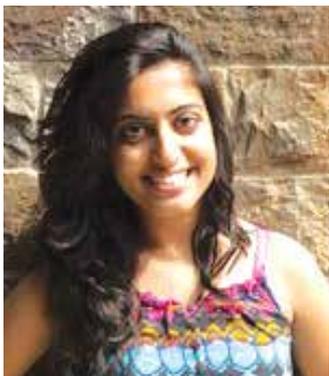
– Garima Awasthy
MA Education, 2014-16

I hope you are doing well and I wish you will do better. Azim Premji University is the best example of unity in diversity. It provides us with a great opportunity to come together and explore. For me, and hopefully for all of us, it was really a great experience studying here, and I feel lucky to have been in such a learning space. I am sure that before leaving this University, each individual will learn something new and something different from here. So, keeping in mind, “There are far better things ahead than any we leave behind”, just move ahead. All the best!



– Nazia Perween
MA Education, 2014-16

PADDY FIELD BOUND



The moon shone bright. So bright, that we abandoned our pursuit of finding the torch. The stars were few. They looked like freckles on the face of the sky. Grey clouds did not lull around. They seemed to have taken a day off from the excruciating task of breaking into infinite

droplets all day long. The street lights were dysfunctional; but no complaints were made today. We needed a guide and the paternal presence of the moon sufficed for the night. Warmth exuded from each passing home. Families huddled together for dinner and talks and customary television serials. Families huddled together to pray and thereafter, to gossip about who did what. A couple of motor bikes zoomed past us, maybe for a movie, a late night drink or the touch of a loved one. Few heads turned at the sight of a girl with a boy, both strangers to this land on a walk at an odd hour. We yearned for the beautiful fields and walked with no care in the world.

Upon reaching the start of the curvy road, we paused to see, breathe, feel, touch and take in all the beauty. We took careful steps so as not to disturb the creatures resting on muddy paths. The wooden bridge was the

perfect spot to view the magnificence. I sat and he lay down. There was momentary brightness to a side when he lit matchsticks, one after the other. The water trickled lusciously beneath us. It crawled through the never-ending paddy fields. The coconut trees stood tall at a distance. The light sky carved the black silhouettes of the trunk, the pointy leaves and roundness of the coconuts. The crickets chirped and the frogs croaked for as long as we could remember. The breeze tickled the grass. They swayed incessantly with laughter. Prayers broke out from two distinct mosques to commemorate the holy month of Ramadan. Every sound, tone, noise blended to make one big picture. Nothing seemed out of place. It was a continuous frame filled with the best.

"And in that moment, I swear, we were infinite."
Then a sudden buzz... a flicker... a call...

We were advised to leave it all for a morning and head back to safety for the fear of abrupt rumours and nonsensical fights. Shaking our heads dismissively, we strolled back with the picture plastered in our heads for the years to come.

(A snippet from my internship at Thrissur, last summer, with the Vayali Folklore Group.)

– Steffi M. Cherian
MA Development, 2014-16



"देना या ना देना ऊपर वाले के हाथ में हैं, हम कोशिश भी ना करे ये तो बुरी बात हैं |"

– Prabhat Kumar Himanshu
MA Education, 2014-16

I don't know how many words does this one say but with this I would like to thank Azim Premji University family to give me some of the best and life transforming experiences.

This is Life at Azim Premji University...

– Ritu Vaishnav
MA Development, 2014-16





Making memories - A reunion of MAD 2014-16, Section 1, in our very own 'Tapi', few days before our final exit. As they say, the picture says it all. Yes, the place and the people will be missed !

– Roma
MA Development, 2014-16



I started searching for an iconic picture of mine to share for our magazine. Finally, at the end of two years, I have no idea how much I succeeded but this is what I found - a still from the 2nd day of UNMUKT, 2015, when I wore a saree at Azim Premji University for the first time. It has been an amazing journey of 2 years

at Azim Premji University. The amazing faculty, the administration people and the canteen Anna add to the glory of Azim Premji University. Although, I was never too much into the classroom readings, the practical experiences I gained from our very own Azim Premji University culture as well as the internships, is my take away from the place. :)

Waiting for the grand reunion during the Convocation!

– Roma
MA Development, 2014-16



“Be prepared to serve than to be served”

– Ruby Jacob
MA Education, 2014-16





Saani Hussain
MA Development , 2014-16

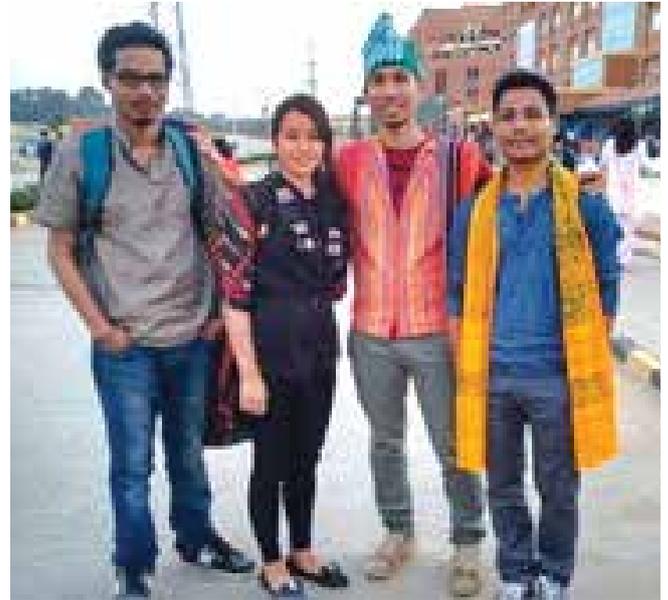


Changing the face can change nothing.

Don't complain about others change yourself if you want peace.

If you wait for the perfect condition you will never get anything done.

– Santosh Kumar Singh
2014-16



जिन चीजों के लिए हम पहले लड़ते थे, आज उन पर हम हंसते हैं |

University is what you make it. Make your stay count.

– Shriharsh Chandak
MA Education, 2014-16



I am leaving with a lot of sweet memories and skills. Thank you and miss you Azim Premji University :)

– Vishala M.S.
2014-16

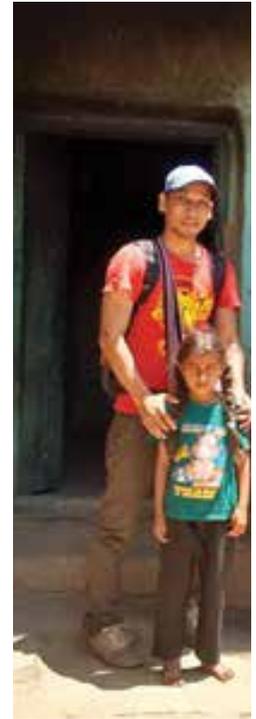


The relationship which we had built with our seniors was really amazing. We never considered them as seniors but as our own brothers/sisters. We still have strong bond with them. We still remember those days when we celebrated farewell with them; cooked together and shared with affection. We also expect the same bond with the 2015-17 batch and would continue the journey together even though we may have left the college.

– William Lahary
MA Development, 2014-16



Jammu & Kashmir State Rural Livelihood Mission, Jammu Division.
– William Lahary, MA Development, 2014-16



William Lahary
MA Development
2014-16



Life at the university was a roller coaster ride with many ups and downs, but at the same time I enjoyed the perks of academic life here. My whole perception of the nine lettered word “education” went for a holistic toss, making me realize that merely being literate does not correspond to being educated. The learning here constituted more of rethinking, questioning, unlearning, learning reviving, , critiquing every bit of what I assumed to be true in the context of what is conveyed by the ‘ministerial masses’. I came in as a shepherd taming the mental sheep’s juggling in my head, but now, I am stepping out in the real world like an eagle ready to fly with passion.

– Zahra Shakir, MA Education, 2014-16

Picture Credits (For the separators)

Musings

Aparna Krishnan (Illustrations)

Archana Khyadi (Top left and centre photo)

Ekta Dhankher (Bottom right Photo)

Deeper Introspections

Archana Khyadi (Top left and Bottom right photo)

Bhakit Damle (Illustrations)

Tales From the Field

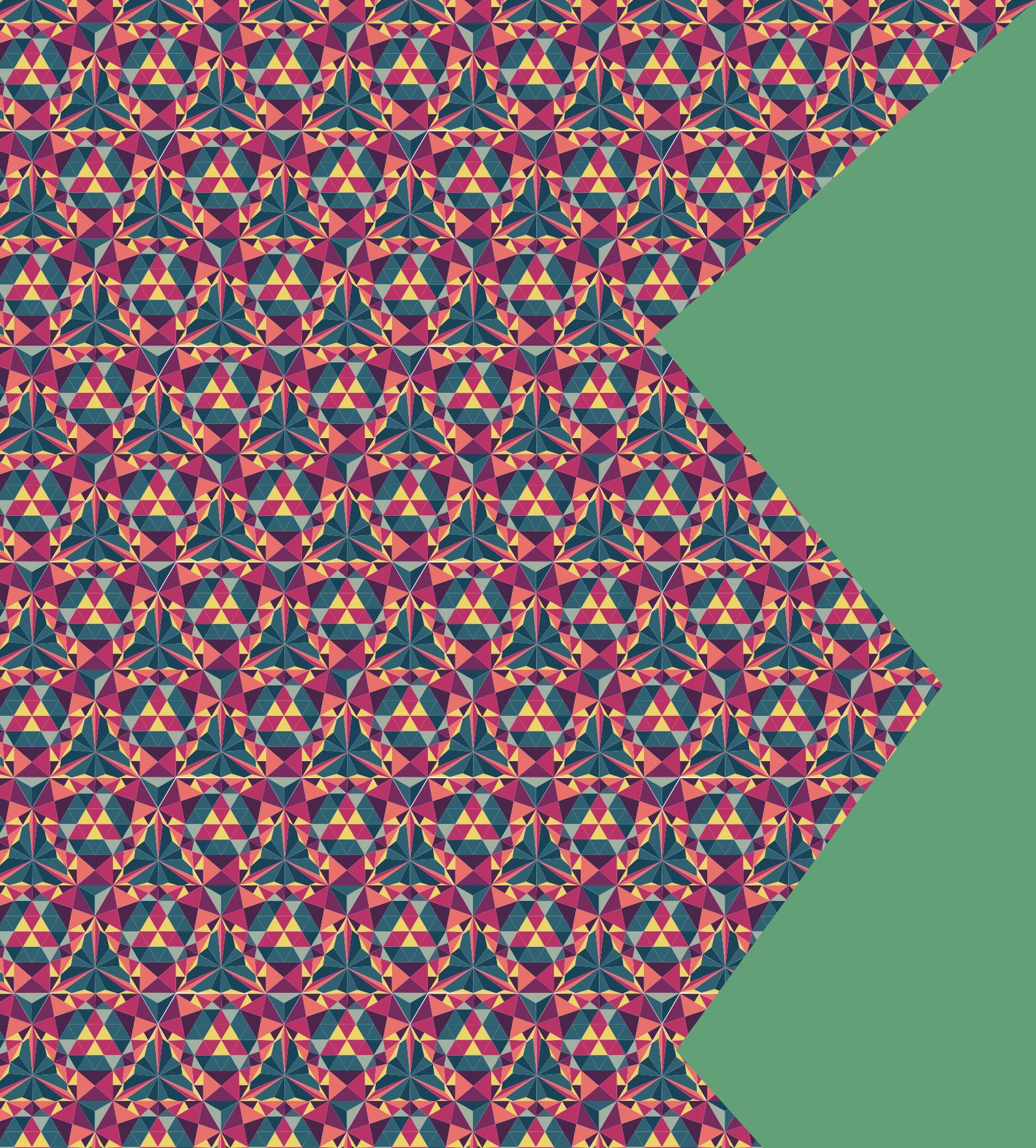
Nagaraj Kulkarni (Elephant photo)

Archana Khyadi (Illustration)

Deepjeet Kumar (Centre photo)

Garima Awasthy (Bottom right photo)

Akash Kumar (Bottom left photo)



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