

# FINE PRINT

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## AN AFTERNOON WITH PAUL FERNANDES

Anahita Ananth takes you through the life, work and routine of cartoonist, Paul Fernandes

I walk down a green sun-dappled avenue to the quiet stone-finish house with a bright patio and chairs set out in the sprawling garden. I ring the doorbell and Paul Fernandes opens the door with a warm, disarming smile that immediately makes any nervousness I may have had, fade right away. I am welcomed into his home by him and a big brown dog that comes bounding my way, wagging his tail. "This is

Jaggu Fernandes," says Paul, wide smile at the ready. "I call him my third son!" We sit in the living room, where light streams in through the French windows that open out onto the garden, with the dog curled up at our feet. Glazed ceramic vases and a sculpture sit atop a bookcase with a collection of coffee table books and graphic novels. The room oozes an easy eclectic vibe, with cushion covers printed with Paul's artwork,

and a door on which is depicted one of his scenes of a laid-back, old-time Goa. Even his blue block printed shirt and his salt-and-pepper beard seem to blend perfectly with the décor.

Having just returned from Mumbai after the successful launch of his new book *Coastline*, he takes me through its narrative. "It describes itself as an 'amuseum' [amusement+museum, as coined by Paul] of Mumbai musings, with a quick trip down the coast for good measure. It's a collection of watercolor and drawing, and short stories with a touch of humor, which take you on a very peaceful journey down the coastline," he explains. "It doesn't aim to teach you anything; it just hopes to entertain you." The book is a coming together of drawings from 12 years of "unplanned planned trips" down the western coastline, through Mumbai, Mangalore, Goa, and Kerala. Paul's love for the sea has its roots in his childhood. "I love the sea for many reasons. The biggest reason is the water, and also this wonderful coconut tree which accompanies you right down the journey. And that coconut tree provides joy and life to anybody who lives on that coast. On the other hand, you meet a variety of people, so it's beautiful for me." Nothing seems to faze him as he talks about taking his sun hat and shoes and walking in any direction through a beach or a city, or jumping on one of Bombay's red double-decker buses, with a little sketchbook in hand. "I've spent a lot of time sitting on the pavements near Fountain. It's in the centre of Bombay. Lots to see. Everything

is a revelation... I like to sit there with a small little sketchpad, quietly. Or sit in a restaurant, guzzle some beer. And you see so much." It is clear that Paul finds joy in the simple things in life, and I tell him how I admire that. "Every trip of mine has to end in a good lunch. Has to," he adds jovially. He recalls having spent his 5 years in Mumbai practically living within the walls of the famous Leopold Café, and regrets how much it has changed.

More than Mumbai, however, most of Paul's work is centered around Bangalore, where he was born and raised. His drawings use a combination of cartooning and watercolor to depict a Bangalore of the '70s, steeped in nostalgia and light-hearted humor. His work brings out the memory of an old-world charm and colonial manners of a city where it is always a lazy afternoon. He shows all things quintessentially Bangalore, whether it is the iconic Koshy's restaurant, or the bustling Brigade Road, giving Bangaloreans of all ages something to smile at. "The difference between Bangalore and the rest of all these colonial places in India is that Bangalore had this fantastic character called the pensioner. No other city had this fellow called the pensioner. And he was an eclectic person, my lord! What a character. And I think it is with that background that I've tried to base all these drawings. A laid-back, peaceful life." Paul speaks of his city with fondness and familiarity, reminiscing the days of his youth.

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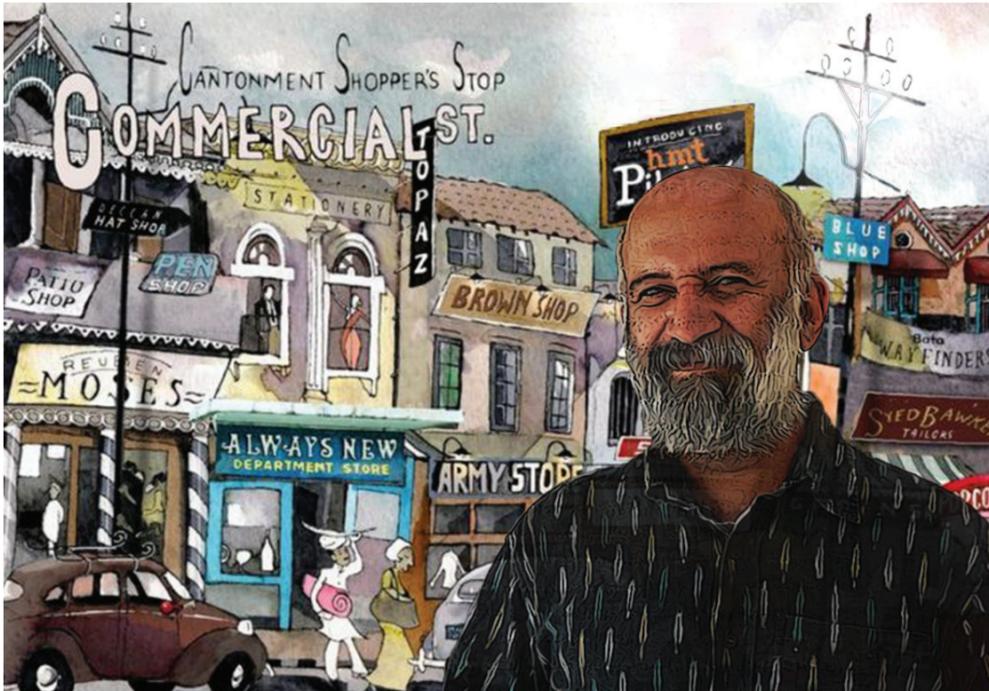


Illustration by Hannah Baptist

## OUR RIGHT TO SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Mirael Lia Samson energizes the need for sexuality education, to exercise the basic right to break the taboo and help make the youth more aware

In 2017, 12 state governments banned programs imparting sexuality education for schools. Sex has been treated as taboo for generations, resulting in young adolescents being clueless about important sexual terms, practices, and precautions.

"The problem any society would have dealing with an issue is the lack of willingness to accept that they have a problem and then the hesitance to be able to address it," says Rashmi Sundar Raj, a mother of four. UNESCO defines sexuality education as education that "encompasses the full range of information, skills and values to enable young people to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights and to make decisions about their health and sexuality." The All India Educational and Vocation Guidance Institute conducted a study, according to which 42% to 52% of young students in India feel that they do not have adequate knowledge about sex. Rashmi confesses, "I did not learn much from my parents...I learnt about sex after marriage mostly and through books."

Priya Thimmaiah, school counsellor at Chrysalis High, believes that young adults being misinformed about sex is a result of patriarchy and ignorance. "When parents talk openly about periods, sex, and contraception to both sons and daughters and non-binary offspring, they help remove stigma. But not all parents know how to do this since their folks were never this open. As a school counsellor I've had to help parents understand the importance of talking to their children/daughters about period hygiene and wearing proper

inner wear." Soumya, lecturer, Mount Carmel College, talks about her own experience as a student. "My biology teacher who explained the parts of the excretory system immaculately couldn't bring herself to say 'anus'. She just wrote it on the board. And let it just sit there. Unpronounced and constipated with hidden meaning."

A study conducted in Mount Carmel College in 2019, shows that majority of students did not know about methods of contraception or masturbation. Only 54% of respondents have had a sexuality education class, of which only 11% had learned about sex from these classes. 68% of the respondents said that sex has been treated as a taboo in their life.

India reports high rates of teen pregnancy, sexual abuse, and rape, a situation in which the need for sexuality education is almost critical. Often, arguments against sexuality education have been made, according to *Youth Ki Awaaz*, such as the belief that it encourages children to have sex at an early age, or that it is a Western belief that will hamper the tradition and moral values in Indian society.

**"When parents talk openly about periods, sex, and contraception...they help remove stigma."**

Priya says, "We need it to understand how the body works, normalize feelings during puberty, understanding gender and sexuality, sex and contraception,

to make their own informed decisions regarding sex and reproduction, for which sexuality education was required. Hence, governments were obliged to provide



Illustration by Mirael Lia Samson

and sexual health once they are sexually active and the importance of sexual communication and consent." She wishes to conduct workshops on sexuality education and believes that it should be made compulsory from grades 5 to 12.

In 1994, member states of the UN, including India, affirmed the Sexual and Reproductive Rights (SRRs) of adolescents and young people, allowing young adults

for free and compulsory comprehensive sexuality education. However, this programme was not accepted by many as its explicit content was believed to contradict Indian culture leading to its ban by 12 state governments, including Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat.

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Following a series of incidents of caste-based violence on university campuses in Karnataka during the 1980s, the state decided to ban student unions in 1989-90, holding them responsible for the violence. B. Somashekar, former Higher Education Minister of Karnataka, told *The Quint* that caste-based violence had “destroyed the ideals of the student politics.” Despite having been a student leader himself, he went on to be one amongst those who strongly opposed student union elections. In lieu of this ban, which continues to exist 30 years later, students seem to have no space to go to with their issues. Even when political engagement in universities such as JNU has demonstrated how student politics has the power to influence national politics, universities in the state are not allowed to have political spaces in their educational



As of 2016, students were allowed to be part of councils. These student councils however, are under the control of the management, and have to listen to their decisions. Shalom Gauri, a student of St. Joseph's College, Bangalore says, “St. Joseph's and Mount Carmel College are some of the few that have elected unions, but these at the same time are not affiliated to political parties, which is a good thing, but they also have very little power in the sense that the Principal can disband the union at any time, and more often than not, their primary focus is the college fest, and not student issues or slightly more controversial things; whether it's organising political discussions, or taking up issues with the management.” Speaking of how colleges can often be unsafe spaces for students because of this, Prajwal H.P., a student of CMS college,

*“It's [TSO] open to students who have problems with their colleges as well. Sexual harassment is something that we've been focusing on a lot.”*

Bangalore says, “In a place like college where students are supposed to be safe and protected is the same space where they were being harassed.” He remembers an incident in a well-known Bangalore institution where a student was molested by a teacher, and was unable to take up the issue as the management refused to take action, and there was no student union to go to. According to him, rampant power tension in college managements among other issues makes it impossible to bridge the gap between students and the management.

On the other hand, in states where there is no ban on student unions and student politics, there is a feeling of disillusionment at how student politics plays out, with affiliation to political parties often causing constant political unrest and violence on campuses. Student activist groups like the RSS-affiliated ABVP (Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad) and the Congress-affiliated NSUI (National Students' Union of India) constantly find themselves in the news for having started violent controversies and protests in colleges across the country. “I don't entirely like the way politics plays out in colleges, especially DU where it's basically a replication of the Indian political system. It becomes about parties controlling students rather than giving a voice to the youth,” says Shika Pai, a student at Ambedkar University, Delhi. She adds that it seems as if students simply get to voice their issues without seeing them translated into everyday life. Even in Karnataka, despite the ban, political party-affiliated groups find their ways of functioning. “Even though the state bans the interference of students into mainstream politics from college and the student elections, the unions will still

## STUDENT POLITICS: NEED OF THE HOUR?

*Anahita Ananth reports on the effect of the ban on student unions in Karnataka*

work as allies to the right wing organizations without directly participating in politics. The ban is only on the student elections and not really on the unions, and when the unions are working the elections will also somehow happen and the law will permit that. The ban is somewhat tricky,” admits Vinay Bidre, former National Secretary of the ABVP, in an interview with Sindhu M.V., a student of Mount Carmel College, Bangalore.

In 2017, in an attempt to do things differently and offer students a space to engage in political discussions and voice issues, The Students' Outpost (TSO) was created. TSO describes itself as “a Bangalore based group of students interested in questions of socio-politics both within and outside campus spaces.” They organise regular events for students to meet, share their ideas, and have discussions surrounding politics and student issues, and engage with various kinds of material. Shalom, who is a co-founder, says, “We started TSO in 2017 because it was getting very frustrating to not be able to ask questions in college and organise the kind of political discussions we wanted to organise. We formed TSO because there aren't student unions and we felt if [we] can't organise inside college we should organise outside college, so that's what we did. It's basically a group of students from different colleges in the city, both private and government, but right now it's largely private colleges like APU, MCC, Josephs, Christ, etc. It's open to all students who are interested in politics, in these kinds of discussions. It's open to students who have problems with their colleges as well. Sexual harassment is something that we've been focusing on a lot.”

Many students are still hopeful, and believe that it is important to be politically aware and involved in order to affect real change. Daya Ambirajan, a student of Ashoka University, a liberal arts college in Sonipat, says, “Student politics is important. Students decide to a large extent what the college demographic, and the college's views towards specific political questions are. Since college and educational institutions are large contributors to the country's political climate, it is important that students make their views known.” Like her, Shika also feels that it is extremely important for students to be aware of politics and take an active stand. “I still believe that if larger populations of students involve themselves in understanding the problems that our society has, especially along the lines of gender and caste, and voice these issues there might be a move towards a better situation,” she says.

**RECLAIM OUR SPACE FOR DISSENT**



Illustration by Mirael Lia Samson

While the end of the academic year marks the start of summer vacation, it also brings about a sense of dread among students, especially for those giving their Board Examinations in the months of February and March. A report by *India Times* revealed that this year, about 28,00,000 students are going to appear for these examinations. Students who have already passed these months of extreme drudgery can safely comment that exams are indeed times of stress and tension.

“What adds to the pressure is that it is these exams that determine what career path the children decide to take in the future,” says Ashutosh Mundkur, a parent. “I think another reason behind why students get so stressed during these times is because we, as parents, put a lot of pressure on them to pass,” says Nitya Natarajan, another parent.

Social media websites such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook are a frenzy among ‘Gen Z’, as they like to be called. A survey was conducted on 10th and 12th grade students from different schools on their leisure preferences during exams. While most of them preferred to go through their social media feeds while taking breaks from studying, a few of them believed that physical exercise has helped them. “I play basketball while taking a break from studies as it helps keep my mind fresh and I can concentrate better,” says Sakshi Pagnis, a grade 12 student from Modern College, Pune.

Gen Z students, however, also explained the reason for using these sites. “I use it to clear doubts among friends rather than for leisure,” explains Pavithra Kanchan, a grade 10 student from Sherwood High, Bannerghatta Road. “It is shocking, how many students are looking to social media to relax rather than go out and breathe the fresh air!” exclaims Mrs. Natarajan. “In our days, we used to go out and talk to our neighbours. It used to be fun gossiping with them,” she reminisces.

Now, an important question arises: Since the social media sites are dependent on the internet, what do the students do in a case of a bad network? “I sit and talk to my parents. It's very refreshing,” says Samar Ather, another grade 10 student. Reading and cycling were among the other responses obtained from students. “I draw. It not only relaxes me, but also helps me avoid



Illustration by Mirael Lia Samson

## WHAT ARE STUDENTS DOING TO RELIEVE EXAM STRESS?

*Mrudula Mundkur investigates Gen Z's choices of leisure during exams*

looking at my phone for a long period of time,” says Ackshaj Anand, a grade 12 student.

“Both my sons prefer to stay at home and watch shows rather than go down for a walk,” says Manjula Anand, Ackshaj's mother. “On the other hand, my daughter used to play basketball while taking a break. I always encouraged that.”

“Meditation is a great way to relax. The peace and quiet, along with the breath of fresh oxygen, refreshes my brain and helps me concentrate,” explains Shivani Iyer, a science student in grade 12. To help with reducing her mobile addiction, Shivani gave her phone to her teacher. “It helped me because after I got it back a few weeks ago, I had lost touch. As a result, I never felt the need to look at it when it vibrated. I could concentrate properly.”

Social Media, however, wasn't always the first choice. “I used to play with my dog, Veer, while taking a break,” explains Harini M. S., a student who graduated in 2018. Joanne Wilson, now a final year college student, remembers participating in athletics to beat the exam stress. “It used to be fun. Although winning the race used to be stressful as well, the joy I got on finally getting a gold medal beat all the tension!” she smiles.

It seems like the students have found a way to beat the exam heat! In these times of stress, taking the pressure off their shoulders is a welcome change. Here's wishing them luck for their exams!

V. Raghunathan

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## DEPRESSED? LET'S TALK

*Jeisa Jacob opens up conversations about depression amongst students, and looks at the state of awareness surrounding it*

“I had nightmares, I just sat in the corner of the room picturing all those things which went wrong in my life and it felt like it was on a loop. I did everything possible to cheer myself, to bring back the energy I had to live but nothing seemed to work. I cried myself to sleep every day, to a point when I didn't have tears to shed anymore,” says an 18-year-old girl studying in 12th standard at La Martiniere for Girls School, Kolkata.

Depression is one of the two most common mental health disorders, anxiety being the other. It is a topic people tend to ignore, saying it isn't a serious issue. In 2017, the World Health Organization made depression their main focus for India, the slogan for that year being 'Depression - let's talk!' Schools around the country started bringing in therapists to tend to the mental health of students. One such school was Loreto Day School, Kolkata, where the Principal, Sister Marilla D'Souza, took in four therapists. According to her, “Students especially being teenagers have a very unsettling mind because there are many changes occurring in their lives; these changes could be emotional, physical, or social.” She also believes that parents should be very careful while dealing with their children because they are partially responsible for their mental health.

Depression is also known as a mood disorder, where people go through episodes of feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and so on. Mrs. Sreedeepta Shome, therapist at Loreto Day School, says, “Depression is an illness which should be given more importance since nothing can work if the mental health of an individual is not good...There are quite a few characteristics which show that a person is depressed. I observe all my students very closely and the one thing common between the ones who go through this similar phase is that they are very restless and agitated. There is always an overreaction to criticism or a pale reaction on their faces. Students also slowly withdraw from friendship and their performance in school becomes poor.”

A 31-year-old psychologist from Sonarpur, Kolkata, talks about how students experiment with drugs and alcohol. “Usually students use drugs and alcohol just so that they can suppress these feelings which might lead to depression. People think depression is not a disease and that it is an excuse for people to avoid other important things but they do not realize how depression is such an important illness that it might stop an individual from becoming a fully functioning person,” she

explains.

Even though depression is getting more attention in our country than ever before, it is sad to see how some parents will not pay as much attention to depression as they will to a viral fever. Mrs. Christina Sneyd, Principal of Ashok Hall Junior Section, Kolkata, says, “Teenagers nowadays think that it is a trend to be depressed so that they gain all the attention from their peers in the form of sympathy. Personally, I wouldn't want any child to say that they are depressed because now there are so many counsellors available, so many workshops being held that it is not right for a child to say that he or she is depressed...Students especially from class 8 to 10 go through these phases in life where they have conflicts on their mind which leads to developmental problems.” She has also noticed how students who go through this lack interest to participate in any of the activities in school because of low self-esteem. She feels that social media influences teenagers to believe that one bad event in their life is something which will depress them, and which they cannot get out of.

Contrary to this, however, Principal of La Martiniere for Boys, Lucknow, says, “Different social media platforms like YouTube have helped the students going through depression as there are many videos up where people talk about how they can overcome depression and how to deal with it. Just in case the students who do not want to open up or confide in anyone but still want help - they can take help from these platforms of media.”

A 19-year-old 1st year student from Mount Carmel College, Bangalore says, “It was like anxiety, I would shiver because of the nightmares, I wouldn't eat or sleep. I wouldn't talk to anyone for a long time until I went to my school's therapist who helped a lot.” There has been progress over time since students have started talking to therapists at their schools. Dr. Ruby Majumdar, a psychiatrist and teacher from Kolkata explains, “The reason

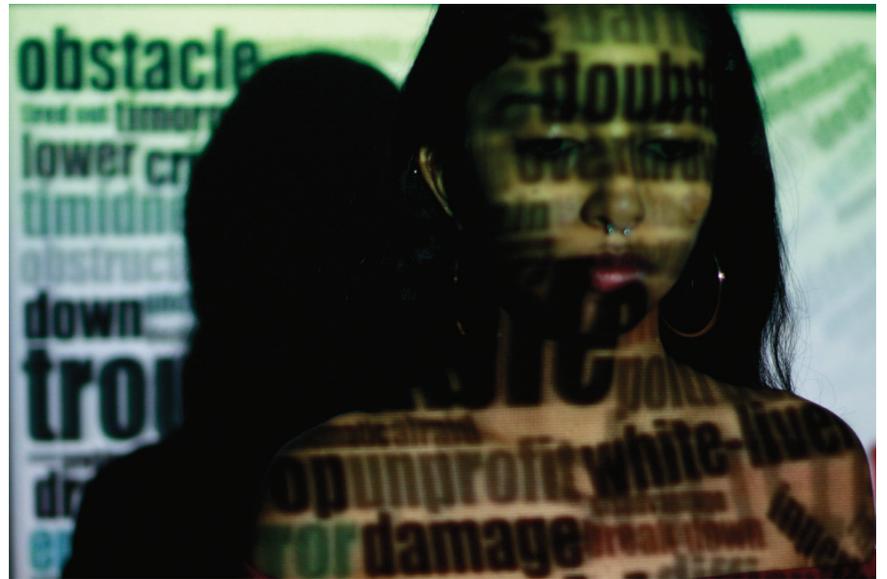


Photo by Jeisa Jacob

why students avoid talking to their parents is because they fear to be judged and that their parents would not look at them in the same way again so they disclose to therapists who they hardly know. The work of therapists has increased a lot through time which means students are finally talking and taking care of their mental health.” Dr. Majumdar also added that depression is a burden which can lead to anxiety disorders, drug usage, and schizophrenia.

Despite increasing awareness about depression, various school teachers go on to say how students nowadays fake depression which makes the elders wonder if depression really does exist or not. They feel it is a way of seeking attention.

The World Health Organization website states that in India, 80% of people suffering from depression are neglected and not treated. Other than ignorance and negligence, reasons why people may not get treated may be lack of affordability, or unwillingness to spend money on treatment, as depression is still not seen as a real illness. “Mental health and especially depression needs more attention,” says Priya Anwar, a 16-year-old student of class 10 from Lucknow. Yes, it's time to talk.

## ARE SCHOOLS ENSURING SAFETY FROM SEXUAL ABUSE?

*Have schools learnt from past mistakes and taken measures to create safe spaces for students? Anahita Ananth finds out...*

Over the past few years, the country has seen a flood of reports detailing incidents of sexual violence against children in schools. In October 2018, a Mumbai schoolteacher was convicted on charges of molestation of three minor girls, and allowed to rejoin 2 months later. Earlier, in February 2018, after a 7-year-old girl suffered the same in her South Kolkata school, the school failed to inform the police of previous charges

of sexual harassment against the teacher in question. 4 years ago, a 6-year-old girl was raped by two gym instructors at a VIBGYOR school in Bengaluru.

In early 2018, Delhi Police revealed that a shocking 60% of child abuse cases are linked to schools. In lieu of such incidents, many schools in the country seem to have tightened their belts with regards to keeping protocol in place. “We have a child abuse committee formed. We have children from the 9th and

10th standards, the vice principal, and the principal. This child protection committee is a mandatory committee that all schools have to form,” said the principal of a well-known international school in Malleswaram. She added, “We have CCTVs and a floor vigilance person sitting at every corner. We have teachers on duty to keep watch.

Those rooms that are not open all the time, they are all locked. These are the logistics we are looking at, to see that there's no sexual abuse...”

While most schools have CCTVs and security guards, not all have gone a step further to ensure that students are engaged in discussions about consent and sexual harassment from a young age. With a 2017 study conducted by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) showing that around 53% of the children surveyed reported facing some form of sexual abuse, the question of opening these dialogues becomes relevant and pressing.

When asked if schools have conducted discussions on the topic, Roshini Sanikop, student of Kensri School, Bengaluru said, “Nothing like that [incident of sexual harassment] has happened till now...so we've never had such talks as well. Every teacher maintains their distance from students.” Nitya Cavale, whose children study at National Public School, Rajajinagar, Bengaluru, says, “We are not aware of any programs that are being conducted in school. Even if they talk, we don't get to know. The teachers haven't spoken to us about any such program whatsoever, nor have we received any official information saying that they're going to conduct a session for the children.”

While these schools seemingly have more reactive than preventive measures in place, there are also schools that are taking a more holistic and active approach to the issue by ensuring that students are made aware about sexual harassment and consent. Leena B.H., Principal of Nagarjuna Vidyaniketan, Bengaluru, speaks about how imperative it is to

make students aware. “We are doing it in school, this awareness program, how important sexual education is, for both the genders. We have already conducted 2-3 workshops for 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th, and 12th standard also,” she says. “For boys, also, we have to conduct a separate session for them to realize that they have to respect the female gender. It comes from the home actually. The parent also plays a very important role, and we also have to take care in the school, by giving awareness to them. If we give awareness to them, I don't think they will be getting into these problems. We have to also sensitize the female students, from LKG, from the age of 3, we have to give an awareness about what is bad touch and good touch, and immediately without hesitating they have to inform their parents. We have to educate the girl child in such a way that they express their views to their parents immediately.” She also says that her school is equipped with counsellors who will provide help in case of such incidents.

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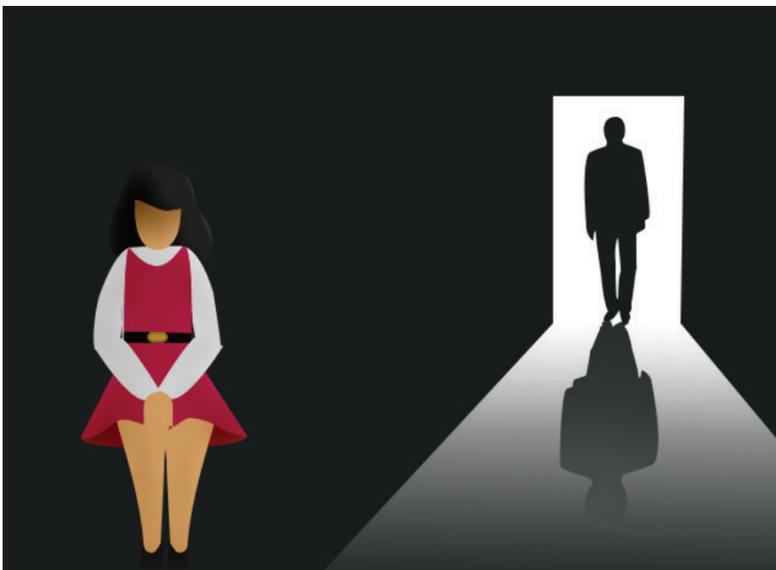


Illustration by Navaneeta Manoj



## PUBG, THE LATEST ADDICTION IN PUB CITY

Zubina Hussain looks into the growing world of addiction to the popular video game, PUBG

The Island of Sanhok in the blue Pacific waters is serene. With lush green vegetation and ancient ruins, it could be your perfect holiday destination. Welcome to the world of Player Unknown's Battleground, or PUBG, a multiplayer video game. The objective of the game is to be the last man or team standing. The only problem is that people here are looking to kill, and it has become quite the obsession among Indians. With the WHO classifying 'gaming disorder' as a mental health condition, has video gaming addiction become a bigger problem than before?

On 4th December 2018, Google released its annual list of Android's best applications and games of the year, and PUBG Mobile took home awards in the 'Best game', 'Most Competitive Title', and 'Fan Favourite' categories. With PUBG Mobile reaching 100 million downloads as of September 2018, it comes as no surprise that kids and adults alike are hooked to the game for hours on end.

According to a survey conducted in December 2018 by free internet provider Jana on its mCent browser app exclusively for Quartz, 55% of casual gamers and 64% of heavy gamers in India are below the age of 24. A number of children play the game PUBG even though it is marked for people who are above 16 due to its involvement of user interaction and digital purchases. Nearly 62% of the 1,047 respondents were playing the game. Most respondents were male (92.1%), and aged between 16 and 24 years.

Talking about the creation of addictive games such as PUBG, an Executive Game Designer and Analyst at Moonfrog Labs, Bangalore said, "We make games which are user friendly that will captivate the audience in a way that they keep on coming back to it again and again; our ultimate goal as game designers is to create something which keeps our audience hooked to the game. Our only intention while making games like PUBG or Fortnite is for the player's entertainment."

Schools in Bengaluru have begun to warn parents against children excessively playing PUBG after cases of

addiction came to light. The Associated Managements of Primary and Secondary Private Schools Karnataka (KAMS) will issue an advisory to parents asking them to restrict the number of hours spent by their children on the game. *Deccan Herald* quoted KAMS as stating, "We will ask our member schools to write to parents about this. We have, in the past, had discussions with the Education Department on imposing restricts on the number of hours a child spends playing such games. We want the police to also play an active role and take precautions to ensure measures are put in place to ensure children do not play such games."

Some parents have expressed concerns about children getting addicted to internet games. "Children play with random people and use abusive language during games, which is alarming. Even if we stop them at home, they would go outside to play the games," said Sheela R, mother of a 16-year-old. Meanwhile, VIT college in Chennai has issued a circular claiming that the game is "spoiling the entire atmosphere of the hostel" and has become an "addiction" for the students.

When asked about how playing and being addicted to PUBG affects one's daily activities, Arijeet Biswas, a 1st-year civil engineering student of RV College of Engineering, Bengaluru, admits that playing for 5 hours a day has disturbed his sleep cycle. "I won't really call it as 'addiction' but more of a stress releasing activity," he adds. Similarly, Zoheb Arshad, an executive front office assistant at Le Meridian, Bengaluru, says he often plays PUBG during breaks. "It is quite a fun game to play and really takes my mind off the workload we get in this industry."

An example of PUBG addiction is a 15-year-old from Bengaluru who is receiving treatment for his addiction to online gaming in the Service for Healthy Use of Technology (SHUT) Clinic, located at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), which helps people deal with technology-based addictions. Dr. Manoj Kumar Sharma, Professor of Clinical Psychology from the SHUT Clinic, said that five out of eight cases that are

referred to them are related to PUBG addiction. *Hindustan Times* quoted Dr. Sharma as saying, "They are between the 16 to 20 age group. When we speak to them they explain that better graphics and interface is a reason they chose this game over the others." Sharma highlighted the fact that students are playing PUBG overnight to compete with players from different time zones, and there are 19-year-old students who start playing PUBG at midnight and continue till 4am, completely destroying their sleep cycles. A child and adolescent psychiatrist of Fortis Hospital, Bannerghatta Road, said that gaming addiction is only the tip of the iceberg. "Underlying untreated issues like ADHD, learning disability, lack of satisfying real-world peer relationships, self-esteem issues have led to this clinical picture," she said.

With an increasing number of cases of addiction, PUBG seems to continue to suck more people into its consuming virtual world. One cannot help but wonder: Is video gaming addiction going to take over the IT capital?



Illustration by Hannah Baptist

## DO IT FOR THE GRAM!

In a world where social media seems to occupy an integral role, **Hannah Baptist** gives us a glimpse of the impact that Instagram can have on users

It is said that you cannot judge a book by its cover; however, in today's world, people are often judged by their feed on Instagram. Social media has taken over the world at an alarming rate, with Instagram ranking as the 7th most used social networking site in the world. This photo-sharing app has roughly 375 million active users (weforum.org). Instagram mainly functions on the ideas of interaction, photography, aesthetics, and battling the constant 'fear of missing out', or FOMO.

Most users create their accounts in their early teens when they feel the need to be part of the huge world that surrounds them, mostly due to their peer groups or mere inquisitiveness. They spend about 5 to 6 hours a day online - scrolling, double tapping, and interacting with their fellow users, their faces bathed in a cold blue hue illuminated by their phones. Sankeerthana Swaminathan, a 19-year-old avid Instagrammer from the 1st year Communications class in Mount Carmel College, says that for her, Instagram acts as an "escapist means" which helps her get out of social interactions.

According to Suvish Samuel, a counsellor at St. Joseph's Boys' High School, Instagram can affect users drastically. "If this social platform is used to only seek validation, they won't be able to receive it genuinely and will depend on Instagram as a tool to build their self-esteem, which isn't healthy and hence they become dependent and will have expectations which won't be met, thereby leaving them depressed. Whereas, if one doesn't have self-esteem issues and know who they already really are, they may not need or depend on Instagram but may post something for the benefit of others and to connect in a healthy manner. He adds that Instagram might also enable introverts to think that their need for social interaction is being fulfilled, whereas in reality, there is no physical connect or genuineness. "Instagram could be a useful platform but to be honest, Instagram is, in fact, a virtual social reality," he concludes.

People of the 'Insta-realm' are just as bad as people in real life. What may seem like 'harmless good fun' on the outside

is actually far more sinister once you look beyond the screen-protected surface. Research has shown that getting more likes or followers on Instagram results in a psychological high whereby the brain reacts to positive interactions on social media by releasing a chemical called dopamine. Dopamine creates feelings of bliss and happiness, resulting in a never-ending cycle of reward that the body ends up constantly craving. Many Instagrammers seem to see the app as a temporary escape from reality; it gives them a reason to smile. Sanchia Christopher, a 12th grader studying at Bangalore

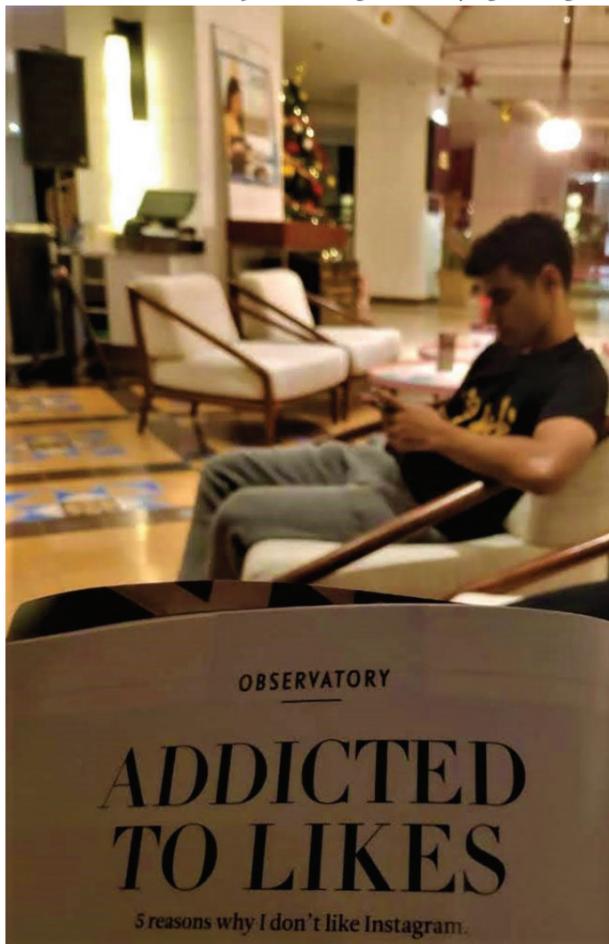


Photo by Hannah Baptist

International School, says, "It's good for socially anxious people."

On the other hand, Instagram can also be an extremely useful media platform and is often used by brands as a marketing strategy to showcase their products or connect with consumers. Latest features also give users an option of purchasing products directly after viewing them on posts. Most celebrities handle their accounts on their own, making it appear more real. Account holders 'follow' others based on their interests. There are a variety of accounts online, from influencers to brands, news channels, athletes, photographers, meme accounts, illustrators, food joints, and even government officials.

Some users like to time their posts. Sankeerthana, for example, says, "The best time to post a picture is either from 4:30 to 7:00pm because people come back tired and scroll through their feed and it's more probable that they'll hit the like button; or between 12:30 to 1:00am because your post is the first thing they'll see in the morning and will 99% of the time, double tap." Many users say that it takes courage for them to post something online for the world to see and expect some amount of validation in return. Christina Sundaram, a 1st year B.Com Professional student of St. Joseph's College of Commerce, says that she spends time trying to decide what to post, followed by editing it to make it "post worthy." Users get regular updates, the latest being the 'close-friends' option which saves you the trouble of creating a 'Finsta'. It allows you to post stories which only a chosen few on your follower list can view. According to Daniel Philip, a 1st year design student of the Strate School of Design, this means "You can be the rawest form of yourself without the slightest fear of being judged."

Instagram seems to have a significant impact on the mental state of many. It is important for one to be aware of how one uses it, given how it appears to have become a means for people to form judgements and put labels. After all, as we were constantly reminded while growing up: 'Nothing stays hidden once it's on the internet'.



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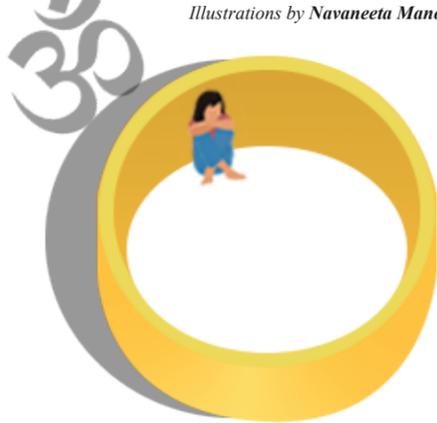
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“The number of marriages that are being registered under the Special Marriage Act (1954) is increasing and interfaith couples don't seem to be taking the usual threats of the society seriously anymore,” said Ramakanth Hegde, a law advocate based in Bangalore.

According to data obtained from the Department of Stamps and Registrations, Koramangala, Bangalore, 2,624 inter-faith marriages were registered under the Act in 2013-14, while the number jumped to 18,391 in 2016-17, showing a massive 306% increase. “Yes. There is an increase in the number of couples who register their marriage under this act and unlike olden days, the parents come to the office to provide consent and not to fight,” says an official from the Department of Stamps and Registrations, with a laugh.

Marriages in India have usually been governed

Illustrations by Navaneeta Manoj



## INTERFAITH MARRIAGES INCREASE BY 306% IN BANGALORE

Sindhu M.V. takes an incisive look at whether acceptance of inter-faith marriages has really changed, despite what the numbers show

by personal laws of specific religions. However, The Special Marriage Act, 1954, was designed to legalize marital bonds between individuals of two different castes or religions, without having to convert to another religion. Individual consent, soundness of mind and body, and the legal age for marriage (18 for women and 21 for men) are the only criteria that the act takes into consideration. The couple needs to give a 30-day period of notice to the sub-registrar, and the solemnization will be done at the end of the period, provided there are no objections.

While the act is generally for couples of different castes or religions, couples from the same caste or religion can also register their marriage under this law. “The process is easier than the personal laws. I chose to get our marriage registered under the Special Marriage Act just for this reason,” said Rohit Holla, a Bangalore-based IT professional who married Ankita Holla in 2015.

Despite legal support, inter-faith and inter-caste couples have faced bullying, harassment, familial opposition, and even death threats. In February 2018, a Facebook page listed over 100

Muslim men who had married or dated Hindu women. The post asked ‘real Hindu men’ to take action against them and save the girls from the trap. In December, Hindu right-wing groups barged into an interfaith wedding celebration in Bangalore. There have even been attempts to take such cases to court in order to break the relationships.

“I had to end my relationship with my husband because of my parents who registered a complaint against him under kidnapping,” said Alisha Begum, who was married to Ruthvic Hebhal in 2016 in Bangalore and is now a divorcee. “After the divorce, my parents started looking for a groom and so I had to stay away from them,” she ended. Another couple, Riyaz Ali and Saadhvi S.V. who got married recently said they had problems with a registrations department official who disagreed with their decision. Riyaz said, “I had to call the police and ask for help and then register our marriage. Thankfully, the policemen were kind enough and

**“I had to call the police and ask for help and then register our marriage...”**



the registration happened without any other problems.”

Ananthram Mullangi, a retired senior civil lawyer who practiced in Bangalore and Delhi, said, “Times are changing and the current generation is a lot more tolerant when it comes to choosing partners and they don't consider religion as a necessity for marriage. And in most cases, the couples are economically stable which reduces the need for dependability on their families or on the society, therefore, causing less high-kich [chaos].”

“The outrage of the right wing groups and the families was there 30 years before and is continuing. Frankly, [it] has increased in the couple of years. But the numbers say something quite opposite. Don't they? Problems are always there, it is the attitude of people and the growing social intelligence in younger minds that is making the difference,” concluded Ananthram.

## OUR RIGHT TO SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Continued from Page 1

A study conducted by UNICEF interviewing over 14,000 children and young adults revealed that 53% of children between the ages of 5 and 12 have been sexually abused – majority by parents, close family members, and legal guardians. According to this report, denying sexuality education to these children proves to be a violation of international law as UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) states, “to undertake to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.” Young adults mostly learn about sex through innuendos or pornographic content, instead of school settings and talks with parents.

In May 2017, the ministries of Human Resource Development, Women and Child Development, and Health Development announced their decision to begin classes on sex education for students of state run schools in Haryana. A report in *India Today* states, “The lessons will include treating sex as a natural desire and not equivalent of a disorder...team members and teachers are being trained to sensitise students on how the attraction to opposite sex is a very natural phenomenon.”

“I believe sexuality education can be an antidote to the toxic masculinity that has made India notorious for its rape culture,” says Soumya, wanting to initiate

workshops on Sex Ed in government schools. Countries which are taking sexuality education seriously have managed to reduce sex-related violence. A report in *Youth Ki Awaaz* states that in Denmark, as compared to India, 33.33% less people are likely to have HIV/AIDS and have 48.62% fewer babies. The annual number of births per 1,000 people in Denmark is 10.22 while in India it is 19.89.” Rashmi explains, “At the end of the day, I want my children to be well informed about such matters; their safety and happiness is important to me.”

Sex has always been a very sensitive topic most teens would never dare approach their parents for. However, a percentage of teenagers do engage in sexual activity on a regular basis. Just how much in denial do parents choose to be about it, turns out to be the question.

“Despite several tries to make my mom realize that it is perfectly normal to have a boyfriend at this age, she doesn't seem to see why it's necessary; my dad on the other hand, is uncharted territory when it comes to all

## TO DENY OR NOT TO DENY - THAT IS THE QUESTION

Deanne Monis investigates attitudes towards pre-marital sex across two generations

this, but he seems to be even more orthodox than my mother. So being sexually active and discussing it with my parents is almost impossible, and the thought of speaking about it dreads me. However, I'm pretty sure I could positively speak about being sexually active once I'm married,” says Prishita Poojary, 18, a law student from Christ University. “My parents weren't always chill. I've been classically conditioning them since 8th grade to imaginary guy friends so that by the time I'm in college, they're chill,” says Dhriti Agarwal, an Arts student from Mount Carmel College. Ajay Toms, a 19-year-old BBA student from Christ University says, “So, it's just that Indian families don't function in a very open way. At least now trends are changing, but I guess it'll take a little more time. Sex is still looked upon in a bad light and I think a main reason pertaining to it is because of how people perceive it.”

So the question then becomes, how do parents actually perceive sex and relationships? Sukanya Ananth, a psychotherapist and mother of a teenage daughter explains, “One, the moralistic perspective. Two, I think parents of girls are more afraid because of the consequences. Three, they are worried about marriage prospects and what people will say if they find out!” Sukanya adds that parents could be in denial because they themselves are confused about what's okay and what's not. “Most of us are in the sandwich generation! Caught between our parents' upbringing and struggling to catch up with our children's ideologies, I guess...”

Parents are usually influenced by cultural norms and only loosen up the second the word ‘marriage’ comes around. There is an emphasis on the institution of marriage and it seems to be a kind of end goal every Indian parent wants to see their child through, and the sanctity of that is maintained, according to them, only if both have been chaste and are each

other's firsts. 19-year-old Shristi Jain says, “Which sexually active person wouldn't be scared?! I mean I'm pretty sure there are 30-year-olds out there claiming to be virgins, just so mummy doesn't hit them with a *belan* (rolling pin).”

Parents of today must understand that times are changing and the onus is on them to create a safe space for honesty, so that they can take initiative to start talking about safe sex when their children approach their teens. Teenagers too, need to be smart about their choices and make decisions that they shouldn't end up regretting. Practicing safe sex and making sure they understand the gravity and implications of what they're getting themselves into, becomes top priority. Remember kids – No glove, No love!

Yukta Chopra, a sexually active 18-year-old states, “I thought that I would lose my virginity only after I get married, but opinions change, your approach to life changes with age...I personally believe that there is an advantage of having pre-marital sex. It makes me more aware of how to feel about it in the future...especially if anyone decided to violate me, I will know that I'm being violated. It's the experience that will teach me this. Again, this is my personal opinion and I cannot project this on anyone else.”

“I don't think teenagers are really thinking about the consequences of being active sexually in terms of health safety, in terms of emotional consequences, and it being a huge distraction from what's important at this stage. Relationships can be very distracting and I think parents feel it's unnecessary at this age. And I must say I agree with how much it can occupy the mind and take focus away from other goals. It does tend to become all-consuming. And if one doesn't have good emotional regulation, it can be very damaging. So for these reasons, it's worthwhile considering the price we pay for getting entangled in a relationship at this stage,” advises Sukanya.



Photo by Teresa Braggs

### SPECIAL THANKS

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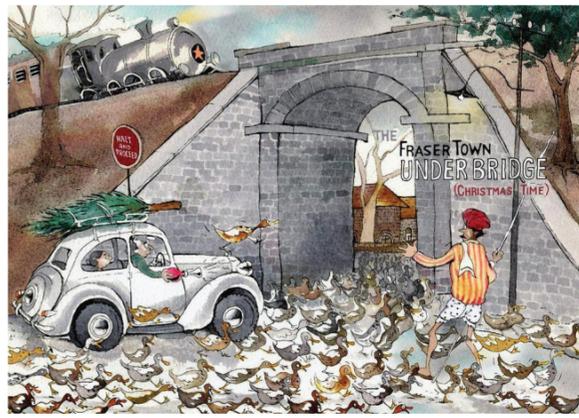
## AN AFTERNOON WITH PAUL FERNANDES

Continued from Page 1

“So where was the place to hang out, when you were growing up?” I ask. Without a moment’s hesitation he says, “Oh, the place to be was Brigade Road. And there was no other place. So everyday, after school we’d jump onto our cycles, zoom all the way down to Brigade Road, sit down on our cycles like big shots, and after an hour, cycle back. That was our joy.” He doesn’t forget to mention The Only Place (another restaurant that has been around for ages), alongside a pinball machine shop and a hotel where all the long-haired hippies from Goa would stay.

Paul tells me of his family home in Frazer Town with fondness. “We were 10 children, and each one of us had 10 friends so there were a 100 people at home everyday and my mother fed them all, quite easily, quite happily,” he says, his characteristic wide smile occupying most of his face. “I think my family played a huge part. You know, my parents had such a big family, they didn’t quite know who was doing what. So if I decided to do art, my father didn’t quite know, you know, till he was told. There were so many of us to worry about. And I think it was that aspect of his, you know, not getting into our lives so much that set us free. And each one of us is quite happy today doing their thing.”

I find myself listening eagerly as he talks about various cultural aspects unique to this old-world Bangalore, that make their way into his anecdotes, like the barber who would come home and give him and all his sisters the exact same haircut. I ask him about the wildest thing he’s ever done when he was young, and after some hesitation, he volunteers a story. “Wow, we’ve done crazy things in our youth,” he says. “Well, one of the nicer ones which comes to mind



immediately was you know, being young and without much to do, we would walk around at night in Frazer Town and Richards Park, just take people’s gates off the hinges, and being fit and strong, we’d carry the gate to Ulsoor Lake and throw it in. Then, some years ago, the lake was emptied to dredge it and clean it out, and suddenly a person would say, ‘Hey, that’s my gate!’ All known people of course. You know, some old uncle and all, just take his gate and throw it. In those days the houses were so large and once an old pensioner went to sleep, put on his monkey cap, nothing will bother him.” As I laugh in incredulity, he laughs with me, as though he has just done the deed. Even when he speaks of his mischievous exploits, he does it with the same genteel, laughing and lighthearted manner, enveloped in his world of nostalgia.

Paul’s affair with drawing began quite early on in his life. “It began when I was 3 or 4 years old, when I destroyed my parents’ house, drawing pictures with a black pencil, of cars and aeroplanes and things on the walls, yeah I destroyed the house! So, my father, poor chap, he kind of put small little stones up to a height of 4 feet so I couldn’t draw anymore. But I think the joke doing the rounds then was that all the rooms in the doctor’s house were drawing rooms,” he says. The decision to take up art as a profession, however, came quite by accident. “Well the accident was simple. You know in school, I did a drawing of our Hindi teacher, I think roundabout the 8th standard or so. He was a very jovial, round fellow you know, easy to draw. So I think I did a small sketch of him on a piece of paper, and it got passed around the class, and everyone giggled and laughed, but unfortunately it went back to the teacher and I was given a bashing with a cane (laughs). And I was punished for it. And I failed in Hindi! So because of that, I took that as an indication.”

“So you decided you must do this now?”

“No choice!”

Today, Paul’s signature style is hard to miss. Most Bangaloreans would have chanced upon his work somewhere or the other, and upon seeing his work, one can immediately put his name to it. On his art and the coming together of a drawing, he says, “Well to my mind, a drawing consists of many small little components. The biggest, the most important of that would be the actual place, or

let’s say the architecture of that place. Then I decide where to draw it from, which angle. And also decide whether you want to draw it in the morning or the night. And that would give it all the character that you’re looking for. The moon, or the sun. You know, it defines the picture. Then very importantly, the greenery that is around that architecture. Because a lovely building always has a beautiful garden around it. And that’s what makes the memory. So for instance, if there was let’s say a Jacaranda tree outside a building, and you drew a mango tree, God help you. Nobody will care for your drawing, isn’t it? Because you remember that Jacaranda tree. So those are small things you look for.” This layered picture certainly comes through in viewing his art, where every painting has an equally detailed, meticulous depiction of every aspect of a space. Each one tells a whole story. “I try to base everything I do on lighthearted humor. So the trick with humor is to know where to draw the line,” he explains. He still uses the old-fashioned pencil, eraser, tracing paper, and watercolor method to create his art, and digitizes it to be printed after this process.

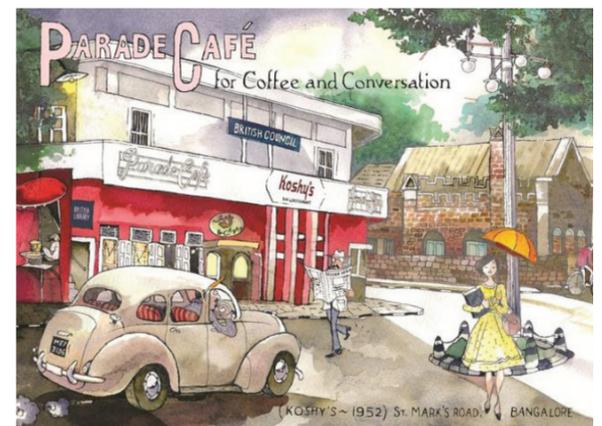
Paul has always preferred to work for himself, but has set an incredibly disciplined routine, putting in 16 hours of work everyday. “It’s hard work to actually paint,” he says. However, he

adds that he is blessed with being able to do what he loves, and he does not, in fact, see it as work at all. When he works, he is completely lost to the world (as he feels it should be), with his phone switched off. He expresses his frustration with technology, and recalls the time he flung his pager

into Ulsoor Lake. Of course, he adds his extra layer of humor to the already amusing incident by saying, “But what a lovely throw it was!” At the end of the day, his aim is to make people smile at a memory, which he says of his art, but is also true of his interactions. He draws inspiration from the style of Mario Miranda, and says he has been a great influence on the thinking that has gone into his approach to his work.

He describes his wife, Renu, as his main critic. “Oh, I depend on her a lot. Well she walks a very narrow path, being my main critic and a loving wife. It’s a narrow path, a fine line,” he says, with a gentle laugh. He recalls the day he first met her. “We were classmates in college. And I was telling her just this morning, I got the shock of my life because the first time I saw her in college, she had just walked in that morning; she had this huge afro haircut. What a sight!” he chuckles, and then jokes about his baldness.

I barely notice that almost 2 hours have passed while we chatted, and the light catching the blue stained-glass orbs in his garden has dimmed. He tells me I must come visit him again, and maybe catch him in his Richard’s Park gallery (which is called ‘aPaology’, by the way). As I take his leave, I find myself turning the picture of us talking in his living room with the dog at our feet into a Paul Fernandes style cartoon painting in my head. And just like that, I feel nostalgia for something only a few minutes in the past.



Illustrations by Paul Fernandes

## RISING ABOVE THE ODDS

Elza Mathew gives an account of the integration of science and art to create a platform for innovation in the medical field, with Arun Cheria

Amidst the hustle and bustle of Ashok Nagar, Bangalore, I found my way to Arun Cheria’s office. Arun was in a meeting with a client, discussing a few marketing strategies for his start-up. He wrapped up the discussion with plans of expanding his products to different continents, and his desire to terminate any problems caused by middlemen. We then chatted over a cup of fruit water in his hand and cup of coffee in mine. “We make high quality mobility, affordable mobility devices, so that people cannot just walk, but they can also run, play, and dance,” said Arun, founder of Rise Legs and Rise Design Art.

“Rise Legs make light-weight, cost effective, flexible legs made out of cane like bamboo. We digitally scan the body, so what would previously take 2-3 days, would now take an hour. On the other hand, we have Rise Design, wherein when we buy cane in bulk, we use medical grain for the prosthetic, and

the non-medical grain, which is still very good cane, we use that to create high-end art pieces that go for a lot of money, and we use that money to subsidize the prosthetic legs. The whole idea is that we can get art to fund innovation in the medical space so that we can do social good, which in turn provides a platform for more artists to create art.”

Arun completed his Masters in Mechanical Engineering from Columbia University and worked as a researcher at University of California, Berkeley. Talking about what inspired him, he said, “It really was a curiosity based invention. My background is that of a roboticist and I used to study the biomechanics of locomotion. I was doing my PhD in how animals and robots can walk...Very simply put, the leg of any animal, whether it is an elephant, giraffe, lion, human, dog or a cockroach, no matter what the size or the number of legs it has, mathematically all animals walk the same. The legs are like tuned springs. This is also how we get robots to

walk and run, we make their leg like a spring. When I came down to Kerala for my sister’s wedding, I saw that we have cane furniture sitting outside the house. If cane can be bent in all these beautiful shapes and take weight, from a mechanical standpoint, it can bend and take weight, that’s a spring. So if cane is a spring, and if the leg is a spring, then the question was, can I make a leg out of cane?” This epiphany led him to local artisans, and he was delighted to find out that it is indeed possible to make a leg out of cane, and it can support human weight too.



An athlete using Rise Legs prosthetics

Having appeared on various TED talks, Arun recalled how honoured he felt, being invited to speak at TED Gateway, which was held in Jaipur. His main motive was to explain to the audience why he was doing what he is doing and what he has accomplished.

Does he have a piece of advice for people aspiring to build a start-up? “It’s so true when people say, ‘If you’re the smartest person in the room, you’re in the wrong room.’ Work with people who are better than you in what they do, and together as a team, learn to solve the problem elegantly. The personal and philosophical growth I had, was orders of magnitude larger than the technical and the business challenge I faced. It’s more of a personal journey than a business journey.”



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# WALKING ALONE ON A STARRY NIGHT...

Imagine looking up on a clear night and seeing stars that make patterns, both peculiar and familiar. These are connected to several mythological figures and are called constellations. **Mrudula Mundkur** tries to identify 5 of these

1) Named after a mythological Greek hunter, we can see Orion throughout the year. Its brightest stars are Rigel (Beta Orionis), a blue-white supergiant, and Betelgeuse (Alpha Orionis), a red supergiant. The constellation can easily be identified by Orion's belt, three stars that form a line in the sky – Zeta (Alitak), Epsilon (Alnilam), and Delta (Mintaka).

2) A constellation in the northern sky, Ursa Major is a Latin name that means 'Greater she-bear'. It has a partner constellation called Ursa Minor, or the 'Lesser she-bear', both discovered by Greco-Roman astronomer Ptolemy, and now known as the largest constellations in the galaxy. We can identify this by seeking out The Big Dipper – four stars that form a box (the bear's body) and three that form a tail.

3) Another constellation that was discovered by Ptolemy, Canis Major is a Latin word that means the 'Greater Dog', and also has a partner called Canis Minor, or the 'Lesser Dog'. They both follow Orion across the sky. Sirius A, one of the brightest stars in the night sky, is part of this constellation. The pattern formed by the stars resembles that of a dancing man.

4) The Latin name for 'Dragon', Draco, a glittering chain of faint stars that curl around Ursa Major, is one of the 88 modern constellations in the galaxy. Circumpolar, it can be seen all year from northern latitudes. Two stars on the front of the Big Dipper, which point to the Polaris – located on the east side of Draco – identify this constellation.

5) A constellation in the northern sky Pegasus, is named after the winged horse in Greek mythology. It is the seventh largest constellation out of the 88 that Ptolemy listed. The brightest star in this constellation, Epsilon Pegasi (Enif) marks the horse's muzzle. Surrounded by several other constellations, Pegasus can be identified by locating a box-like pattern formed by stars, that looks like that of the Big Dipper. Three stars that start from the right corner of the box, and end with Enif, form the head of the horse.

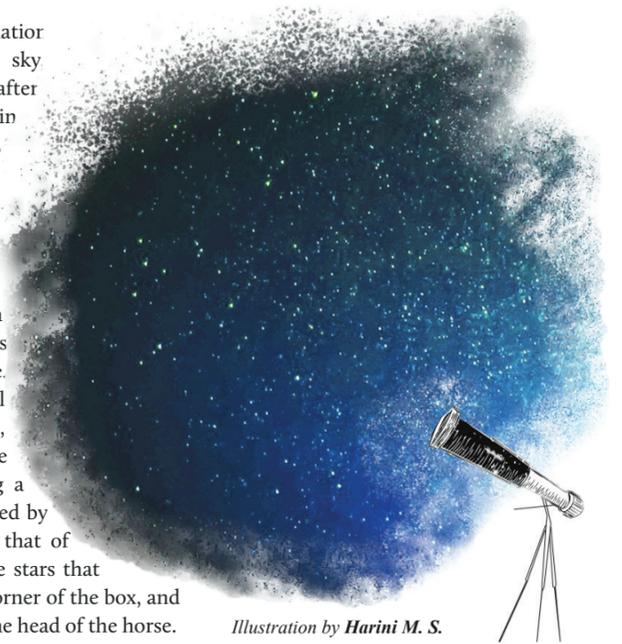


Illustration by Harini M. S.

## UNDER THE SEA

Marine biologist, **Oshin Joanna Christopher**, speaks with **Hannah Baptist** about the state of our oceans and what we can do to conserve them



### THE BIOLOGIST SAYS...



**“Drilling for PETROLEUM**

is one of the main reasons for polar meltdowns, with Shell Petroleum being one of the main companies behind the ice cap melts. This they do while promising us ‘quality oil.’”



“Sunscreen not only inhibits coral regeneration but also enhances bleaching, therefore slowly killing it; mass death in a way. Look out for oxobenzene in your sunscreens, if it contains the chemical, then drop it.”



“Plastic bags can take up to one or two decades to decompose in the ocean, and plastic bottles - a century.”

### BAD FOR THE OCEAN, BAD FOR US



#### EFFECTS OF SEISMIC BLASTS

10% of all the marine litter in the oceans is either lost or discarded fishing gear



“I’ve found fish under nets, caught in corals. We’ve spent hours trying to get them out but those nets weighed close to 25kgs.”

I became deaf.

All my friends and family within a mile of the blast died due to the shock.

We lose our migration paths. We can’t hunt or even reproduce.

“A Manta ray was found without fins and sinking to the bottom, in Thailand, because people clipped its fins to make it look like a shark’s fin.”

### IT WILL ONLY GET WARMER FROM HERE ON



It's hot in here

El Niño, a climate cycle and bleaching effect, took place in 2016; it suddenly woke everyone up.

The Earth goes through a warming and cooling period. There was a previous ‘El Niño’ as well; it wiped out a lot of coral. There was less carbon production then, but now there’s so much more of it going into the oceans, making it the largest carbon sink.

### WHAT CAN WE DO?

Use less PLASTIC

We can set up reserves and cordon them, monitoring species and taking care of their needs.

In a research institute, Lamave, in the Philippines, they’re educating the fishermen to be guides. This can serve as an alternate stream of revenue and reduces ghost fishing by huge numbers.

Infographic by **Hannah Baptist**; Illustration by **www.abrahamthinking.com** for **One World One Ocean** | 2012

## ARE SCHOOLS ENSURING SAFETY FROM SEXUAL ABUSE?

Continued from Page 3

A student of Apeejay School, Noida, Arunima Tiwari talks about how while protocol may be in place, teachers are awkward and uncomfortable around the topic, and largely avoid talking about it. “Last year, when I was in 10th grade, an organization came to our school, and class teachers were given these handouts that described what is a good touch and a bad touch, what is child sexual abuse, what kind of forms it can take, how people deal with it, how traumatic it is, how to seek help and stuff like that. A 1 hour period was given to every class

and the class teacher was supposed to talk to the children about this. So, we had this ‘discussion’ with our teacher, but she cut it short, and it was clear that she was annoyed and didn’t understand why she needed to do this with us. I remember very clearly this very problematic statement that she made, in response to a part in the handout that said how with child sexual abuse, the accused is guilty until proven innocent; saying ‘They obviously don’t know that children these days are very cunning and can lie their way out of anything,’ which I think was a very ignorant thing to say in a discussion

like this, which is obviously very important.”

It is clear from this, that awareness and education seem to be the need of the hour. “There is a lot of ambiguity about consent in both women and men, and it is important that this is addressed at an early age in schools,” says Sukanya Ananth, a psychotherapist and parent. “Those who are dispensing the knowledge also need their conditioning and belief systems about sexuality examined so they don’t propagate problematic ideas.” She maintains that healthy dialogue is the best way forward.

## ANIMAL ADOPTION: A MISUNDERSTOOD MEANS

Harini M. S. presents a detailed picture of the state of animal adoption in India today

According to a 2016 report in *Hindustan Times* which cited statistics from the India International Pet Trade Fair (IIPTF), around 6,00,000 pets are adopted every year in India. With a pet population of close to 10 million as of 2014, *India Today* claims that India is home to nearly 25-30 million street dogs, with only a 3.5 crore Government Budget for sterilization in 2014. With such large numbers to consider, campaigns for animal adoption, including the famous #adoptionshop, have gained popularity over the last year.

The long-standing debate of whether to get a pet from a breeder or a rescue center continues to remain relevant, with thousands of Google search results popping up at that question. A survey involving 60 residents of Bangalore revealed that 55% of people had pets that were purebred, i.e., directly or indirectly procured from a breeder. 40% said they had rescued their pets, while the remaining 5% were either unsure of the source or had multiple pets from both breeders and rescue centers. 25% of the people under the first category were aware of having got their pet(s) from a breeder. These respondents said that they had done so because of the quality that came with having a purebred animal, like being allergy-proof.

Deena Nagesh, parent of two pugs and three cats, had purchased her dogs from a breeder and explained why she thinks people prefer breeders. "You get good quality, you can choose. When you go to a shelter, you don't have much choice. You should go with an open heart when you go to a shelter. This isn't a place where you go, pick up, choose, pay money and come back, no. If you're really an animal lover, you'll not see all this...You just want to give a life to an animal."

75% of those who had rescued their pets did so mainly out of fondness for that animal. "Our dogs were rescues - one was found paralyzed in a dustbin and the other was orphaned as a puppy. With so many homeless Indies and abandoned/injured dogs in need of a home, the idea of buying a dog from a breeder seemed unnecessary," said Nishant Bhatia, an animal-lover who also conducts a number of rescue and neutering operations for stray animals. A further study of those who didn't have pets but wanted one, revealed that they would prefer to adopt, citing affordability as a major reason.

Over the past few years, animal rescue centers have mushroomed all across the country, devoted to the purpose of giving abandoned animals a new home. Bangalore itself is home to a number of such shelters like Charlie's Animal Rescue Centre (CARE), Precious Paws Foundation, and many more.

"I've heard that people's preferences continue to remain as breeds...But at least there's a change in mindsets where they are coming to shelters

to look for abandoned breeds, which itself is a huge thing because you do have abandoned breeds," says Sudha Narayan, founder of CARE. "If you look at any pet food advertising...it's always those cute breed puppies that are there. So naturally when they see one, they want one like that. They don't realize what all it comes with, they're not willing to. But it's changing."

Speaking of problems with the breeding industry, Sudha explains, "You can have breeds. There's no problem in liking a particular breed or wanting a particular breed. But...let there be ethical breeding. Let it not be like you have two dogs, you constantly mate them, the female gets to mate her own progeny - there are so many horrible things...the genetic pool gets so weak that by the time it comes to the 3rd generation, the pup is born with so many illnesses that are masked...but by the time it grows, by the 4th or 5th month, they manifest. Then it's done." She continued to talk about how breeders fetch a huge sum of money per pup, and consequently for the litter itself, and about how the continuous existence of demand for such puppies keeps these breeders in business.



Photo by Harini M. S.

In contrast however, Meryl Dyer, who sold 8 of her 9 Doberman puppies, says, "We kept the weakest, we gave about 2 or 3 to friends and the others were bought from us, but not for much. We just wanted to see people who care about dogs and wanted them."

Discussing the affordability aspect of adopting animals, Sudha completely agrees to the results of the survey. On adopted stray dogs, she adds "They are hardy, their immune system is very high...they don't fall ill." In her experience, the health issues that the Indies (strays) come to the shelter with are mostly to do with having been abused, or with living on the streets, as opposed to other chronic conditions common in purebred dogs. "The Indie has everything...sharpness,

intelligence, love, kindness, loyalty, whatever you're looking for in a dog is out there in the Indie for us to see, but we don't look at it."

Sudha also offers insight into the perspective of animal shelters. Pointing at the newest puppy adoption unit in her shelter, she speaks of how funding affects the looks of the animals and consequently, their adoption. It isn't just Indies but physically challenged dogs, as well, that face discrimination compared to pedigree dogs. "For the physically challenged dogs, it [the preference] is not so high. Because it's a lifetime of commitment, like a special child; it is also a matter of looking after. As they grow older, the challenges are more. So, someone who's really up to it - we are also very wary of giving away dogs like that, unless we know them really well," says Sudha. She cited the example of Mowgli, a three-legged survivor of Canine Distemper, who was made a permanent resident of the shelter after being put up for adoption. She explains, "Everyone is carrying him - from my attendant to my housekeeping staff, everybody. My managers, part of their work is carrying him in one hand and doing

their work. So now we cannot break that bond, we can't! So that is why when it's a special dog adoption, I see the whole group watching me like 'What decision are you going to make? Will they be okay there?' So, there's a lot that goes into that."

Deena admits that it was her lack of awareness that led to her going to a breeder for her pugs. "7 years back, we didn't know about animal shelters and all...My children were very keen on adopting dogs, and I didn't find any shelters. Finally, I had to meet a breeder."

Awareness about the cruelty in the breeding industry has led to an increase in adoptions not just in India, but also abroad. Shelters such as ResQ Charitable Trust in Pune and Guardians of the Voiceless in Patiala have begun opening up offers to have Indian dogs adopted abroad, with animals going to places like Australia, New York, and London.

Sudha foresees a positive future for animal adoption in India. "We have to keep reinventing ourselves, we have to be more innovative because the thing is everyone is doing adoptions. There are little-little cluster groups coming up for which you have people who rescue pups off the street, foster them, and then give them for adoption. So, it's actually like a competition." Sudha also feels that today, people who flaunt their pedigrees are looked down upon and how it is the 'cream of the society' that adopts from shelters and flaunts their adopted dogs instead.

Deena believes every dog deserves to have shelter and food. "Two meals a day. They just need two meals. So, if every family adopts one dog, there won't be any problem of stray in our country."

## Eco-Friendly WEDDINGS

Aliya Thomas addresses the latest wedding trend and offers grandeur and sustainable development on the same platter

The wedding season is just around the corner. In India, when we think of weddings, we associate it with grandeur, because it's not just a celebration of two individuals uniting but their families, as well.

What we are not inclined to thinking about, is the waste generated from the weddings. It comes in all forms - be it the décor, the food, or the utensils. Studies by *The Times of India* show that, in Bangalore, on average, over 9 tonnes of food is wasted in every wedding hall. This is just food. Adding to the 9 tonnes, will be waste generated from the other aspects of the wedding that go in making it lavish.

Nilma Dileepan, who is a nature lover herself, started her company 'With love, Nilma' based in Bangalore, in 2014.

"Most of the couples we have encountered try and be as eco-friendly as possible, but then there are about 15% who ask for a wedding

designed to be eco-friendly from head to toe," said Nilma, about the couples who like to have a strictly eco-friendly wedding.

With eco-friendly weddings being a fairly new concept, couples tend to think that it is equally tedious. "It is easy to plan it, but there is that extra effort you need to put in. Things like sourcing a supplier who will provide steel tumblers instead of plastic bottles, or asking the caterers to get glasses, and using chalkboard instead of flex print are things one needs to consciously think of while planning an eco-friendly wedding," said Nilma.

Marianne, a client of Nilma's, spoke about her eco-friendly bridal shower planned by them. "I think, having this bridal shower be eco-friendly, was one of the best decisions I made in the entire planning of my wedding. The aesthetics and the look of the event is just as any other non-ecofriendly event. In fact, I'd say it was better." Marianne went on to explain the details of the event. "We used cotton Jaipur block-printed sheets as our tablecloth and eco-friendly fairy lights...The jars that were used were from my house. I also had giveaways planned for my bride squad. It was cups and saucers that was from Bombay, from an eco-friendly vendor. I handed them out as return gifts to my friends."

Everything has its pros and cons. The pros of this type of wedding are definitely its aesthetic look and the fact that nothing will be harming the environment. Nilma went on to explain the cons, "Since you are already time-pressed and have many tasks in hand while planning a wedding, the added task of finding eco-friendly vendors might be stressful for some people. Hence, not going ahead with it. Some people also think one is being cheap while going eco-friendly and hence some families prefer to use materials that are flamboyant but, at the same time, harmful to the environment."

The trend of having an eco-friendly wedding is picking up. It's definitely not as fast as it should be, but the growth is inevitable. "I am honestly praying that couples will have more environment-friendly weddings in the future. Considering the situation, we are in, with excess amounts of waste generated in all industries, I am hoping that they will take a conscious effort for the same," said Nilma.



Photo courtesy of Crews Projects

## THE K-POP WAVE IN INDIA

*Navaneeta Manoj traces the history of K-pop's debut in India, and facets of its evolution*

India has been considered a *Hallyu* (or Korean culture) wasteland, compared to other Asian countries, having been largely untouched by the *Hallyu* wave. KBS, a Korean broadcasting company, recruited 6 K-Pop stars in 2015 to go to India's entertainment capital, Mumbai, in an attempt to find out the cause. The result was a travel-variety show called '*Fluttering India*'. Although the show failed in many aspects, it managed to cite a possible reason for it – the dominance of Bollywood as a soft power in itself.

The roots of K-Pop can be traced back to the early 90s. As South Korea reformed its policies, gearing to a more globally integrated economy, the youth began to indulge in American Pop music. The hip-hop trio, SeoTajji and Boys revolutionised the music scene by incorporating western influences into their discography. Korean music soon became a melting pot of various genres like EDM, House, Rap, Rock, and Jazz.

Contrary to most beliefs, the *Hallyu* wave first hit Indian shores in the early 2000s, thanks to the North-Eastern region of the country, with Manipur being the epicentre. Due to a ban on Hindi films by The Revolutionary People's Front, people started searching for new sources of

cultural entertainment. This was supplied through easily available and affordable DVDs of Korean films, dramas, and music. Eventually, Korean channels like Arirang and KBS began airing on local cable networks.

After absorbing their fashion as well, Manipur was beginning to resemble a mini-Korea. The craze continued even after the relaxation of the ban. Meanwhile, the rest of India seemingly had their first encounter with K-Pop in 2012, at the same time that it was picking up momentum globally. PSY made waves worldwide with *Gangnam Style*, paving the way for the third generation of K-Pop groups and artists into the global market. The rise of YouTube and social media further propelled these idols, making the content easily accessible. Most big acts constantly upload videos of themselves and even have live streams to interact with fans worldwide.

To support their favourite artists, fan accounts of various groups and idols began popping up. India itself has hundreds of such accounts on Twitter and Instagram. Specific pages, like Bangtan India (BTS or Bangtan Sonyeondan fans) and EXO-L India (EXO fans), provide latest news and updates, organise fan events and fan projects, and also order albums en bloc. This has created a large online community for fans to come together. Komal Thaker, an admin of EXO-L India

says, "I think the happiness lies in when people come and tell you that they found fellow members because of you. It is heart-

warming because fans think that they are all alone in India."

Mahesh Sarasambi, an admin of 'Twice India', had never expected K-Pop to be popular in his hometown, Nasik. "That fan-meet gave me an opportunity to socialize more and make new friends," he said, about a BTS fan-meet he attended. Ritika Maitri, another admin of EXO-L India, adds, "Fandom is family in K-Pop."

Earlier seen as one-sided love, nowadays, even the artists are beginning to recognise the rising popularity in India. When the

Korean Cultural Centre (KCCI) began organising the annual Changwon World K-Pop contests in 2012, there were 37 contestants and 300 attendees

which increased to 900 contestants and over 2000 attendees in 5 years. In Bangalore, Christ University organises an annual 'Indo-Korean Utsava', where contestants cover K-Pop songs in singing and dance contests, as part of their cultural programme. Indian media outlets are covering interviews with K-Pop stars and popular music channels, such as VH1 and 9XO, began launching special segments for K-Pop. According to *The Economic Times*, music streaming app, Gaana, has seen the consumption of K-pop among Indian users grow thrice within the past year.

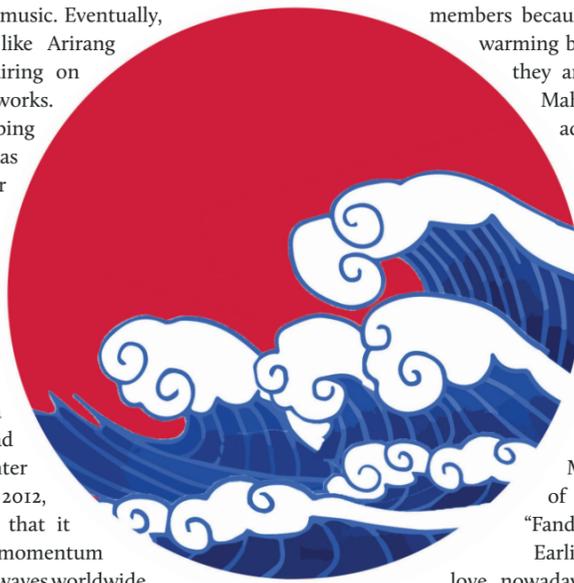


Illustration by Navaneeta Manoj

**"India has grown a lot in terms of K-Pop in recent years and people are more open to accepting it now."**

Are traditional Indian music styles dying? A large part of the youth, both recipients and artists, believe that they are not. The more one thinks about the question however, one thing becomes certain: we need change to keep us hooked. Here, the musician-youth of Bangalore talk about their struggles and opportunities in the field, while analysing the differences in experience in broadly Western and traditional Indian styles.

A survey of Bangalore musicians between 17 and 27 years showed the ratio of those trained in Indian Classical music to those in Western music as 4:3. The numbers are closer when experimentation and transition in styles are taken into consideration. So, what is it that keeps them apart? What makes a style more or less acceptable? Artists begin either with professional training or with online modules, and performing in cultural platforms, or school and college platforms, moving to open mics, weddings, inaugurals, even streets, among other places until they get paid for gigs at the modern, performance-demanding spaces. Their common struggles include convincing parents, balancing work/academics with practising music, financial support and social acceptance, along with finding their 'sound', and the emotional turmoil that comes with being in a creative field.

Shashank, 19, is a multi-instrumentalist, sound engineer, and part of the band Vikrith Kepelle, a Carnatic-Western fusion band. Having experienced both Western and Indian music niches, he points out the obvious types of audience turnouts: extremes in age-range for Indian classical performances, and the intermediate, younger age-range for Western/fusion performances. "[We perform for] Very young people, and old ones. We don't see any 'millennial youths'

## BANGALORE'S MUSIC THROUGH THE YOUTH LENS

*Lavanya Neelakandan brings to light the current musical tastes of Bangalore's music lovers, through the eyes of self-made musicians in the city*

at our concerts," he says, about the Carnatic performances. For Western performances, however, they get audiences ranging from 20-30 years of age. Shashank's original composition, *Sirigannada* (Rich Kannada), has a regional, emotional appeal. "I wrote this single and released it during Parva 2016. I expected it to hit 10,000+ views. It went up to 7,000,000 instead," he says.

Sasmith, 18, is a self-taught pianist, composer, and music enthusiast and is part of the band InkBlot. He likes to call them Progressive Rock, but it's a fusion of Jazz, Soul, Blues, and R&B. Jazz has given him confidence "to be weird and make mistakes and be human." He says that Bangalore has a kind of distinction; a lot of Bollywood and Indian music lovers, and then, those trying to bring in Western music with their own twist. He mentions some bands that merge the types and do it well – Thermal and a Quarter, Pineapple Express, and Kelvikkuri. "But a lot of elitists and musicians won't really like this," he adds. "So, I started consuming music like nobody's business. 6 hours a day listening to extreme Prog [Progressive] music and analysing it with pen and paper...spent about an entire year...before approaching a friend to see if she needed a board player. Guys were like, we don't need one. So, I started my own [band]. That went downhill really quick 'cause I had this insanely talented drummer, a guitarist who had no idea what he is doing (he thought the pickup selector was an 'on' switch). This coupled with a bunch of failed acoustic groups really pissed me off. Eventually I asked that friend to talk to her band again. She did. And I haven't let that drummer and guitarist go ever since. We're going to play big shows together."

Young music connoisseurs, hobbyists, amateur artists, and experienced musicians, all alike, feel the need for people to break out of the craze for popular music and EDM, and to appreciate the skill, technique, and work ethic in, say, underground, and other genres of music.

They believe that recognition and acceptance come with authenticity, constant growth, and marketing oneself as an artist. Shashank shares his experiences. "Every second of every concert is our best moment. We just love not preparing beforehand and taking things to the stage and then randomly laying out our song list on spot. And there was this one moment where our guitarist was playing out of tune and we didn't realise it because we had bad feedback monitors, that'd go down as the worst." It's not easy being a musician, one has to do a lot of things and make it look like they do it full-time. Not only do they require musical skill, they also need to manage time, expenses, travel, and social life as well. Sometimes, they're part of multiple bands and at others, they're found in a creative block. There is a necessity to talk to several people and trade favours to find someone who knows someone else; to find artists, producers, or to even get shows. "We're people, and we're not always seen as such. We want to be accepted. So, we practice. Many frustrating days, shitty band mates, emotional traumas later, we play on stage and people scream when we do. That's worth it. That's why we do it," says Sasmith.

Many bands and artists seem to move towards fusions, and genre-bending music. For example, Progressive Rock combined with Carnatic, in case of the Bangalore based band, Agam. Musician Harish Sivaramakrishnan, in an interview with Rekha Balakrishnan, explains, "A lot of young people don't generally listen to Carnatic music because of its format. I would say that the format killed the music. You see three people sitting on a stage, with extremely predictable arrangement, and attire. At Agam, we love the art, but we don't necessarily love the format. The people singing along is only because it takes them away from the confines of an elitist environment where it is tied down to a few notions and beliefs and semantics. We broke the semantics, but we didn't break the art." Like every art has its critics, Agam too has received a lot of flak "for taking Carnatic music to pubs."

Whether or not an art form or genre can die has no absolute answer, but it is evident that the styles can be integrated and experimented with to produce a great, unique sound, and hence, re-assign the significance and purpose of the form of art.

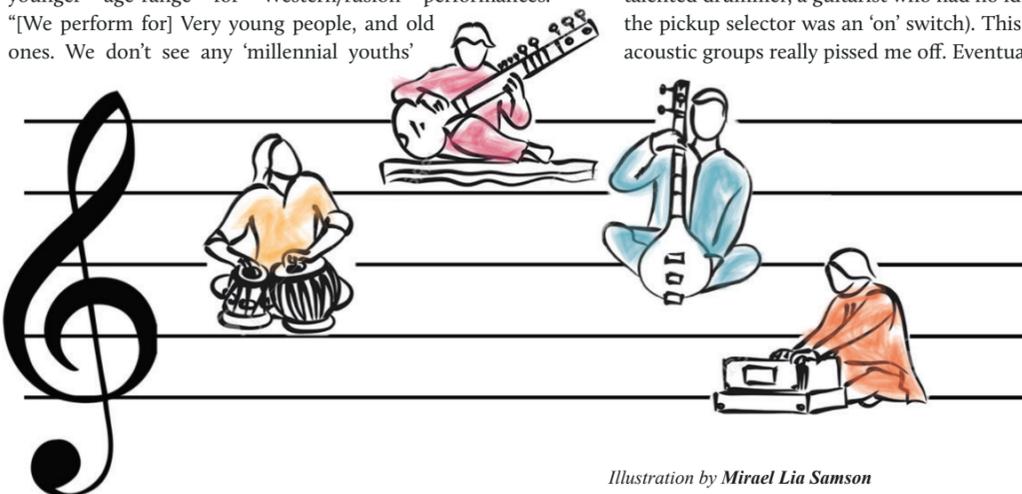


Illustration by Miraal Lia Samson

*Continued on page 11*

# HEAVY ON THE TUMMY, LIGHT ON THE WALLET

Zubina Hussain and Jeisa Jacob wander around, food hunting

“Going over and over again through the menu of the canteen along with standing and waiting with the huge crowd of hungry girls, takes up half of our lunch time. And all of this is only to get the same boring expensive food,” says Ekta Agiwal, a student of Mount Carmel College. Half the conflicts in a Carmelite’s mind come from their hunger pangs. Deciding what to eat and then reconsidering it after looking at their purse is the real struggle. Regularly eating the same food from the canteen can also get boring. But stepping out of college and into Loafer’s Lane can be the solution needed.

As we walk down the busy lane opposite Mount Carmel College, on the left footpath stands a blue coloured stall. A man intensely stirs *ghugni* on a huge *tawa*, while the other man pours the *masala* along with the necessary ingredients, serving the dishes to their customers. For Rs. 25-30, a hot plate of *chaat* is handed to you, and it satisfies your

cravings for something spicy and filling. In the morning, students are always in a rush to go to college, because of which they skip breakfast. This unhealthy practice can be avoided with a plate of *thatte idlis* available at the same blue stall for only Rs. 10. It is a filling meal to keep your energy level up until lunch time.

This stall is surely the first stop for the cheapest *chaats* and *idlis*.

As you walk further down the lane, on the right side, next to Corporate Bank, sits a Sikkimese lady who sells veg and chicken momos. One bite into the momo and the flavourful juice pours out. She serves it with a spicy chutney. “*Ketile mero bano eko chutney pura maya garchu. Tiniharu dosro cōṭi sodhchan ki yo chutney dinus* (Girls love the chutney I make. They often ask for a second serving of this chutney),” says the lady as she smiles and hands us a plate of steaming hot momos.

Moving ahead on the same footpath is an eatery on 3rd cross called ‘Roller Toaster’. Within the green and white walls of the small area, Carmelites are always seen ordering their favourite snacks while trying hard to find a seat. According to the owner, Tarun, the crunchy peri-peri fries and the perfectly grilled spinach corn sandwiches are the bestsellers of this eatery. He also suggests their new drink, Saffron Cream, which was a drink we would go to on a hot summer day. With every sip of the drink, one feels refreshed.



The prices of the sandwiches are pretty reasonable, ranging between Rs. 35-45. The milkshakes and drinks on the other hand are a bit more expensive, but they all fall within the range of Rs. 25-60. You will leave the eatery

during a hot summer day for a refreshing and cool drink will be fulfilled within Rs. 30. A cocktail of papaya, watermelon, mosambi, apple, and many more citrus fruits, is the most refreshing drink the small shop sells for Rs. 25. The rolls are all priced under Rs. 50.

For those with a sweet tooth, the most affordable place is the small yellow bakery on 7th cross called ‘Jingle Bakes’. Shrayya, the owner, says that Carmelites are always leaving the place holding a cake pop, their bestseller, which costs only Rs. 10.

It is interesting how diverse the shops on Loafer’s Lane are. A few steps into the lane and one would already start smelling pakoras and bhajjis being prepared on the left side of the lane. The small journey has left us with one clear impression – you will never reach the end of this lane starving.

with a full stomach.

“It is actually made of love, if you ever get bored of the canteen food, this is the right place to come,” says Ditipriya Acharya, a student of Mount Carmel College about the small shop run from the last two decades by a Malayali couple. It is a small shop with a big blue board with the words ‘RR’s Blue Mount’ printed on it. Standing in front of the shop, the first thing you’ll notice is a sign pinned on the right softboard which says, “You waited 9 months to be born, you can surely wait 10 mins for fresh food.” Above the sign are cut-outs of articles about RR’s. Indian actress, Anushka Sharma had also mentioned in one of her interviews that Mexican Chaat from RR’s was her favourite dish to eat whenever she came to college. It is also one of their bestsellers. The other dish to try is the Chicken Delta which has been inspired by pizza – it has the base of sandwich bread and plays around spicy, crispy, and cheesy. All dishes are under Rs. 60 and are cooked by the couple.

Just a few steps ahead is a small juice and rolls shop called ‘Roll and Cool’. Cravings



Photos by Jeisa Jacob



“I don’t have time to say anything.”



“What’s there to say...”

## LIVES ON LOAFER'S LANE

Anahita Ananth and Jeisa Jacob offer a glimpse through their lens



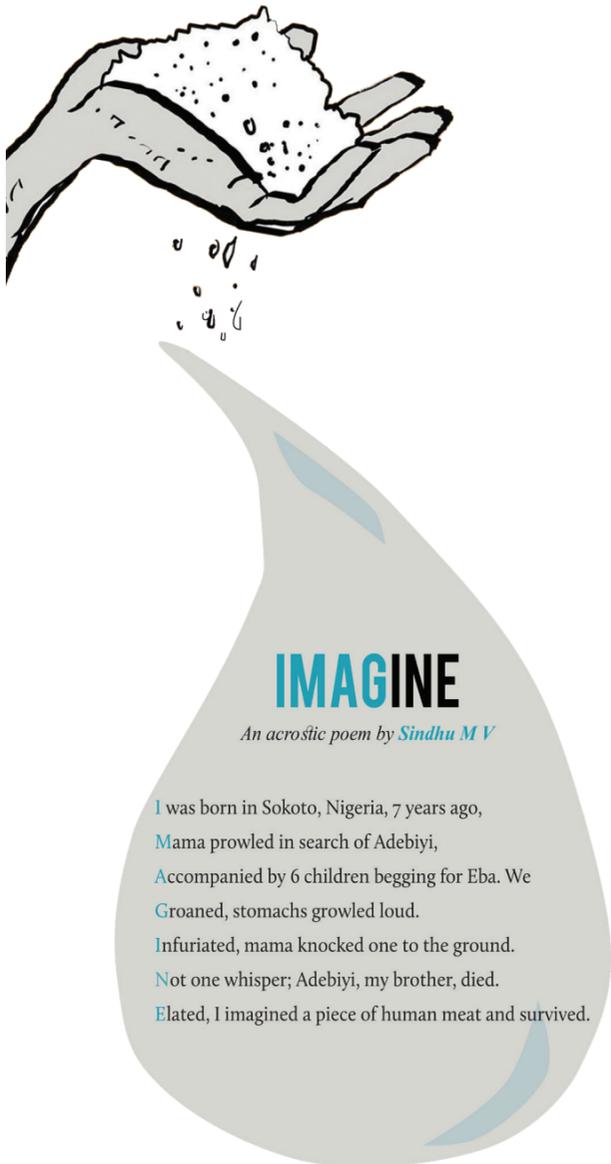
“My whole life has gone on the footpath only, dragging these carts...I’m finding it hard to walk now.”



“Earning, that’s all. That’s our hobby. Already aged 50.”



“Mujhe toh inhi rasto mei khushi milti hai.”



# IMAGINE

An acrostic poem by *Sindhu MV*

I was born in Sokoto, Nigeria, 7 years ago,  
 Mama prowled in search of Adebisi,  
 Accompanied by 6 children begging for Eba. We  
 Groaned, stomachs growled loud.  
 Infuriated, mama knocked one to the ground.  
 Not one whisper; Adebisi, my brother, died.  
 Elated, I imagined a piece of human meat and survived.

Illustration by *Harini M. S.*

# THE K-POP WAVE IN INDIA

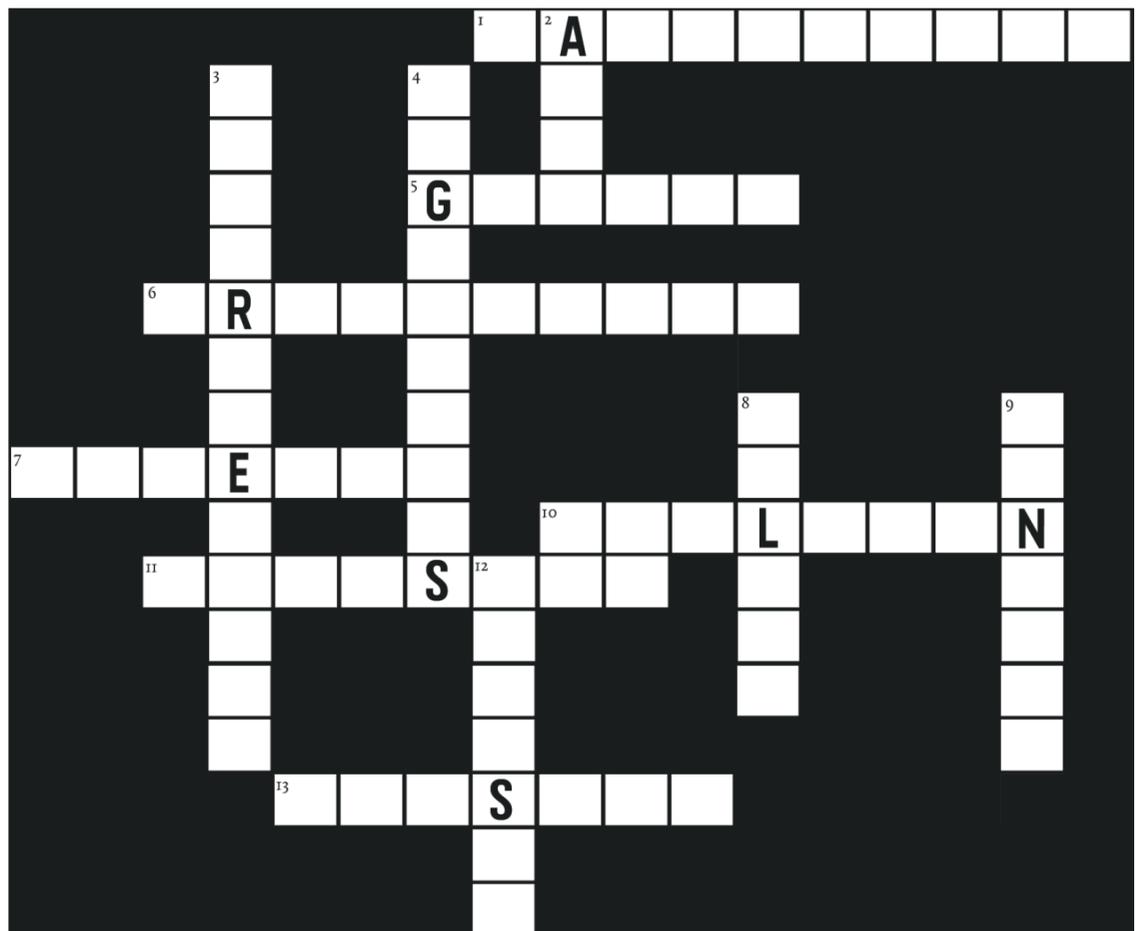
Continued from Page 9

One common dream shared among K-Pop fans is to see their favourite acts live in concert. Flying out to another country to see them perform is a costly affair, but currently, fans have no other choice. A reason why there hasn't been a K-Pop concert in India so far may be the high cost of setting up a stage (due to elaborate stage set-ups, high production, performance fees, etc.) along with a low disposable income of the young fans. Slowly, this is changing. LUCENTE, a seven-member group, had free concerts in Mumbai and Pune, courtesy of the KCCI in 2017. They returned to the same cities in 2018 as part of their first tour. With the rising popularity of K-Pop, fans probably won't have to wait for too long.

What is different about recent K-Pop artists is their ability to speak about relatable themes such as depression, youth, and societal pressure. Artists like BTS, BIGBANG, IU and the late Jonghyun have been praised for their song-writing skills and are known for weaving such themes into their music. "It really helps a person with mental issues such as depression or

anxiety because a lot of fans and sometimes even the idols suffer from it and feels good to know just that you are not alone," remarked Suhail.

When asked what attracted her to K-Pop, Komal attributed it to its uniqueness. Suhail, however, says, "It's not just unique music but also how it's visualized and presented to the world. The music videos and concepts are different from what we have seen in American music... It's everything, right from the lyrics, production, videos, choreography, the talent, the fanservice, the system. And how K-Pop stars not only sing in Korean but, stars like BoA, SNSD [Girls Generation], NCT [Neo Culture Technology], and Red Velvet have sung in Japanese, Chinese, English, and idols like GOT7 and SUPER JUNIOR have sung in Spanish...it's culturally unbounded and I think that's why a lot of people are drawn into it." Komal continues, "It has a story to tell and that attracts you in an amazing way."



# CROSSWORD

*Mrudula Mundkur & Zubina Hussain* use keywords from each article to make a puzzle

**ACROSS:**

- 1) Acceptance (10)
- 5) Virtual fun (6)
- 6) Artificial body part (10)
- 7) They force dogs to mate (7)
- 10) 14th November (8)
- 11) Desserts Backwards (8)
- 13) Crush the bottle (7)

**DOWN:**

- 2) Carnatic Rock band (4)
- 3) Way not to have babies (13)
- 4) Bad Dreams (10)
- 8) Korean Wave (6)
- 9) No means no (7)
- 12) Condoms (7)

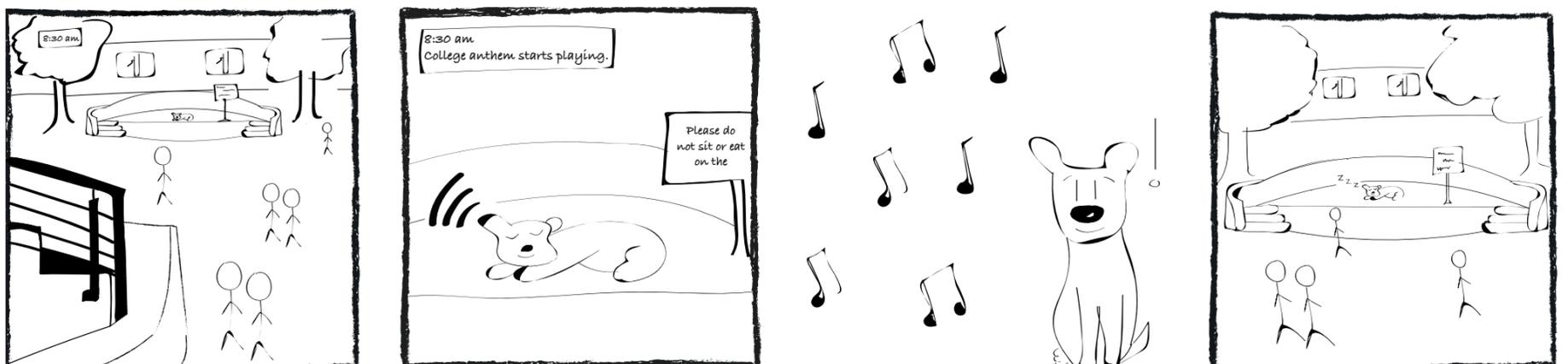
ANSWERS  
 ACROSS: 1) Validation, 5) Gaming, 6) Prosthetic, 7) Breeder, 10) Children, 11) Stressed, 13 Plastic  
 DOWN: 2) Agam, 3) Contraception, 4) Nighmare, 8) HalYu, 9) Consent, 12) Safe sex



**SPECIAL THANKS**  
 to *Praveen Mathew*

# ATTENTION ONE, ATTENTION ALL

Idea and Illustration by *Jeisa Jacob & Lavanya Neelakandan*



# CAN LOVE TRULY STAND THE TEST OF TIME?

*Elza Mathew unravels the value of staying in touch with the elderly, as she witnesses their current situation in the state of Kerala*

Strands of hair turning grey, wrinkled eyes, and walking sticks are synonymous with our image of a grandparent. But in reality, how much do we really know about them? We are often advised on our dating lives, marital lives, and even on maintaining good rapport with teachers and co-workers, but how often do we come across a forum, online or otherwise, which stresses upon staying in touch with grandparents?

"Distance makes the heart grow fonder. I have four grandkids who are in the US. The more you are with them, the more connections you make is what I thought, but it is amazing how you wake up and see a message when they had a dream and they wanted to share it with their *Ammachi*. Having them around makes me feel young in spirit. Being wanted and needed matters a lot to an aging person," says Raziya, a doting grandmother from Kottayam, Kerala. Research suggests that playing a role in taking care of their grandchildren – by babysitting on weekends, for example – brings a longer life expectancy for a grandparent as compared to those who don't.

Geeta, a grandmother from Mavelikkara, frequently sends letters to her grandchildren, who are currently living in Dubai. She reads out one of her letters with a wistful look, "Your grandpa and I were sitting on the porch watching the birds near our sandalwood tree, before retiring for the night. Suddenly, your grandpa turned to me and said, 'Don't you remember, when the children were here last year, we had them chase butterflies? Richa was so scared of a fly, let alone a butterfly! How we laughed!' Yes Rohit, we still laugh and reminisce

about the fun we had when you were here. Seeing you on Skype is not the same. We get to know about what's happening in your life, only when your Papa and Mama tell us. But we miss your chatter, your laughter, your pouts, your frowns. We miss you so much." A study by Boston College researchers (2014) found that emotionally close ties between grandparents and adult grandchildren reduced depressive symptoms in both groups.

Alloparenting involves situations where several people (including grandparents) are involved in caring for a child besides the child's biological parents. "My grandchildren bring the much needed energy which I long and crave for. Often, we tend to see old age as a time when we feel estranged and lonely, but I'm fortunate enough to have my grandchildren live with me. Every time they



Illustration by Hannah Baptist

scream '*Appachaaa*', I am overwhelmed with a feeling of affection and the need to protect them," says Raju, a grandfather from Kochi, who is still kicking in his 70s!

Elizabeth Mathew, a counsellor from Kottayam, gives a psychological perspective for maintaining relations with grandparents. "Recent trends show that the grandparent-grandchild relationship now lasts longer than

that of their predecessors, due to increasing lifespan...grandparents have a wealth of experience in wisdom and life lessons, which if shared with grandchildren, can help them in life to be better able to handle difficult life's situations. For the grandparents, connection with their grandchildren can provide exposure to different new ideas and trends which might have otherwise be limited. Grandparents are parents sans the custodial form of parenting. Relationships with them are much more relaxed with less or even no punishment... The nature of communication is different. Parents are seen as disciplinarians whereas grandparents are seen as hubs of comfort and love." She adds, "For grandparents, involvement with grandchildren keeps them mentally sharp and at times even physically active. One great form of communication is playing games together and doing activities

like cooking, gardening, painting together to inculcate better communication through fun and learning...a happy individual is a happy family and ultimately a happy society."

The state with the highest percentage of the elderly is Kerala, where they constitute 12.6% of the population. Old age homes have mushroomed in the state. While some live there by choice, the rest, whose children or

grandchildren are settled abroad or who no longer wish to meet their needs, abandon them in these housing facilities.

Sparing some time for a conversation, even if it's small talk, or calling them to enquire about their well-being will go a long way in making a grandparent's day. Raju adds, "Every time they tell me their problems, I feel a sense of fulfilment, because it bridges the generation gap between us and it helps me play an active role in their lives."

## ALZHEIMER'S ARRIVAL

by Lavanya Neelakandan

Collect  
the words  
I can't remember  
when  
I have lost  
the syllables  
to apologise

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