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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Member,

Namaskaru,

Trust you all are safe and healthy.

As you get to read this edition, we would have completed 100 days of lockdown. Something that nobody expected when we entered this year.

The life post this scenario is expected to be different, socially, financially and culturally. The hygiene levels would emulate the “anvalpana” that our ancestors practiced.

Socially, events and functions like cradling ceremony, chowl/upanayanams, marriages and festivals would be somber. Financially, discretionary spends would see a big dip. Cultural events would not happen for some time now. The Sabha’s program schedule will also undergo significant changes, details of which are covered elsewhere in this edition.

Mankind has learnt to respect Mother Nature and follow certain rules which we took for granted. Since memories are short we will have to see how long this change would last.

The digital platform has taken over a very large part of how we interact with the external world. It is nice to see many families in touch with their “long lost” relatives/friends and have weekly calls, play games and keep themselves connected. Your Sabha also initiated the Samvaad series which was well received by our community and our well-wishers. The idea was to keep our minds occupied and divert from all the negativity that was all around. In the series of 6 talks till date, we covered diverse topics and the speakers were domain knowledge experts. We had audience not only from India but also from the US, Middle East, Europe and New Zealand.

Including the Lockdown Issue special edition, this is the third e-version of the VoG. The Lockdown Special e-version was well received by our community. Contributions came from all over India and some from overseas as well.

With the migrant workers gone to their homes, major cities would feel their absence. In Mumbai, we are heavily dependent on them, starting with the milkman, the newspaper delivery boy, the car cleaner, the drivers, the security and house keeping resources, the vegetable and fruit vendors....the list continues. It would take them some time to introspect on their decision to return. The debate on how we unlock ourselves is the talk of the town. It’s a trade-off between living with the challenges or moving on with the challenges. Till such time we all would have to be Atmanirbhar.

We are sure that, by the grace of God and the blessings of our Swamiji’s, there would be a vaccine available very soon, till then we will muster the courage to live with this challenge. .

Take care, stay safe and healthy.

Dev baren koro.

Thanks and regards,

Laxmikant Prabhu
President

COVID WARRIORS



by Dr. Veena Adige

The highly contagious COVID 19 has created havoc in the world. This has resulted in thousands being hospitalised, many recovered, and some are on ventilators fighting for their lives. Doctors, nurses, class four employees; policemen are all COVID warriors who are fighting the disease with dedication and zeal, unmindful of the danger to themselves. There are several such Corona Warriors in our community to whom we bow our heads and salute. Here are some of them:

Dr Seema Kini

Covid warrior of Nair Hospital

Dr. Seema Kini is the Associate Professor of Medicine at the currently full corona virus Nair Hospital. A single mother of two, she worked at the Hinduja Hospital, KEM and now Nair Hospital since 2005. When corona virus struck she was on leave but resumed duty immediately. The situation which has gone from bad to worse in Mumbai, has converted her 'from a mother of two, I now feel responsible for all my resident doctors ---- more than 500 in number, not only from my department but also other clinical and non-clinical departments as most of their parents are faraway' she says.

When she rejoined on 17th March, she saw that the OPDs were crowded. She says, 'There were

around 400 cases every day, of which one third were either fever/ cough/ cold....each with a fear of Corona. We devised methods to separate out respiratory illnesses. We would treat them first and then treat the others. We then had no protection for ourselves other than surgical masks and sterilium rub between patients.'

Many patients who came to Nair Hospital were in a bad shape, the hospital was short of

nursing staff as commuting was difficult due to the lockdown. The class IV workers disappeared and many times the doctors themselves or the residents had to do their work.

They also had to call back the residents who were appearing for exams to do corona duties. Meanwhile, the Kasturba isolation centre was filling up rapidly. The more severe cases would come to Nair. Residents from other clinical departments got involved. The regular OPDs closed down as they had to focus on the epidemic.



‘On 19th April our Dean changed and Dr. Mohan Joshi was temporarily appointed dean. We were declared a COVID-only hospital. As more and more wards were getting added our issues just multiplied. Unreliable / deficient manpower, lack of constant supply of drugs, oxygen ventilators and other equipment were a few of them. Both, the administration and clinicians scrambled to do their best in the given circumstances. Donors

were roped in to overcome deficiencies. In the last week of May, we exceeded 1000 Covid-19 inpatients’.

The resident doctors of all departments and interns are the real warriors, who are doing

Doctors, nurses, class four employees; policemen are all covid warriors who are fighting the disease with dedication and zeal, unmindful of the danger to themselves.

duties of six hours at a stretch dressed in PPE, which is very uncomfortable and dehydrating. Besides supervising medical aspects they also end up serving water, feeding, giving pots, wheeling patients, etc. as sometimes there is no one to do these things as relatives are not allowed in the hospital.

‘I have worked hand-in-hand with my residents and attempted to support them and together we come up with solutions to the challenges that we face. Many times we feel stuck....We have to deal with morale-impacting non-medical things that we have no control over. And bigger than these hurdles are the internal hurdles like fears and negativity, frustration, anger and depression. Each time I feel low, I think of the multiple reasons that I need to be in gratitude for. I ask myself, is this best I can do in the present circumstances and move on’.

When asked if she was afraid of getting the infection, Dr. Kini replied that once they started working they had no time for fear. Most

corona patients have recovered though deaths are also there. 'Who dies and who recovers is unpredictable', she reveals, 'An eighty year old man who came in an unconscious state was kept on a ventilator but has recovered and is ready to go home. We don't give up. I have been working nonstop, taking just a couple of days off so that I don't collapse. It is exhausting, I have seen people dying though the mortality rate is less than two percent.'

'It has been a long and challenging journey with strength coming from my Sadguru to go through this difficult period, without crumbling

physically or mentally. biggest sacrifice and support comes from my kids who have been very good and bear with my inability to spend time with them'.

'Doctors cannot win this battle alone', continues Dr. Seema Kini, 'the need of the hour are humane humans. We need compassionate, healthy young volunteers to serve our patients'

(This doctor is known to take care for the patients with an immense amount of sensitivity not just for their concerns but that of the family too. Dr. Seema H Kini has made an exceptional name in the city.)

Dr Bhujang Pai

Director and Head Department of Radiology, Seven Hills Hospital

Dr Bhujang Pai, Director and Head Department of Radiology, Seven Hills Hospital

Seven Hills is the largest corporate hospital in India and is fully devoted to corona patients. They handle all sorts of cases and complications and even though many patients come pretty late, the mortality is less than two percent, says Dr Bhujang Pai.

Very well-known Dr Bhujang Pai has been besieged with too many COVID patients and it was only a few days after my first contact with him that I could get an opportunity to talk to him. He was currently in the midst of above a thousand cases of positive corona and was having a tough time managing everything.

'We are accepting only corona positive cases,' he said. 'We do not accept those who are waiting for the result of the tests. There is an overwhelming demand for beds and ventilators though we have 1,500 beds it is still not enough.'



'We had passengers from the international airport till about March but now patients from all over are accepted. People are paranoid about COVID and we tell them that if the symptoms are mild, low fever, some irritation, it is better to self - isolate at home as long as the facilities are there.'

He spoke of a GSB patient who had forgotten his mobile at home when he was admitted. A nurse from Moodbidri took his son's number, rang home and got the mobile so that he could connect with his family. Dr Bhujang Pai takes care of even the minutest details of patients under his care.

'Some people still have a feeling of stigma of corona cases. We see to it that the patients here never feel neglected or shunned by society' he said.

Dr Bhujang Pai appealed to people to follow the rules set down of social distancing, wearing masks, drinking warm water, sanitising hands, washing with soap and taking precautions as one cannot expect the police or the government to enforce all this as they are all overburdened with corona cases.

'Don't listen to fake news, don't hesitate to approach a doctor if you are not well, respect the virus and don't let your guard down. Don't take things for granted,' is his advice to people.

Dr. Sheetal Shenoy

COVID Warrior at Dedicated COVID Care Centre, BKC

Dr. Sheetal Shenoy is a registered medical practitioner who did her MBBS from Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences, Karad and did externship at KEM, Pune. She is planning on specialising and is studying for the entrance exams.

Young and bubbly Dr. Sheetal Diwakar Shenoy was very excited when she got an opportunity to work at the Covid Care Centre at BKC in Mumbai in May. She says, 'I never thought I would get an opportunity to serve our nation during a pandemic crisis like this, so early in my career. I am glad I could do my bit to treat the ones in need and save lives. My experience has been really challenging but also rewarding at the same time.'

'When I first got an email from BMC asking me to join the Dedicated COVID Care Centre at MMRDA grounds BKC, I was scared. I was scared, not because I was going to get exposed to COVID positive patients but scared because I had never been a part of any pandemic

crisis before, scared to be risking my family's lives if I were not given any accommodation. But I also knew that this would be an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and this is what I have been wanting to do in my whole life'.



The Dedicated COVID Care Centre, BKC is a 1,026 bedded centre with all facilities. The patients are interrogated in the OPD and wards

are allotted to them accordingly that categorises them into positive, suspects, quarantine and negative. There's food and water available for the patients 24x7.

Dr. Sheetal Shenoy started her first day with an orientation of the centre. The next couple of days were really hectic. Doctors and Nurses were sent to Sion Hospital for the training and received a certificate for the same. She got the opportunity to train the essential workers how to don and doff the PPE. Most of the patients at this centre are transferred from KEM, NAIR, SION or COOPER hospitals.

'I feel like it's the doctor-patient relationship that matters the most during such times' she continues. 'Patients are leaving their homes

to get treatment. It is natural for them to feel scared and depressed in isolation and quarantine hospitals. So as doctors, we try to console and counsel them everyday to make them feel better besides giving them medications.'

'Let me be honest, it hasn't been easy at all. 10 hours of duty shifts in the PPE, clearly took a toll on us. I mean, just imagine not being able to drink, eat or use the washroom for 10 hours at a stretch! I remember getting drenched in sweat completely, really thirsty, the skin over our faces got so sore and sensitive from wearing masks all day long that some of us developed rashes due to friction too. It is stressful and difficult but it is worth every bit! My family has always been my support system.'

**Dr. Jennifer and
Dr. Ajoy Prabhu**

USA



They are a husband-wife team from the US and relocating to India soon. Dr. Jenny Prabhu took a lead in her hospital to treat COVID patients and did all the testing herself rather than let the medical assistants or nurses do it. She was awarded a prize and was the first Essential Hero.



Dr. Ajoy Prabhu is a research scientist who studied Pathology at the University of Maryland Medical Center and Epidemiology (a study of the spread of diseases) at the Johns Hopkins University. Until recently, he was the Director of Marketing at NIH taking care of all the inventions for the US FDA, CDC and NIH. NIH is where most of the vaccines, drugs, treatments and tests that are used worldwide,

are invented. He worked with the top leading scientists from NIH and CDC that are in the limelight these days. He has authored many patents and research papers in medicine and was appointed by the Obama administration to open up federal lab datasets for technologies and inventions.

Dr. Jenny Prabhu has a deep understanding of infectious diseases and has worked with

coronavirus patients. She is board certified in Internal Medicine as well as in Pediatrics. She is a Senior Physician who completed her residency training at Case Western University Hospitals Medical Center in Cleveland, Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital in Cleveland and the University of Maryland Medical Center and the Veterans Administration Hospital in Baltimore. She has also worked at Johns Hopkins Hospital and currently works at St. Agnes Hospital in Baltimore.

'Covid-19 is not something to be feared. It is just like other corona viruses such as SARS and MERS. Yes, there are many unknowns and yes,

it is widespread, but we all can overcome it. Some studies have shown that aspirin, zinc and vitamin C help in reducing the severity of corona infection. Multiple studies have shown that one full hour after an infected person enters an enclosed space, such as a store, he/she leaves the virus floating around - only if they are not masked. So, assume people are not masked, and act accordingly. Mask yourself and stay indoors in enclosed public places for as little time as possible. In case you do get sick, remember, you have about a two week window so stay positive during that time, meditate, do pranayam, aerobic exercise (if you can), and take the medications your doctor offers.' they say.

Dr Preeti Shanbag

Kandivali, Mumbai

Dr. Preeti Shanbagh is working in the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) Hospital at Kandivali as Professor of Pediatrics. She was earlier at the ESI-Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (ESI-PGIMSR) at Andheri.

In the last week of February, the BMC approached their administration and asked for beds to admit COVID patients from the area. After the lockdown, routine outpatient services were shut down and they were working in rotation, one week on and one week off. During her ON weeks she was mainly given the duty of reviewing treatment protocols, and taking calls from residents regarding individual patients. Guidelines for swab collection and treatment were literally changing everyday so somebody was needed to keep a tab on it. Labour staff and



nursing staff and also some doctors had to be counselled regularly. That was her work. She also had to liaise with other hospitals to transfer COVID positive patients requiring dialysis (this facility is not available in this hospital). In the initial weeks they did not see too many bad patients though later they saw one or two deaths every day. Since she had worked for nearly 25 years with the BMC hospitals, she could check with colleagues there, regarding various

protocols including how to deal with deaths and all the formalities regarding handling the bodies etc.

Negative aspects were mainly regarding getting adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), handling administration which has a very simplistic view about how patients should be managed. 'For example, they cannot understand how residents from departments like orthopedics cannot manage patients on ventilator properly when an hour's training has been given' she says. People spend years training in Intensive Care.

'During this COVID period a spirit of team work across all cadres of staff exists. With the lack of PPE in the early stages of the pandemic,

creativity and innovation has come to the fore. For example, one of the boys working in our kitchen made face shields with locally available plastic sheets and distributed them among the residents'

To the public, she advises that just because the lockdown has been eased, the pandemic has not peaked as yet. The worst is still to come so it is not the time to be foolish. One needs to take the same precautions and be more alert than before. The maximum risk is when people are out in public. 'We have to prepare for the long haul. But we will surely overcome and this too shall pass!' she ends on a positive note.

Dr. Kirti Pai

*of Karnataka Institute of Medical Science,
Hubli, Karnataka*

Dr Kirti Pai is an intern who is involved in screening corona suspects. 'I began my internship in February 2020 and faced the biggest challenge of my budding career- COVID 19. I was immediately involved into screening suspected patients and other COVID related work. I was then posted in the obstetrics and gynecology department where there was no time to wait for a COVID swab and its result. Most patients were suspects but we first managed their case and sent the swabs later. On my first day there were two suspected positive cases who went into labour. One was premature and a high BP patient. I had no time to don the PPE and conducted the delivery using only gloves and an N95 mask. Fortunately, when the reports came negative three days later, we heaved a sigh of relief. But the fear was real and my heart



was pounding all the time though I was more concerned about the mother and the baby. When I saw the happy face of the mother I felt that the fear, the tension, the danger was worth it. That's why we are in this profession.'



Dr. Usha and Dr. Jayawanth Kini

UK

Dr. Usha Kini is a Consultant Clinical Geneticist and Head of the Department at the Oxford Centre for Genomic Medicine, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust. Dr. K Jayavanth Kini is MD, FFARCSI, Consultant Anaesthetist, Oxford University.

‘The Corona Pandemic first started making its impact on our service in early February. We began identifying patients that did not need

face-to-face consultations in order to reduce the footfall on the hospital site, but by mid-March we had completely stopped all face to face appointments. Some of the staff was redeployed to acute general medicine to help the hospital deal with the expected influx of COVID patients. Consultants took on posts of junior doctors as they had been out of touch with practicing acute medicine. Our genetic counselors were redeployed to Psychological medicine to counsel families of staff and patients who had not had a chance to say ‘goodbye’ to their loved



ones lost to COVID,’ says Dr Usha. ‘Like everywhere else in the world the department readily embraced digital support to ‘work from home’. I am proud to say that the team pulled through together at this difficult time and we have continued to provide our service to our patients all through the Pandemic, albeit remotely.’

‘As the pandemic peaked in the UK, the scene was bleak. Hospitals were full of COVID patients and no one knew the exact nature of the virus. New guidelines had to be followed, new protocol, learning how to don and doff the cumbersome PPE had to be learnt,’ says Dr Jayavantha Kini. ‘We took charge and saw to it that all corona warriors were protected, that everything was streamlined. We, anaesthetists, have unique lifesaving skills which came into use during this pandemic.’

Dr. Ashutosh Pai

Mumbai

Dr. Ashutosh Pai, is doing his MD (Doctorate of Medicine) has been on the frontline of the covid war in Mumbai. A big salute to him as well as the thousands of medical staff all over the world who



have put their lives at risk in dealing with this deadly pandemic. For every 6 days that he has been working with the COVID patients, for the next 6 days, he and many other medical doctors are in quarantine. Dr. Ashutosh Pai is a grandson of Smt. Sudha Pai, Trustee - GSB Sabha, Mumbai. Many fresh medical graduates have willingly and enthusiastically joined the team of covid warriors



Authors Note : There are several more GSBs who are corona warriors. We congratulate them on their dedication and selfless service to the patients.

Dr. Veena Adige is a journalist, an author and a writer. She has written five novels, six e-books and hundreds of articles, stories, interviews, reviews, features and the like and her work has been translated into many languages.

COVID Yodha – Sanjay Nagarkar

By Sejal Kamat



“It is a pandemic which requires to be tackled at multiple levels” says Sanjay Nagarkar, the RSS Mumbai Pramukh. Sanjay Nagarkar has lived away from his family for over a month and a half, he has been helping with strategies and mustering support in the war against Covid-19. He has been engaged in these efforts since the beginning he says “We formed an action team, constituted with karyakartas trained to look into activities that needed immediate attention, I myself am a part of the team staying in the RSS karyalay at Parel since 50 days to be with fellow karyakartas and to monitor and control the working of these yodhas in Mumbai”. He has been on the ground to guide and support the team while at the same time helping

out fellow karyakartas who have been affected. He elaborates about the activities they have been involved in “Leading a team of COVID warriors means working at all levels, starting from providing food grains, extending help to government hospitals, private clinics and nursing homes by way of providing medical equipment, supporting public through counselling and providing commutation facilities along with food to migrant workers, we even extended tele medical help and established eight different teams for screening in hot spots with BMC. These activities were in co-ordination with the police, administration, hospitals and other NGOs. Our efforts went further to helping transport dialysis equipment and providing emergency support to non COVID patients. I must say the dedication, compassion and presence



**Sanjay Nagarkar
(in kurta) with his team**



**Sanjay Nagarkar
in PPE**

of mind exhibited by the selfless swayamsevaks of RSS is truly commendable and it has been a pleasure to lead them.” RSS swayamsevaks have time and again proved their seriousness towards serving the community especially in times of crises. Sanjay believes it is the organisational structure, discipline and leadership that has facilitated the establishment and co-ordinated functioning of the action team.

Sanjay explains it was a great experience and adds “The fight is not over”. He also expresses the role of society towards contributing to such efforts, GSB institutions offered several resources. Contributions like financial donations, volunteering time and blood donations from society at large strengthen our efforts and morale”. Sanjay explains that fear was also an important hindrance for people during this time, since it was a unique situation and unfamiliarity bred discomfort. Motivating people towards contributing positively at the same time abiding by government established guidelines was also an engaging task he was involved in. He also expressed the importance of discipline, a principle RSS has adopted ever since its establishment. “A disciplined lifestyle will definitely help reduce risk of exposure”. An important take away from his experience has been “The importance of a healthy lifestyle with immunity at the core of it! Follow a proper satvik diet, do yoga, engage in pranayama, change your lifestyle towards a Bharatiya jeevan padhati, also remove fear from your minds! Accept reality! And finally help the people around you!” He also

reminds us that besides staying healthy and fit and taking timely medical consultation we need to be more empathetic towards each other, we must understand that everyone is going through very trying times which may have a serious mental and financial impact. People now need support and understanding! Listen to each other patiently and try to help out as much as possible, he also mentioned that the economic impact of

*“A disciplined lifestyle
will definitely help
reduce risk of exposure”*

Covid-19 will be noticeable and to get ourselves out of it is a joint effort with the administration, private sector and general public working together cooperatively. He signs off saying “Together we can fight the worst of situations! So stay united!”

सर्वेभवन्तुसुखिनःसर्वेसन्तुनिरामयाः ।

सर्वेभद्राणिपश्यन्तुमाकश्चिद्दुःखभागभवेत् । ।

ॐशांतिःशांतिःशांतिः

(May all be happy and free from all illness, May all see what is auspicious and may no one suffer, Om let peace prevail)

*Sejal Kamat is Mr. Sanjay Nagarkar's niece, currently pursuing her post graduation.
She is an avid writer and also a travel enthusiast.*



The day 7th June 2020 will forever be etched in my heart.....

By **Shraddha Prabhu**
(COVID Warrior)

On March 20, when our Prime Minister addressed the nation on TV, many of us were not aware of the seriousness of COVID-19 which had affected many Western countries and had made slow inroads in our country. The PM was very stern in his message and made an appeal to observe a Janta Curfew on March 22. The PM further stated that it is only resolve and restraint which would help in combating this virus. The entire country stood behind the PM and observed the curfew.

After the Janta curfew, the lockdown was imposed and the news of COVID-19 patients started kicking in. With every passing day, the numbers showed a steep hike and our state was the most affected by this virus. Our city, Mumbai had started reporting the maximum number of patients. Every day we would see how COVID warriors working on the frontline day in and day out were attacked by few miscreants. We also witnessed on social media that with the increase in number of patients, the pressure on the medical staff was too huge and it was at this time that I used to feel that I should lend a helping hand to the medical fraternity so that I can serve my country in these critical times.

On 13th May, there was a message broadcasted on Sevankur group on WhatsApp, which is a student development organisation saying that they needed volunteers for a Combing and Screening Camp which was going to start from 15th May, in the Nehru Nagar slum of Andheri which was a containment zone. Since lockdown 1.0, I was waiting for such an opportunity where I could be of service to the nation. When I sought permission from my parents, they gave me a

go-ahead without batting an eyelid.

On 16th May, the first batch of this screening camp which included 34 Swayamsevaks and 6 medical students and doctors were on the field assisting the BMC officials, working at the ground level in their PPE kits, screening citizens for temperature and oxygen saturation. Over a period of 4 days, we managed to screen 3500+ people.

Since the threat of community transmission in these slum pockets is very high, the idea of this operation was to screen people, quarantine those who were suspects which in turn would help in converting the area from a red zone to a green zone and thus help in flattening the curve in that area.

*Being tested COVID positive
is not as harmful as the
stigma associated with it*

The local volunteers also helped us by bringing out maximum people for screening. We were told to touch down on points which included spreading awareness about COVID, proper use of a mask and encouraging them to practice proper social distancing norms.

Through the course, I observed several changes in people from Day 1 to Day 4 of our screening in terms of citizens diligently wearing masks, practising social distancing and were keen to know whether they were carrying this infection. While I could see the fear on their face, I could sense the happiness in their hearts wherein it felt like a ray of hope to them in these dire circumstances knowing that doctors had come forward to check them.

After 5 days of screening, the first batch was quarantined in a hotel and the second batch was immediately brought in, in order to carry forward the project.

We were tested for COVID-19 on our 7th day and the results were to come after 2 days. Even after adhering to all the precautionary measures and protecting ourselves completely with the PPEs on 24th May, at 8 PM I got to know that I've tested positive. I was further informed that 2 of my 3 team members were positive and we were immediately shifted to a quarantine centre of that ward. 7 volunteers overall had tested positive in the 1st batch. Even though we knew there was nothing to be afraid of since all of us were asymptomatic, accepting the truth was difficult for all. We were supposed to be back home the next day had our results come negative, but then there we were, in a CCC2 centre where we had to stay for next 10 days.

The next day, BMC officials quarantined my family as per protocol even though I hadn't been home since 15th May. The next thing we hear is some society members spreading false rumours saying my sister has tested positive. Being tested COVID positive is not as harmful as the stigma associated with it.

Throughout those 10 days, the 7 of us saw to it that we kept each other's spirits high as feeling alone or anxious is very normal when you are quarantined in one room. I had my fair share of days wherein I felt uneasy but knowing that I had to be brave for my family kept me going.

After a period of 10 days as per the new guidelines, we were discharged. RSS officials didn't want us to go home without being tested

negative and so we were kept in a hotel for 3 days before being tested again. It was now the 7th of June, 24 days since we left our homes.

My mother, who stayed rock solid throughout this whole ordeal, was now longing to see me and since our report was to come the next day, I was sent home.

The day 7th June 2020 will forever be etched in my heart. I was welcomed with merry cheers. Tears rolled down my eyes as I saw how proud I had made my parents. I guess that's all that a child truly wants in life. I was overwhelmed with emotions. The very next day, I got a call stating that my report was negative and finally after a turmoil of 24 days, I beat this virus.

Coming to an end, the one question I got asked, once I was back, was did I regret going for this screening since I had tested positive. Well, not for a moment did I regret it. Yes, I had some tough moments along the way. But as they say, "Once the storm is over, you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won't even be sure, whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person who walked in. That's what this storm's all about." After all, the smile on my parents' faces said it all. The feeling of being a part of something so huge is unparalleled and I'm forever grateful having gotten an opportunity to make a difference!

I would like to conclude with two lines from the couplet which is recited by all Swayamsevaks-

देश हमें देता है सब कुछ, हम भी तो कुछ देना सीखें ।

Jai Hind.

Shraddha Prabhu, currently pursuing Masters in Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy from CMF college, Pune. She graduated from Sancheti Institute College of Physiotherapy in the year 2019. She has always tried contributing to society by actively engaging in various medical diagnoses and awareness camps occurring around-the-year in Pune. She enjoys playing the Guitar, Ukelele and Photography.

How Vadodara Kept its COVID Numbers Low



State education secretary Vinod Rao (seen in yellow shirt) talks to doctors of BMDA.

With close to 11,000 cases, Gujarat is among the worst COVID-affected states, faring better than only Maharashtra. But among its prominent cities, Vadodara has done remarkably well to keep the number of cases low. The city recorded 691 cases as of May 17, as against 8,000 cases in Ahmedabad and 1,033 in Surat. While the death toll was 32 in Vadodara, it was 493 in Ahmedabad and 49 in Surat. But how was this achieved?

“This shows what all can be achieved through proper dialogue using the right channels.”

The Vadodara administration emphasised on aggressive COVID testing from the start in order to isolate suspected cases and prevent the spread of the infection. But, as was evident early on, a section of the city’s over 11 per cent Muslim population was reluctant to step forward and get tested, and there were also reports of their non-cooperation with health workers carrying outdoor-to-door surveillance. Among them were members of the Tablighi Jamaat, who had returned from their organisation’s congregation in New Delhi in March.

To try and bring around this section of the population, state education secretary Vinod Rao, who is also the COVID-19 operations in-charge for Vadodara, began tapping NGOs and organisations considered to have influence in the Muslim community. That Rao enjoyed a stature in Vadodara helped —as municipal commissioner in 2017-2018, he had played a key role in the city’s clean-up and beautification.

In the first week of April, Rao shortlisted half a dozen organisations and, among them, chose the Baroda Muslim Doctors Association (BMDA) for the outreach job. The BMDA, led by its president Dr Mohammad Hussain Agarbattiwala, is a network of healthcare professionals operating in Vadodara city and its adjoining tehsils. The organisation not only came onboard but also offered the hostel of the Ebrahim Bawany Industrial Training Institute in the city as a dedicated COVID isolation facility.

Rao and Vadodara district collector Shalini Agarwal, however, wanted the BMDA to go a step further and convince the apprehensive members of the Muslim community to agree to COVID testing. According to the BMDA, one of the reasons for non-cooperation by some Muslims was the suspicion that this could be a closet identification exercise of the government towards the objectives of the National Register of Citizens (NRC). “The fear of an NRC survey being carried out was one of the reasons for non-cooperation by some of our Muslims brothers. But once we allayed their fears, they were on track,” says Agarbattiwala.

About 150 of the BMDA’s 350 members got down to working with the Muslim community to ensure their cooperation. The BMDA has a very

good rapport with the city's Muslims, having organised since its inception in 2012 about 8,000 medical camps for the community, particularly to address the problem of malnutrition among children. BMDA doctors started accompanying COVID testing teams to the affected Muslims localities and convinced the local leaders to ask people to cooperate. Around the second and third week of April, Agarbattiwala and his colleagues managed to get some 400 Muslims to come out and get tested.

Another reason for the lack of cooperation had been that many suspected COVID patients among Muslims were asymptomatic. BMDA teams had to convince them that not all COVID-19 patients showed the usual symptoms of persistent cough, fever and breathing trouble. Many came

around when they learnt that even non-Muslim asymptomatic cases had been isolated at the industrial training institute hostel-turned-COVID facility.

So far, 200 COVID patients have been discharged from the makeshift hospital after recovery while another 100 are admitted. Encouraged by the BMDA, the patients who have recovered have given their nod for donating plasma for treating COVID cases. "This is a great turnaround—those who were at one time unwilling to cooperate with the anti-COVID drive are now ready to donate their plasma," says Rao. "This shows what all can be achieved through proper dialogue using the right channels."

This article was first published in India Today on May 18th 2020.

Note from Team VoG : Shri Vinod Rao is a GSB and has received appreciation for the various steps taken by him at Vadodara to stop the spread of the pandemic.



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Migrant labourers in rice mill buck trend, not going anywhere



Pro-worker measures make them happy

Entrepreneur Ullal Venkatraya Mallya (seated in the centre and inset photo) with employees of Modern Industrial Corporation's rice mill in Mangaluru. DH PHOTOS/Govindraj

Mangaluru's dwindling labour force has left both private and public entities, dependent on migrant labourers, a worried lot.

As many 26,530 labourers had left Mangaluru as on May 15 and 40,510 migrant labourers, who have registered their names on the Seva Sindhu portal, are ready to flee from the city. However, 80 and odd migrant labourers working in Modern Industrial Corporation's (MIC) rice mill near Urva Market have decided not to go anywhere.

The migrant labourers working in the 64-year-old rice mill had also turned down the offer from policemen, who had visited the mill looking for potential passengers to fill up empty seats in a train departing with half its capacity from Mangaluru, said Ullal Venkatraya Mallya and Ullal Nandan Mallya of Modern Industrial Corporation.

"My family in Motihar district in Bihar even insisted that I stay in the same place," Dilip Kumar, who is serving in the mill for the past five years, said.

The many privileges that come with working in the mill have ensured minimum attrition. Those working in the mill, including families, get free quarters and five meals a day.

"Our families in villages are leading a happy life because of the mill,"

Every week the migrant labourers receive a free kit comprising of oil, soaps and detergent cakes. There is an in-house barber to give free haircuts.

“During the lockdown, the working hours in the mill, with a capacity of 45 tonnes of rice per day, was extended to meet the demand. To keep their spirits high, the menu included non-vegetarian dishes,” said Venkatraya.

The mill’s policy of transferring salaries directly to bank accounts by the third day of every month has left families in villages pleased. The migrant labourers also get some money every week to spend on their entertainment, said Venkatraya, a third-generation entrepreneur.

“Pro-staff initiatives. including free medical care, was introduced by my father Sudarshan Mallya. And we added the free meals,” said Mallya.

However, growth in career appears as a big incentive for employees.

Nanjesh SB from Matthikot near Shikaripura joined the mill as an unskilled labourer and went onto become a skilled employee.

Uma Kallappa from Mundgoud in Hubballi said there are no thoughts of looking elsewhere for a job. “Our families in villages are leading a happy life because of the mill,” she said with pride.

“The welfare initiatives for our staff are not borrowed from the best managerial practices. It is same as looking after your family by providing food and other comforts.” Venkatraya said.

by Harsha,
Mangaluru, DHNS

*This article first appeared in
The Deccan Herald newspaper*

Self-development in times of Lock Down.



by Prof Pradeep Pai

We are currently passing through challenging times due to the global coronavirus pandemic. Almost every one of us has tales of sorrow to share. The epidemic and the resultant lockdown have brought in untold hardships to everyone and the GSB community in particular. The GSB community, at the forefront of religious and cultural activities, has been confined to their homes with major temples deferring the main programs or conducting token programs

without community participation. In these difficult times, we come across some entrepreneurial ventures like Wedding package, which adheres to government conditions for 50 people covering all essentials like thermal screening, UV hand sanitization stations, personal hand sanitizer, N 95 masks & cuddle curtains for greeting. Or Corona special khakra with immunity booster ingredients like moong, coriander, ginger, lime juice & turmeric.

So, is it correct to benefit during adversarial times? Is it ethical? The answer is a big yes. The first thing that you can do in this lockdown adversity is to bring out the entrepreneur in you. The difficulty is of two types, personal or situational, like the current lockdown. Examples of overcoming their adversities are, Walt Disney who overcame poverty, Winston Churchill who defeated learning disability, Hellen Keller who overcame the loss of sight and hearing, Physicist Stephen Hawking who overcame Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), and Oprah Winfrey who overcame childhood trauma. There are examples of entrepreneurship during situational adversity: Wikipedia, born during the dotcom bust, FedEx starting around the worst US stagflation of 1971, Microsoft getting launched in 1975, and the first version of iPod getting launched around the dotcom bust era. The examples of innovation, strength, courage, and never-to-die attitude are the best uses of the lockdown period. The critical learning under challenging times will most certainly be helpful in better times.

Our GSB community has many successful entrepreneurs like Raghunandan Kamath of Naturals Icecreams or G Pradeep Pai of Hangyo Icecreams, to name a few. A few pages from their initial struggle days would give many insights into developing your entrepreneurial skills. Amy Wilkinson from Stanford University lists the following four skills that have to make entrepreneurs extraordinary,

- a) Find the gap – This Gap analysis between a need that is not being met and what the customers are making do with currently.
- b) Drive for Daylight – Just like the formula one race drivers focus on the road ahead

while seeking opportunities to overtake the competitor, successful entrepreneurs focus on the future undeterred with the obstacles or the lane constraints.

- c) Observe, Orient, Decide, and Act (OODA loop) is the framework for rapid decision making in the fast-changing environment. Remember we are in the worst possible times and the regulations are changing very fast. A quick response could be extremely crucial.
- d) Fail Wisely – Successful entrepreneurs understand that rather than making catastrophic mistakes, it is infinitely better to create a series of smaller errors. They test ideas in a low-risk environment in an inexpensive way and decide whether a product or an idea will take off. Not all ideas will work, but the learning from such failed ideas is phenomenal. Amy Wilkinson concludes by stating that these successful entrepreneurs are those who build small things and solve new problems.

Lockdown or no lockdown we must always walk the path of self-development.

Bringing cheer to everyone around you is the second point you could do in these lockdown days. In early April, we saw some videos of GSB Puttur Mahila Vibhag organizing competition for men

excelling in home chores. It was very innovative and brought in a lot of fun element to our lives. Although I am not sure who won the competition or whether there was any such competition at all, it brought cheer to most GSB community who watched the video. GSB community is very good at making small skits or at storytelling or any such innovative concept from our past. We could use the time available to

present this to our members and enlighten them besides spreading cheer.

Increasing the reading quotient during lockdown could be the third-best use of your lockdown time. In today's day and age, access to all the developments or history of any place in the world is available at the click of the button. Daily we must dedicate about 1 hour to read about anything that interests us. It could be politics, environment, scriptures, history, social, learning a new language, anything. Most newspapers and magazines are available as e-copies, and this can make us a better-informed person. Importantly, you must detach yourself from social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp) for 1 hour. It has a double advantage; first, you are reading something meaningful for that 1 hour, and second, you have avoided reading meaningless stuff for 1 hour!

The fourth thing you could do during the lockdown is to enhance your skills in hitherto alien areas. For men, it could be cooking or cleaning or gardening. For women, it could be stitching, painting, banking (online), investments (equities, derivatives, futures, and options).

For children, it could be scriptures, music, singing, traditional dancing, etc. The list is not exhaustive and can expand. Still, the critical aspect is that we must use this time to pick up new skills that other members of the household demonstrate. Firstly it helps appreciate the hard work put in by others in the house and secondly you can lend a helping hand in the future if you have picked up those skills well.

To summarize, you can benefit from the lockdown by,

- a. Developing the entrepreneur in you,
- b. Spreading cheer to your family, your friends and your society.
- c. Increasing your reading quotient, and
- d. By enhancing your skills.

I am not sure when you would be reading this article, and it's possible that the lockdown is lifted but do ponder on these four points of self-development. Lockdown or no lockdown we must always walk the path of self-development. Wishing all the samaj bandhavas great learning, and best health always.

Pradeep Pai is a Chairperson and Associate Professor at NMIMS - School of Business Management with over 28 years of teaching experience, authored two text books in quantitative techniques and project management published by Oxford University Press and Pearson, respectively. Grew up in Gokul building, Dahisar (East). Has keen interest in social welfare and community service.

UPDATION OF MEMBERSHIP RECORDS

We would like to be in touch with our members. Please e-mail us your mobile number and email id to gsbsabha@gmail.com. While sending the details, please include your membership number or your complete address so that we can locate you correctly in our membership records.

Why do you need to create an emergency fund now?



by Amit Shanbaug

While writing this article, I remember the example of one of my former colleague Anand Birai (43), a dear friend and a travel enthusiast. Anand never believed in saving much and loved to live life to the fullest. He must have travelled to most of the countries and would change his vehicle every three years. Also, he never believed in the concept of taking an insurance policy. Then tragedy struck one day. His 65 year old dad had a heart attack and had to be rushed to the hospital. The doctors suggested an angioplasty which by a conservative estimate would cost him around Rs 2- 3 lakhs. With no money on his own, he was left to borrow some from his friends and the rest he paid by his credit card. Today, even after many years, he is still repaying his dues.

This is where an emergency fund if created would have come in handy for him.

What is an emergency fund?



An emergency fund is a corpus one creates to tide over any kind of emergency and unavoidable expenses like a medical emergency, accidents, drop in income or job loss which has become common in the current COVID crises. The

emergency fund helps the person find respite to the problem during his tough times. It also helps him to avoid taking high interest paying debt as we see in our friend Anand's case. It also gives

The objective of creating a contingency or an emergency fund is to take care of the unforeseen liabilities like a medical crises or a loss of job which is true in situations like a COVID pandemic.

a sense of financial security to the person to face any challenge in his life.

How large should the emergency fund be?

An emergency fund depends on several factors. For instance, if the person is the only bread earner of the family and has several dependents on him like children and dependent parents then the corpus needs to be at least six months to one years fixed expenses. I have tried to explain this with the help

Expense	Amount
Household expense	Rs 20,000
Home loan EMI	Rs 15,000
Travel and utility bills	Rs 10,000
Medical bills (Aged parents)	Rs 5,000
Miscellaneous Expenses	Rs 10,000
Total Monthly expense	Rs 60,000

For instance, suppose the monthly expense of a person given above is Rs 60,000 which is Rs 20,000 for his monthly household expense like his grocery and food bills, Rs 15,000 is the EMI or the rental amount which he is paying for the house which he is residing in. For travelling, the person incurs an expense of Rs 10,000 and another Rs 10,000 in miscellaneous expenses. We also factor in Rs 5,000 as medical expenses which he may incur if anyone in his family may fall ill. The total monthly expense of the person comes to around Rs 60,000. So ideally, the person needs to save a corpus between Rs 360,000/- (Rs 60,000 X 6 months) and Rs 720,000/- (Rs 60,000 X 12 months)

I would also recommend that a person takes a health cover for himself and his family. Medical and health costs are rising every day in the country. So it is better to take a health cover when one is young and insurable. With rising age, the premium payable also increases. You must have read that private hospitals charge lakhs of rupees to treat COVID patients, this cost would be borne by the insurance companies if you have taken the cover. For a major ailment and hospitalization, if the person does not have a health cover, his entire emergency corpus would be wiped out.

When can a person think of a smaller emergency corpus?

There are several factors due to which a person can think of creating a relatively smaller corpus.

1) When he is debt free: A home loan EMI is one of the large expenses any person

incurs. If a person does not have any debts for instance, he lives in his family house for which he does not have to pay any rental or home loan EMIs, he can then think of creating a lower emergency corpus.

2) No dependents: There are several families where the elderly parents are not dependent financially on their kids. They either have their own savings or have their pensions to take care of their medical and other expense, then in that case a person can think of creating a smaller contingency fund.

3) More than one source of income: If a person has more than one source of income like a rental income or have a working spouse, then he can also think of creating a smaller emergency corpus.

How to save the money for the emergency corpus?

To create an emergency fund, a person should keep a monthly target to save a percentage of his monthly income. He can cut on some of his leisure expense and transfer the money in a separate bank account. A small part of the corpus fund needs to be kept in liquid cash form, while the rest can be either be saved in a liquid fund or a short term deposit account which can be redeemed in a day's notice.

So, one should decide sooner than later to create an emergency fund for secure future.

Disclaimer: The writer does not advocate or recommend any investments for any group.

Amit Shanbaug works as a Senior Assistant Editor at the Times of India. He has been a personal finance writer for publications like the Economic Times and the India Today group.

POGO

Travelogue

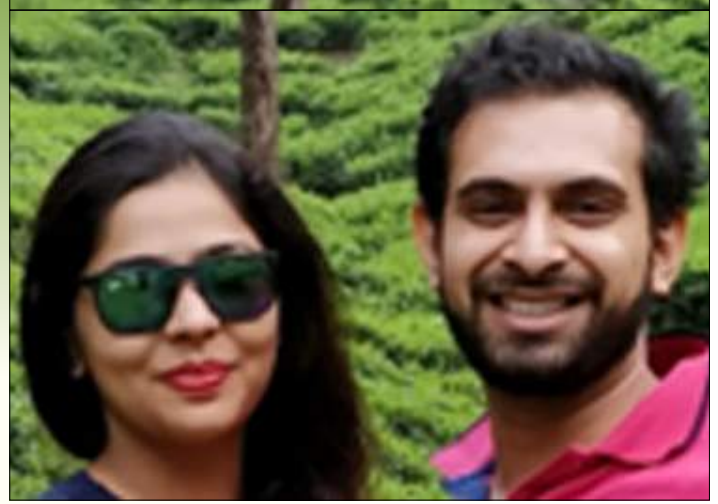
By Gopal Prabhu & Pooja Kamath

Hello VoG!

We are an IT Couple (proudly;) in our late 20's living in Bangalore. Our idea of escaping the pressures of India's Silicon Valley is to travel. It's the wanderlust within us that makes us pack our bags and leave home sweet home... to wander out there to taste, savor, smell and feel a bit of this big wide beautiful world and come back feeling soul-refreshed. Travel is quite a spiritual experience too, and makes you feel how small you are in the larger scheme of things. The bug has bitten us officially, and we have travelled 17 countries in 3 years as a family of 3 (bragging? Yeah a lil bit :P). But all that put together doesn't even come close to the number of hours we have spent travelling @ Silk Board Traffic Signal in Bangalore :D



Each place we visited had its own unique cultural flavour. It's traditional cuisine..the vibes



of the local people and its sights and smells which keep motivating us to search for newer pastures to wander and gaze !

Hopefully, this COVID crisis ends soon so that it's time again to dust off our travel bags from the loft above and taste a piece of a new heaven!

For now, reminiscing the Good times and our Reasons to Travel.

1. The Mountains just called, they want you back: If ever you need a spiritual experience in the name of travel, nothing beats



Kashmir and **Ladakh!** A mountain bike ride on the seemingly deserted, barren and beautiful roads of Ladakh is enough to get you emotional. You don't need to get high, the low oxygen levels there take care of it. **Kashmir** is the most beautiful hill region in

Travel is quite a spiritual experience too, and makes you feel how small you are in the larger scheme of things

the world, period.

2. The Sun and Sand: In November 2017, we got married and had booked a 10 day honeymoon in **Bali**. One of the volcanoes turned violent the day before our flight, and it suddenly became a high-risk destination. We went along the ride as we trusted our families' Angvan at various temples. Perhaps the best travel decision of our lives. An otherwise overcrowded place welcomed us with open arms and empty islands, upgrades to Sea-Villas,



Volcano views and it never felt unsafe. 10 days on a rented scooter in Bali turned out to be the most memorable experience. Candle lit dinners at the beach with the waves under your table, the lovely temples, amazing sea-food, the submarine tour, water sports enough to give us a sun-burn and the LUXURY (thanks to the Volcano). Surprisingly, Bali is the most per-capita Hindu place in the world with 97%

Hindu population and all the beaches are named like Ramayana beach, Pandava beach etc. which makes you feel at home.

Travel Tip: don't fret over "risky" destinations, they are the best time to explore. If you just want a relaxing holiday at some of the best beaches in the world, Sri-Lanka is a great place and doesn't burn a hole in the pocket.

3. FOOD TOURISM: India has the best food in the world, coming in at a close second though is South-East Asia. The street food markets at Thailand and Malaysia



will leave you mesmerized. Although not very vegetarian-friendly, the options and deliciousness around will leave you craving for more each time. The sea-food game here is brilliant with

Singapore Chilly Crab, Thai pad thai, MeeGoreng; and they also have the best exotic fruits. These countries are very value-for-money, and you can splurge to your heart's content. The grocery stores @ every 100 metres will satisfy your junk food appetite too.

***TIP:** never try the fancy restos on travel, street food/small eateries with good online reviews/ long lines are the best. If the locals like it, you will!*

4. A lil History & Culture: Nobody preserves their history and monuments as well as the Europeans do. The cathedrals in **Rome**, **Vatican** and **Germany** will leave you looking really small. We went with a gang of

Charles Bridge, Prague:

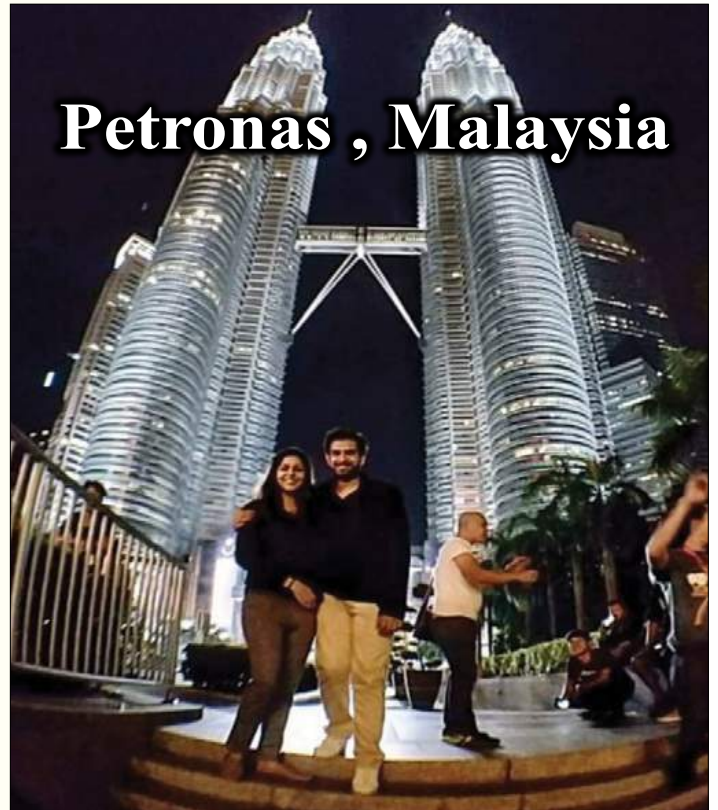


12 friends for a Fun trip - Cycling around the waterways and canals of **Amsterdam** and the beautiful Austrian hills, **German** beer and partying. **Switzerland** and **Prague** are our favorite European destinations.

***TIP:** Travel with a group to expensive countries, so that the economics of scale reduce your credit card debt. Also, stay at airbnb's which are usually wonderful places and really reasonable (12 of us stayed in a huge 5 bedroom house in Munich for Rs 500/person/night)*

5. Urban madness : who are we kidding, we are too used to the hustle and bustle. Absolutely love visiting the big cities of the World, to experience what it would be like to live there. New York, San-Francisco and Singapore have a lively energy which is hard to put into words. Apart from being financial capitals, they have created enough for the casual traveler to enjoy. Luckily, we get to travel to some offbeat cities for work like Dhaka, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Dubai and Colombo which have their unique madness.

Petronas , Malaysia



***TIP:** The major cities are super connected with the subway system, always use that to go around.*



Goa atleast twice a year for their food and hospitality. You don't get that anywhere else in India. Also love doing the long-weekend trips to places like **Wayanad, Coonoor, Pondi. Rajasthan, Punjab, Sikkim, Kerala, Uttarakhand** are great 1-week trips. We realized we haven't explored our own country fully, so in 2021 we intend to cover the underrated options like the North-East. In the current times, local businesses need the support of the Indian people as tourism is a big Industry employing millions. So let's take a small step in that direction too 🍌

6. INDIA: Goankars are known for their languid Susegad and that's exactly the reason why we keep coming back to

The Founder Members of the Sabha (1934)



G.S.B. Sabha, Mumbai, was formed on 26th August, 1934, with the divine grace and blessings of Param Pujya H H Shrimad Sukradeendra Tirtha Swamiji of Shree Kashi Math Samsthan. On 26th August, 2020, we complete 86 years. Every year, in the month of August, we used to celebrate our Foundation Day. This year, due to the Covid-19 scenario, the celebrations have been postponed to a date to be announced in future.

We print herewith a photo of the founder members of the Sabha from 1934.

In case any of you can recognize any of them, do drop us a mail at gbsabha@gmail.com with the information. We will be glad to print the same in our next issue.

Half ticket

and a full plate! –my Indian Railways food experience

I grew up in the 90s – times when hashtags and words such as wanderlust, travelgram and Instagram were unheard of and the thrill of an epic adventure was always when my dad got transferred to a new naval base or when we were visiting grandparents for summer vacations.

Why? – because it meant long train journeys and hence interesting people to meet/observe, places (with hard to pronounce names) to visit but more importantly, it was an all-paid ticket to



sample some of the best takeaway food before pre-Swiggy and Zomato times!

It is true - food does bring a lot of us together. For me, it continues to be that memorable conversation starter that I always associate with travel (and notably, train journeys) and one that you're always sure to find an audience with.

Be it the constant barrage of lip-smacking snacks, pot teas, lunches and dinners served by the Indian Railways pantry during our ~72 hour long train journey from Jamnagar to



by Vipin Shenoy

Visakhapatnam or the late night bread – masala omelette combo at any train station in India, the very thought of train journeys would be never complete if not accompanied by the lingering taste of each of these seemingly simple food items.

With our longest stint ever of ~10 years at Visakhapatnam, most of my memories of train station food would be recollections from our summer vacation jaunts to Mangalore. With no direct trains to Mangalore, one had to always head to Madras (now Chennai) and hop on to a connecting train via Kerala. This was our modus operandi until the Indian Railways provided us with a new option – skip Madras and head to Bangalore instead. This not only saved us time but for the foodie in me, this meant new train stations and the added joy of experiencing more good food!

Enough of the build-up now.

Here's a compiled list of my cherished food items through the journey – certainly, not a close representation of the variety of food items available across train stations in a country as diverse as India

Visakhapatnam Junction (VSKP) – Punugulu, a deep-fried snack made with rice, urad dal and other spices served with a generous amount of coconut chutney

Vijayawada Junction (BZA) – savouring ice-cold fruit juices served by the Azad Fruit Stall mobile vending vans, and mango jelly!

Donakonda (DKD) – we almost, always had the train halt beyond the railway station for the other “priority” express train to pass, but the locals never failed to show up with piping hot upma and coconut chutney wrapped in banana leaves

Guntakal Junction (GTL) and Sathya Sai Prashanti Nilayam (SSPN) – Dal vada and coconut chutney or Khara Pongal

Dharmavaram Junction (DMM) – Masala vada and coconut chutney

Madras Junction/Chennai Junction (MAS) – super strong coffee at the Nescafe kiosk near Platform #5, fresh apple/orange juice at the HPMC stall and a delectable choice of crisp, ghee-laden dosas!

Kozhikode/Calicut (CLT) – Deep fried banana goodness we fondly call as pazham poris. Enough said!

Mandya (MYA) and Maddur (MAD) – Maddur vadas- crisp fried patties that serve as an all-day snack for anyone travelling between Mysore and Bangalore

As most of us, including me, hop onto our next flight, I wonder if there is a lingering feeling to experience the joy of train journeys once again.

It was a moment of mixed feelings when Indian Railways launched the e-catering

service in 2015. Yes, there was the convenience of choice as one could order from their favourite restaurant or fast food chain but would it also lead to a complete change in consumer behavior and shutters down for the family run or licensed food stall vendor, who were for me



the lifeline for the millions of passengers who traversed past non-descript train stations but always remembered the limited quantity but scrumptious affair?

According to a PTI report (2018), IRCTC’s e-catering service accounts for less than 1% of meals served on Indian Railways. E-catering is used by 7,000 train passengers on average daily as compared to 12 lakh meals served by Indian Railways daily. The *junta’s* verdict could not have been more crystal clear.

As most of us, including me, hop onto our next flight, I wonder if there is a lingering feeling to experience the joy of train journeys once again. Would you ditch the meandering self-drive through the beautiful countryside or the two-hour flight to experience this feeling once again?

When I asked this to myself, the answer was a resounding yes! I did ditch the drive to Mysore once to experience the crispy Maddur vadas; to

Mangalore another time to savour the *pazham poris* and the goli baje (Mangalore bajjis) and boy, they were yum!

Are you convinced enough or are you salivating, simply from the thought of food? Do decide soon and let me know what do you need more – some chutney, an extra plate, or serviettes?

Source citations:

What train passengers eat while travelling on Indian Railways, Livemint, 27 July 2018, accessed on 14 June 2020
Rashmi Drolia, Indian Railways launches e-catering service at 45 stations, 29 October 2015, The Times of India, accessed on 14 June 2020. Maddur Vade – picture courtesy: G.P. Sampath Kumar via Food Safari Magazine (The Hindu)
Still image of a railway station food vendor courtesy Marat Nugayev's YouTube video titled 'Street food at the railway station in India'

Vipin is a management consultant based in Bangalore. A social observer, he has widely travelled across India owing to his father's military background and this strongly influences his first-hand account laden writing style. You can reach him at shenoyvipin@gmail.com



THEY MAKE US PROUD THE G.S.B. LEGENDS SERIES : TONSE UPENDRA PAI MY AJJA

by Chandrika Prabhu



My grandfather, Sri Tonse Upendra Anantha Pai, was born on November 26th 1895 to Sri Ananth Pai & Smt. Yashoda Pai in Brahmavar, Udupi. He had his education in various locations in India, like from class seven to Senior intermediate—Udupi, Mangalore, Kumta, Poona, Baroda. Upendra Pai closely followed the nationalist movement in the country led by Gandhiji.

He was the first person of the renowned Tonse-Pai family to have moved to the barren

land of Mannu-palla (Manipal of today) and started working towards developing it through his sheer hard work and entrepreneurial spirit.

The Canara Land Instruments Ltd, the tile factory, the Manipal Handlooms, the Maharashtra Apex Corporation & of course, The Canara Industrial & Banking Syndicate - now known as Syndicate bank were his brain child. The Bank promoted the formation of Manipal Power Press, known as Manipal Technologies Limited today

The Gita Mandir a place for prayer meetings and host of other enterprises in and around Manipal were established by Sri Upendra Pai. He enjoyed construction work. In his entourage were few carpenters & masons. He believed in using local material a part of his philosophy of self help. He was called as “a one-man public works department”.

Upendra Pai closely followed the nationalist movement in the country led by Gandhiji.

He had already become a convert to the nation of swadeshi & self help. He also had a love for the arts and that is how Ramakrishna theatre in 1932 came into existence in Udupi. It was the 1st theatre in Udupi in those days. He started Grama Seva Pratishtan keeping in view the multi dimensional progress of the villages. He was really a karma yogi.

His first son, Anantha—popularly known as T.A. Pai was elected to the Rajya Sabha in 1972 and represented Udupi Lok Sabha constituency in 1977.

In short he had not left a large estate but left behind a better community with individuals who were so grateful. Strong towers decay, but a great name shall never pass away.

Krishna says in Bhagwad Gita “he who is same to foe & friend and also in honours & dishonours, who is the same in cold & heat in pleasure & pain who is free from attachment to whom censure & praise are equal. Steady

mindful full of devotion, that man is dear to me”. The teaching of Gita is to transform karma into karma yogi to be active in mind but detached in mind and same thing can be said about Sri Upendra Pai of Manipal. There always was something extra ordinary about this seemingly ordinary person. His influence was always in the direction of good and he seemed to scatter goodness about him. His greatest contribution to the social upliftment was the establishment of The Canara Industrial & Banking Syndicate (Syndicate Bank.). He believed that the life of this country was its villages that is how providence brought Sri Upendra Pai to Manipal a barren hill Mannu – palla) in those days. He simply went on building Institutions.

In short he had not left a large estate but left behind a better community with individuals who were so grateful.

It was a proud moment for us in the family & his well wishers when a special cover was released by India Post (Karnataka Postal circle) to commemorate his contribution! The Coinage monument circle which was installed in memory of Late Upendra Pai was unveiled and inaugurated on Sunday, February 25 2018 by the Udupi District minister in-charge Pramod Madhwaraj.

Chandrika Prabhu is elder of twin girls born to Tara & Mulki Dinesh Kudva.

She has a elder brother, Narender Kudva, who is the Deputy

Managing Director of Kurlon Enterprise Limited – the largest mattress manufacturers in India which was started by his father Mr. Dinesh Kudva as a small scale industry under the guidance of his brother in law Mr. Tonse Ramesh Pai of Manipal. Chandrika graduated in Arts from MES College, Malleshwaram, Bangalore . She got married to Vasudeva Prabhu in the year 1991 & is settled in Hyderabad since then

Mandir in Nandigram



by K. G. Mallya

Years ago, I had gone on a pilgrimage to Ayodhya and other nearby places as a member of a party but the memory of one place is still fresh in my mind as though I had paid a visit only yesterday. It was none other than Nandigram, a tiny hamlet where Prince Bharat, the younger brother of Lord Rama lived like an ascetic for fourteen years like his brothers in the forest, caring little for the comforts of the palace but ruling the kingdom in the name of Lord Rama worshipping his sandals.

In a democracy like ours the citizens are supposed to be the rulers, maybe like Lord Rama's sandals and the elected representatives Bharat-like persons

We went to Nandigram after visiting all the important places in Ayodhya. On the way we crossed Faizabad and then travelled on the same highway by which we had arrived in Ayodhya on the first night. After covering a distance of about 16 miles we reached Nandigram, the village of Ramayan fame.

The village was not far off from the road and as the name suggested it was a tiny hamlet since Lord Rama's days and it appears it never grew even after centuries.

The village proper consisted of thatched huts, eight to ten in number and four to five tiny shops on the road and then there was a school. After crossing them we reached an elevated place

on which was standing a shrine dedicated to Bharat. To give a look of a cottage, on both the sides of the shrine, there were sloping roofs of dried grass and inside in a sitting posture like a hermit, was a beautiful blue coloured idol of Bharat, wearing a calm and composed look. The 'panda'(the guide)told that in front of the idol were the same sandals that were gifted by Lord Rama when Bharat tried in vain to persuade Lord Rama to come back to Ayodhya to rule the kingdom. However the sandals were not visible as they were covered with a silk cloth on which could be seen the picture of the sandals. There was a holy lamp made out of an earthen, decorated pot from which a flame was gently glowing.

On the right hand side of the temple on the wall was a painting depicting Bharat embracing Hanuman who was carrying the Sanjivini mountain back to Lanka,. As the story goes, thinking that he was an enemy of Lord Rama, Bharat had shot at Hanuman and Hanuman with the mountain in hand fell down in a swoon. Even in a swoon he was chanting Lord Rama's name and Bharat, realizing that he was a devotee of Rama, gave proper treatment. After Hanuman gained back his senses, they acquainted themselves and embraced each other. Though the painting was not so pretty, it was very meaningful and appropriate to the place. We visited the school. Young kids were at play.

The school building did not have walls and the slates they were carrying were the wooden sheets with a coating of tar. The dress they had put on were nothing but rags and everything here bore the seal of abject poverty.

Before returning we decided to take tea. There was a small restaurant at the entrance of the village. We sat on the benches and ordered for tea. "Anything to munch?" someone enquired. "Yes, groundnuts and biscuits," came the reply. Order was given for biscuits but surprisingly the entire village we could not procure even two dozen biscuits. After buying whatever was available our party bade farewell to Bharat's Nandigram, the seat of supreme sacrifice never to be found in any mythology or

history. On the way a sudden thought crossed my mind. In a democracy like ours the citizens are supposed to be the rulers, maybe like Lord Rama's sandals and the elected representatives Bharat-like persons, especially the leaders holding the Ministerial positions. Should we draw that analogy? Well, I shuddered even to think like that!

Viewing differently whatever be the background, Prince Bharat ran a very unique administration. He made a village or the rural area to be the seat of power. He ran the administration with great simplicity, without fanfare or royal splendor and it was virtually the first phase of the famous Rama Rajya as he ruled the kingdom in the very name of Lord Rama.

K.G. Mallya is a retired banker. He has authored several books and regularly contributes articles to various newspapers and publications, including Voice of GSB. He resides in Kinnigoli, D.K.

G.S.B. Sabha, Mumbai

Announcements of Cancellations/Postponements due to Coronavirus

In view of the prevailing situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sabha has taken the following decisions pertaining to its programmes and activities which are usually held in the upcoming few months :

1. **CANCER SCREENING CAMP FOR WOMEN** : This camp, which was to be conducted by GSBS Medical Trust at its Health Rakshak Centre on Monday, 1st June, 2020., is postponed to a future date to be announced.
2. **76th PARICHAY : GET-TOGETHER OF ELIGIBLE BOYS AND GIRLS WITH THEIR PARENTS** : which was to be held on Sunday, 7th June, 2020, stands cancelled. We are planning a Zoom Parichay, suitable announcement will be made later.
3. **SHRAVAN HALDI KUMKUM PROGRAMME** : will not be held this year.
4. **86th FOUNDATION DAY CELEBRATIONS** : In usual course, this would have been held on Sunday, 23rd August, 2020. As of now, the same stands postponed and new date will be announced.

5. BHAKTI NATYA TARANG PROGRAMME : We had planned this annual musical programme for July 25, 2020. As of now, the same stands postponed now and new date will be announced.
6. VIDYANIDHI EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE DISBURSEMENT : In usual course, we would have started application form distribution in June. This year, we will be replacing the physical form with an on-line application. All other GSB organizations in Mumbai who are disbursing educational assistance will also have to replace their physical process with digital process. Discussions on a collaborative effort have been initiated wherein the digital application form can be commonly used across all organizations.

Please also make note of the following :

1. Voice of GSB : In the absence of printing facilities, we came out with a Digital Issue for April to June 2020. We also came out with a Lockdown Special Issue. You can access these issues by following the following links :

April to June 2020 : <https://online.pubhtml5.com/excu/sopx>

Lockdown Special Issue : <https://online.pubhtml5.com/excu/ylwa/#p=1>

The present issue, July to September 2020, is also being released as a digital issue. A decision to print the same will be taken later, depending on circumstances.

2. QUARTERLY BENEFITS TO SENIOR CITIZENS : We have ensured that quarterly benefits which we extend to needy senior citizens has been done in April 2020 by doing NEFT transfers. Usually, these benefits are in terms of reimbursements of the cost of their medicines for which they send bills to us. In the present scenario, we have transferred the money to them on account without waiting for their medicine bills to enable them to continue to meet their health care needs.
3. ONLINE SAMVAAD SERIES : The Sabha has started an Online Samvaad Series on its official Zoom platform wherein inspiring and influencing speakers share their knowledge with registered participants and also take questions. There is a simple Google Form Registration process and the meeting co-ordinates are sent to registered participants. We also stream the session live on our facebook page. The sessions we have had so far are :

May 17th : How to overcome fear ? By Dr. Vivekanand Shanbhag, Vishwarup Das

May 21st : Playing the G.A.M.E. – Wellness in Crisis by Smt. Pratima Bhandarkar

May 31st : Eat Right – Live Strong by Smt. Anjali Dange

June 7th : Staying Invested by Shri Ambareesh Baliga

June 14th : Bhimsen Johsi – Aakasha Eavadha with Shri Sudhir Nayak and Shri Bharat Kamat

June 21st : Staying Positive by Dr. Jennifer and Dr. Ajoy Prabhu

4. Both our Shree Nidhi office and Kreeda Mandir remain closed. We will announce on their opening.

IN LOVING MEMORY

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत |

अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ||

Bhagwat Geeta Chapter 2.28

O scion of Bharat, all created beings are unmanifest before birth, manifest in life, and again unmanifest on death. So why grieve?



MRS. LEELAVATHI RAMMOHAN RAO

(10-12-1929 TO 01-06-2019)

AMMA was super imaginative. Known for the various cross stich frames which she had made. She would always find ways to make things aesthetic from things as mundane as old cup noodle boxes. That is how we will always remember her; as a visually creative person who was always finding ways to make things look better. The good part is, most of it is still there in the house, as if, a part of her is still around. And that's why, whenever we think of her, we don't feel the sorrow of missing someone. Rather the memories we have of her, making the world around a little better than what it was.

Always remembered by
SUBHAS ANURADHA CHITRA MADHUKAR
&
ADITYA ABHISHEK NALIN NITIN

Samvaad - Online series on Inspirational Talks

Organized by G.S.B. Sabha, Mumbai.

A popular adage in the entertainment industry is that The Show Must Go On. In a global lockdown against an unseen danger lurking everywhere and the only safe place being our homes, it would be wise to rephrase it to The Show Must Go On-line! And thus, the Sabha decided to use technology and connect with our community online through a series of inspirational talks by a variety of speakers who are experts in their own respective fields.

Samvaad 1 - "How to overcome fear?"

by Dr. Vivekanand Shanbhag,
HG Vishwarup Das



The first session, held on 17th May 2020, was a discourse led by Dr. Vivekanand Shanbhag, also known as HG Vishwarup Das, on "How to overcome fear?" The session was a mix of experiences narrated by Dr. Shanbhag in his role as Deputy Director of Bhaktivedanta Group of Hospitals where he heads the Department of Spiritual Care Training and Education. He touched upon several points of how to overcome fear of the pandemic and focus instead on keeping ourselves healthy with traditional, time-tested home-cooked food, meditation, breathing exercises and yoga. The other part was about the spiritual discussion around the pandemic and seeing the positive sides of the pandemic where Nature gets a time to reset, our lives taking a pause from the mad rush and building stronger connections with family, while appreciating many of our ancient

teachings and get back to simpler living. This was an interactive session where participants greatly appreciated the content and also interacted with Dr. Shanbhag to get guidance from him..

Samvaad 2 - "Playing the G. A. M. E. – Wellness in Crisis"

by Smt. Pratima Bhandarkar



Smt. Pratima Bhandarkar conducted the second session of the Samvaad series, titled "Playing the G. A. M. E. – Wellness in Crisis" on Thursday, 21st May 2020. Pratima's deep experience of more than 25 years in the field of child protection and family welfare was in full demonstration as she talked to young participants in a way that they could relate easily, advising them to stay strong mentally during the lockdown and utilizing their time to plan and build on their skills. She discussed some examples of courses that could be taken by young and older children that could potentially help them in the future or even just teach them a new skill. She also discussed various points for enhanced wellness and optimal functioning, such as being able to concentrate on a task, when staying locked-in at home with all other members of the family.

Samvaad 3 - "Nutrition Everyday Keeps the Virus Away"

by Smt. Anjali Dange



Continuing on the trend, the Sabha organized a talk,

on 31st May 2020, in another dimension of wellness, titled “Nutrition Everyday Keeps the Virus Away” with Smt. Anjali Dange, a practicing nutritionist and regular columnist of Voice of GSB. Anjali presented an insightful session into the science of nutrition of foods, with a special emphasis on vegetables, ingredients and dishes in G. S. B. cuisine. She also provided tips to senior citizens and people with diabetes or gastric problems on how to combat with the right diet, exercise and what things to avoid in the current lockdown situation. The session saw a lot of interaction with a lot of questions asked around different dietary restrictions, myths and questions on what is allowed and what is not for certain medical conditions.

Samvaad 4 - “Staying Invested”

by Ambareesh Baliga

Switching gears, the Sabha had the pleasure of hosting Shri Ambareesh Baliga on 7th June 2020, a renowned independent financial advisor to companies and HNIs and family offices. In a session titled “Staying Invested”, Ambareesh captivated the audience with a free and frank discussion on the current state of economy and discussed strategies to ensure that people stay invested and keep their savings safe during unprecedented times of uncertainties. A lot of participants quizzed him about his views on the country’s macroeconomics and his advice on specific investment ideas.



Samvaad 5 - Bhimsen Joshi - Aakasha Eavadha.....

by Sudhir Nayak and Bharat Kamat

With growing audiences in each session, the

Sabha was encouraged to find newer ideas and hosted another Samvaad session on 14th June 2020, with two speakers this time. The session was a trip down memory lane with renowned



harmonium player, Shri Sudhir Nayak in conversation with Shri Bharat Kamat, a well-known Hindustani classical tabla player. Both the accomplished artists accompanied Pandit Bhimsen Joshi for nearly 18 years and discussed their memories of the Bharat Ratna vocalist. They revealed the loving and compassionate side of Pandit-ji as he encouraged young artists and respected all of them in spite of his own towering achievements. The two artists who were in his close company discussed everything from his relationship with his accompanying troupe, fond memories of singing in the Indian Parliament for the Golden Jubilee of India’s Independence and even his love for spicy food and how he could perform marathon sessions if the audience connected well. The engaged audience had a lot of different questions and Sudhir and Bharat answered all of them enthusiastically. Finally, on popular request, Sudhir Nayak enthralled the audience by performing a beautiful rendition of a few lines of the popular abhang Indrayani Kathi. The audience were thrilled and applauded the artists loudly after listening to an uplifting session followed by soulful music.

Samvaad 6 – Staying Positive

by Dr. Jennifer and Dr. Ajoy Prabhu



For this session, we got a Doctor couple from the US to interact with us on 21st June 2020. Dr. Jennifer and Dr. Ajoy Prabhu stated that the global pandemic and the forced confinement of people to a certain area could spread negativity which could lead to depression.



They shared certain tips, tools and tricks to stay positive and emphasized that positive people tend to recover faster from any disease. They went from the inner aspects of our personality to the outer and spoke on what could be done in the areas of spirituality, emotional, mental and physical aspects to stay positive. They demonstrated yogasanas and exercises and recommended apps which could be used and shared the link to their website which has several useful resources. Questions were answered to the satisfaction of the audience.

The Sabha continues to organize Samvaad sessions every Sunday. These sessions are announced on the Sabha's official Facebook page and past session recordings are available at <https://gsbsabhamumbai.org/samv>

SUTA PUNNAV

This year Suta Punnav falls on Monday, 3rd August, 2020.

New Jannuves, blessed by Bhatmaam would be available at our Sabha office from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. Kindly avail yourselves of this sacred service.

*Members are requested to wear mask and follow the norms of social distancing.

IN MEMORIAM

ON YOUR 14TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY



MANIK GOPALKRISHNA PRABHU
(28-09-1928 – 10-06-2006)

*Loving and kind in all her ways,
Upright and just to the end of her days;
Sincere and true, in her heart and mind,
Beautiful memories, she left behind.*

*With fond and everlasting memories
of our loving mother*

SON	– NARESH GOPALKRISHNA PRABHU
DAUGHTER-IN-LAW	– SHAILA NARESH PRABHU
GRAND DAUGHTERS	– RASHMI JNANESH PADIYAR RUMA PRASHANT SHENOY
GREAT GRAND CHILDREN	– TOSHANI PADIYAR MITHIL SHENOY



Vasanth's Poetry Corner

Geriatric Love

(based on a news report about the Spanish Queen's marriage as an octogenarian)

Heard of the Duchess of Alba of Spain
Whose wait for a mate has not been in vain
She is all of 85 and a widow so lovely to behold
A distant relative of the Queen and Churchill I am told
Been married twice and third time maybe lucky
The dowager worth \$ 3 billion sure is plucky
This time she chose a civil servant Alfonso Diez
(About her mate's calling in life she has no bias)
He is only 60 but looks much older than his age
She met him at a cinema and love developed backstage
Her six children on hearing this went into a rage
They thought Mr. Diez was a mere gold digger
His interest in an 85 yr old they could not figure
So the Duchess called all her 6 children for a meet
And settled their demands on her estate clean and neat
Unfettered, the wedding took place with great pomp
At the palace in Saville, the invitees saw her romp
Kicking off her shoes and doing a flamenco dance
The crowd of 700 clapped as they saw her prance
Friends, this only shows it is never too late to marry
If you are thinking of tying the knot, do it now, don't tarry

PS :The full name of the Duchess:-

Take a deep breath - Maria del Rosario Cayetana Alfonsa Victoria
Eugenia Francisca Fitz-James Stuart y de Silva.

Life and Filth

*It's a scene of crime, really, I haven't moved anything.
The windows are still shut tight to keep in all the din.*

*The waste basket is still full
and the lizards are now rotting;*

*Everything's just the way we left it,
the way it's always been.*

*The sheets are still crumpled,
and dirt tracks run around*

*From the kitchen to the bathroom
and spill into the lounge.*

*Abandoned webs are threatening to fall onto my head,
onto the picture frames and the stereo
and on the unmade bed.*

*Our clothes now have little patches that
appeared from nowhere.*

*And the drinking water we left, remember?
It's still lying there.*

*The water tank is empty
and the pantry shelves are bare.*

*The plague just ran out the hallway,
even epidemics are scared!*

*I am missing you like mad, honey,
come back before I die.*

It's as unclean and unhygienic as hell in all its might.

*I won't yell again when you
don't put the clothes to dry.*

if you're reading this, please...

PLEASE.....

COME BACK SAKKU BAI!!!

Konchadi Vasanth Pai (87), has spent over 60 years in the pharmaceutical industry in Govt. and non Govt. sectors and as consultant after retirement. He has also worked in NGOs such as Sanjivani in Delhi and Childline in Pune. He presently lives with his son in Bengaluru. He is passionate about blogging and social networking

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*I accidentally wrote a poem for this English assignment instead of an essay.
I am rather proud of this poem which I have written it straight from my heart
I would love to share it with you all.*



Amyshka Shenoy

“Masked Fatality”

*In a world like ours, we are told to stay strong,
to keep our problems to ourself and to show the world that we belong.
But sometimes our woes get too strong to hide,
with the tide of emotions we just sat and cried,
but we mustn't, oh we mustn't.
Since crying is for the weak,
and our feelings aren't important to the world that we seek,
So we put on those facades, those smiles that bear so much pain
Since anguish will bring one no gain
and go on with our day hoping no one sees tears brimming in ones eyes.
Because the world keeps moving, so we keep saying these fatal lies.
We wear a mask of joy everyday,
but hope that secretly your eyes don't betray.
So the masks stay on, and the world goes by,
hoping the ticking bomb of tears will comply.*

*Amyshka Shenoy. is 14 yrs old. She is in class 9 at Podar International School.
Her hobbies includes listening to music, singing, reading books & travelling.*

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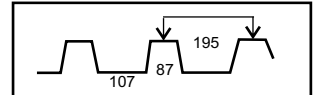
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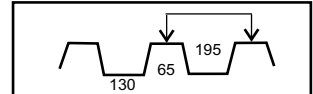
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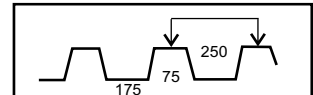
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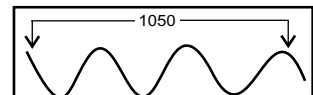
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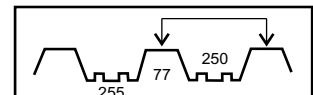
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**(23rd April, 1920 to
24th February, 2016)**



Remembering Shri Gurbur Dattananda Bhat



Shri Gurbur Dattananda Bhat and Smt. Shanta D. Bhat

23rd April, 2020 was the 100th birth anniversary of Shri Gurbur Dattananda Bhat. In his passing away at the age of 96 years, on 24th February, 2016, the G.S.B. Community lost a great supporter, well-wisher and philanthropist.

Dattananda Bhat-maam supported several GSB institutions by handsome contributions to further their objects. For the Sabha, he is our single largest donor till date. During his lifetime, Bhat-maam had donated a sum of Rs. 50 lakhs to the Sabha in 2014, with the express intention of Sabha setting up a scheme for providing financial support to the needy senior citizens of our Community in meeting their domiciliary health care needs. We remain indebted to him, and this Scheme is presently supporting 35 needy GSB senior citizens for the cost of their medicines and regular procedures.

Further, Dattananda Bhat-maam, bequeathed a sum of Rs. 1.50 crores to the Sabha in his

will. Of this amount, Rs. 1.00 crore was directed to be utilized to establish an endowment to provide scholarships to meritorious students belonging to economically backward sections of the Gowd Saraswat Brahman community for pursuit of higher education in any field. This is the second year of disbursements from this Fund and we have been able to assist students who are pursuing engineering, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and architecture courses, from this Fund.

The balance sum of Rs. 50 lakhs has been directed to be utilized to provide Medical Aid for operations/surgeries and we are utilizing the same for the said purpose.

Shri Gurbur Dattananda Bhat was a source of strength and inspiration to the Sabha and his absence will be missed by us. We respectfully remember him and Late Smt. Shanta D. Bhat. They will remain a source of inspiration to us forever.



Vishwanath Ram Kantak

12.11.1935 - 15.06.2020

“I want to show the world that age and disability are no barriers for success” were the words the then 82 year Shri Vishwanath Ram Kantak had said when he held an exhibition from 21st March to 27th March, 2017 at Mumbai’s prestigious Jehangir Art Gallery by the name Sixth Sense Symbolic Spiritual Suspending.

Born in Goa in 1935, Kantak-maam came to Mumbai and studied at J. J. School of Art. He worked as a commercial artist and then took to freelancing. He lived at Ramkrishna Mission, USA for a decade before returning to India. Though his son lives in the US, Kantak-maam chose to spend his time at Shantikunj Sevashram (senior citizens home) at Vidyadhiraj Charitable Trust (VCT) in Panvel, where he stayed since 2011, till his demise on 15th June, 2020.

An artist with great caliber, Kantak-maam used different styles, different mediums, colour combinations and designs in his creations. Besides paintings, he also created some fabulous artifacts. One of them, an attractive and huge falcon. The falcon stands for success, victory and rising above a situation. Kantak-maam visualised the falcon as a symbol of rising above a situation. His firm belief that age and disability are no barriers to success reflected in this beautiful sculpture.

His enthusiasm and hard work, his focus and dedication to his art made him create beautiful paintings, in which his spiritualism was reflected.

Our Sabha bestowed the GSB Talent Recognition Award in 2018, for his excellence in the field of fine arts, to this great artiste.

An enthusiastic, energetic, spiritual person who succeeded against adversities is no more among us.

GSB Sabha, Mumbai prays for strength to the family to bear with this loss.





GSB Trekkers Group (GTG) Pune of Samyukta Konkani Sabha, Pune

by Gurudatta Wagh

Samyukta Konkani Sabha Pune (SKSP) is a 35-year-old non-profit organization representing the Konkani speaking Gaud Saraswat Brahmin (GSB) community in Pune. SKSP has been actively organising activities and events like bhajan sandhya, rugupakarma (januve parab), food festival, ugadi puja, trek, nature walk, and other social activities that foster unity and coming together amongst the Gaud Saraswat Brahmin (GSB) bandhavas in Pune.

With a wide variety of activities conducted by SKSP, the participation of the community members is steadily increasing with each passing year. These activities have also played a



big role in ensuring a good diversity amongst the participants with children, youngsters and seniors all coming forward enthusiastically to participate.

Social media (WhatsApp, Facebook etc.) has been very instrumental in enhancing the coverage of the activities. The steady increase in participants and attendees is a very promising sign of the GSB community in Pune



coming together. SKSP has active WhatsApp groups for reaching out to the community members with information related to such activities. There is even a Puneri Jolly WhatsApp Group to keep the community members in good humour.

GSB Trekkers Group (GTG) Pune

With physical activity a growing concern in urban areas, the idea of a GSB trek group was floated by Mr Sudhakar Kini in 2017 and put into action under the leadership of Mr Sudarshan Bhat. Recently, the group has been hosted on Facebook. Members of GTG range from six to sixty years.

Mr Sudarshan Bhat, the pillar of GTG, is a compulsive trekker, with close to twelve hundred treks to his credit. His selection of trekking sites has seen the popularity of the activity soaring higher and higher.

Sudarshan Bhat's immense experience of trekking routes has ensured complete safety of

all the members. There has not been a single incident of any accident involving the participants during the 57 treks which GTG has conducted. That speaks volumes of the meticulous planning and experience that Sudarshan brings to the table. His devotion to the activity and his unassuming nature are the true reasons for making this activity a runaway success.

Sudarshan Bhat says, "For me trekking is just not a hobby, but an obsession. It gives me a lot of pleasure. It keeps me physically and mentally fit. It rejuvenates my body and mind."

GTG Pune does not charge any fees for the trekking activities that it conducts. The treks are an occasion for all the members to come together and simply enjoy the outings. Individuals chip in with their own expenses and carpool to ensure that members without private vehicles can also participate and enjoy. The trek routine begins with an assembly at a predetermined spot at 6.30 am. Since the distance of the destinations varies each time,

members usually reach home between 1-4 pm. As per the requirement, members together have breakfast and lunch in local eateries.

The trekking expeditions come with additional benefits too. During the treks, members get to interact freely and discuss on a myriad of topics which include lifestyle, nature, recipes, happenings at native places such as the annual jatra (teru), religious functions, developmental activities and so on. These treks in a way facilitate intellectual interactions and forge close bonds amongst the participants.

Networking with community members, de-stressing and rejuvenating the mind and body, exploring new environs in and around Pune and a lot more benefits accrue from this fortnightly activity that has seen the completion of fifty-seven treks so far. These treks also help in identifying enthusiastic volunteers for conducting SKSP activities.

Community members wishing to participate can WhatsApp Amit Hegde 9545536369.

Gurudatta Wagh, born in Karwar, residing in Pune, is associated with SKSP activities. Working in a science research institute, his hobbies include reading, writing, and physical fitness.



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A RENDEZVOUS WITH JHOMOLHARI

by Lt Gen PG Kamath (Veteran)



Jhomolhari or Chomolhari is a Himalayan mountain peak of 7326 meters (24035 ft) height located on the Bhutan-Tibet Border. The peak symbolises female Protector Goddess of Bhutan and Tibet who was bound by an oath by Guru Padmasambhava to protect the land, Buddhist faith and people. Guru Padmasambhava was a saint from India of 8th Century who brought Tantric Buddhism to Bhutan, Tibet, Nepal and almost to the entire Himalayan Belt. He is revered as the Second Buddha.

It was around three decades back I was on an adventure patrol with my friends from Bhutan. It was a 13 days trek. Spring appeared like a throwback episode in history as the winter chill was already hanging in the air. We had walked for four days. While traversing the incredible mountain ranges one can imagine as to how the bed of Tethys Sea rose to form the mighty Himalayas when the Gondwana Plate collided with the Laurasian Mass. The Himalayas is still the youngest mountain and is still growing as the collision of the landmass is still in progress; so, say some crazy geologists. I won't dispute them as I do not have any alternative theory to sell.

As we continued with our trek; the monotony of the rocky surface was broken several times when the hidden bowels of the mountains revealed rich green velvet meadows surrounding pure, pristine and placid lakes. The turquoise blue lakes looked like sapphires embedded in green emerald. The icicle dripping from the rock overhangs glistened and transformed into tiny prisms

refracting sunrays into a myriad of miniature rainbows. I quietly feasted my eyes to the gorgeous glamour of nature. The beauty of the spectacle dazed and all I could respond is with bewildered silence; whether my mouth remained open; I cannot tell; anyway, who cares? I was lost in amazement; subsumed in nature's ecstasy.

I could imagine as to how Arjun was overwhelmed when Lord Krishna unfolded his 'Vishwaroop' to him. The Darshan of Jhomolhari was no less.

We also came across graziers with hundreds of yaks happily gorging on the luxuriant grass, moss and lichen. They had fattened themselves to survive the approaching long winter when there would not be any food for about four months. One of them would be pushed down a steep slope to die. The fattened carcass would be skinned and hung over the hearth. The black soot of the fire would form a protective layer and preserve it. Each day of the winter pieces of flesh from the carcass would be cut and eaten. As also during spring and autumn the milk from the yaks would be curdled into cheese. These cheesecakes

are very rich in nutrients and fat; absolutely essential to survive the winters, where temperature touches 20 degrees below zero degree Celsius.

Our adventure patrol started late as the autumn had almost reached the threshold of winter. The cold fury of the wind was unabating. Thick fog would not lift for several hours after daybreak. Blowing winds like an invisible giant magician would blow the fog away in a swish clearing the entire mountain top. However, the persistent fog rose to the occasion to recast its gloom the very next minute. It appears to be a duel between the wind and the fog; both evenly matched. I, of course, cheered the wind as it brought some sunlight which lazed across the mountains like a reluctant schoolboy who had not done his homework being goaded to go to school on a rainy day.

Each day we started out just before the break of dawn so as to utilise maximum daylight hours to walk as dusk would descend early with thick fog further pre-empting the darkness a couple of hours before. Just to tell you we were at heights between 16000 to 18000 feet and had left the treeline several thousand feet below. The oxygen was rare and I had carried a couple of oxygen cylinders in case any of us develops difficulty in breathing. Fortunately, the members of the patrol had the lungs of a mountain goat and I wished we were better endowed with brains than the Bovidae. Though doubts arose in me on myself; wondering what made me volunteer for the unending adventure?

I think it was on the seventh day of the trek we started moving at half-past four in the morning. A diffused dawn had already broken out and the wind was blowing; reminding me of Shakespeare; 'ingratitude unkindier than winter's wind'. Surely; I don't think he was ever on a

winter adventure in the Himalayas? How come he described the wind that I was experiencing; so explicitly? No doubt; he is called the 'Bard of Avon'. The wind was tearing into my face and was cold burning my skin, extinguishing the last of the residual lustre it presumably had, a few days before; when in a raging bout of lunacy, I opted to go out on the needless adventure?

We moved over a ridge, the wind appeared to be blowing in all directions and I was firming my feet on the ground from being swept off. Suddenly; just ahead of me; dazzling, effulgent and refulgent, mighty, spawning from earth to heaven, resplendent and overpowering; she stood. It appeared that the Sun had risen on that day only to blaze its rays on Jomolhari and display its divine form to the mankind; probably representing my patrol. It appeared that I was seeing the mighty Peak in a giant photo frame with thick fog resembling the frame and the sparkling, snow covered, bejewelled peak mesmerising me with its enormity and incandescence in the centre. It also showed me as to how puny and insignificant is a human before a boundless, infinite and mysterious nature. Though Jhomolhari was good 15 Kms away from me, it appeared all I have to do is extend my hands to touch it; it looked so near and massive that I was struck with awe and fear as if it would just suck me in into its folds and blaze me into nothingness. I could imagine as to how Arjun was overwhelmed when Lord Krishna unfolded his 'Vishwaroop' to him. The Darshan of Jhomolhari was no less. I was chastened and humbled. It was a lifetime experience and marvelled at myself for getting the opportunity to see the spectacle that is blessed to only a handful of humans.

After several days of the trek, we returned to our base from where we would be picked up in a vehicle to Thimphu. To this day if I have to

recount a scene that showed me the presence of God on earth; the imposing Jhomolhari illuminates my mind, body and spirit and brings me down to the reality that as a human; I am irrelevant, pointless and trivial. Let us preserve

this glorious planet so that our future generations savour its beauty in all its grandeur. Jhomolhari stands in her unsurpassed splendour and magnificence waiting to enthrall and bless future generations.

Lt Gen PG Kamath, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, SM, Commandant, Army War College retired from service after a long and illustrious career spanning four decades in the Indian Army. He has served on all the frontiers of the country.

A highly decorated officer, the General has been the proud recipient of the Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM), Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM), Yudh Seva Medal (YSM) and the Sena Medal (SM).

He has served in the Madras Regiment (Infantry) and was the 'Colonel of the Madras Regiment' for over five years.

He also the Defence Adviser to the High Commission of India in Malaysia and Brunei.

After retirement he also served as the Special Rapporteur of National Human Rights Commission in charge of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana for two years.

He is a prolific writer and his articles can be seen on his Linked In. A plethora of his published articles are on the net. He gives talks on Motivation, Leadership, Ethics, and on International Issues.

He is also a Motivational Speaker.

IN FOND REMEMBRANCE



Srinivas Ramchandra Mallya
(Nov 23, 1923 - June 3, 1987)

Tariff Commission, Mumbai;
Finance Ministry, New Delhi;
IPCL, Baroda;
ICICI, Mumbai



Sushila Srinivas Mallya
(Nov 19, 1927 - July 31, 2002)

GSB Social Worker,
Writer of dramas, fiction
Bhajan singer
Homemaker

From,

CHILDREN - Veena Mohandas Shenoy Adige, Yeshwant Srinivas Mallya and Maya Satish Achar

GRANDCHILDREN - Priya, Deepak, Ashwin, Sandeep, Anjali, Aarti and their families.

Monsoon Cravings



by Smt. Anuradha Prabhu
anuradhaprabhu49@gmail.com

When monsoon arrives the craving to eat some spicy dishes increases, in amchigele we say “ekteeki randayi khavka mhonu dista”. Hence posting a few dishes to satisfy your spicy cravings.

Vodiye Ambat

Vodies made of udad dal and ashgourd(kuvale) are fried and cooked into an ambat which goes well with rice.

Ingredients

- 10-12 vodies
- 1 cup grated coconut
- 4-5 dry red chillies
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 marble sized ball of tamarind
- Oil for frying
- Salt to taste



Method

- 1) Grind together coconut, red chillies and tamarind to a smooth paste.
- 2) Transfer to a pan, add water to get a gravy consistency, add salt and bring to a boil. Keep aside.
- 3) Heat oil and fry the vodies till crisp. Add the vodies to the ambat gravy.
- 4) Heat 2 tablespoons of the used oil, add onions and fry till brown and pour over the ambat. Cover and keep aside.
- 5) Serve rice topped with ambat.

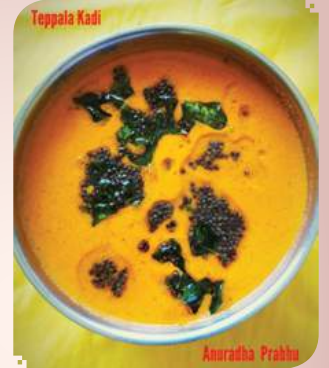
P.S:- While adding salt check, as the vodies also contain salt.
Kuvalevodies are available in mangalore stores and can be stored to be used in monsoons

Teppala Kadi

Teppal is used in making bendi or in khatkhate. An excellent spice that aids in digestion.

Ingredients

- 1 cup grated coconut
- 4-5 dry red chillies
- 1 marble sized tamarind
- 8-10 teppal
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- A few curry leaves
- 1tbsp oil
- Salt to taste



Method

- 1) Soak teppal in 1/4 cup of water. Grind together coconut, red chillies, tamarind to a smooth paste.
- 2) Add teppal along with the water to the paste and grind for a few seconds.
- 3) Transfer the paste to a vessel, add water to get a kadi consistency, add salt and bring to a boil.
- 4) Heat oil in a karahi, add mustard seeds and as they splutter add curry leaves, stir and pour over the kadi.
- 5) Serve hot with steaming rice.

Jeevkadgi soyi bhajili ghashi

Breadfruit or jeevkadgi is a favorite among amchigeles. So posting a dish to satisfy ones jeevkadgi cravings. I have seasoned it with mustard and curry leaves. An alternative seasoning of fried onions can be also used..

Ingredients

- 1cup breadfruit medium pieces
- 1 cup grated coconut
- 6-8 dry red chillies
- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- 1/4 tsp fenugreek seeds
- 1/2 tpsasafoetida powder
- 1 tsp raw rice
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- Lemon sized ball of tamarind
- Salt to taste
- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- A few curry leaves

Method

- 1) Cook the breadfruit in a little water till tender, it should not become too mushy.
- 2) Heat 1 tbsp oil in a karahi, add the coriander seeds, fenugreek seeds, asafoetida, red chillies, turmeric powder, stir for a few mins, add the grated coconut.
- 3) Saute the mixture on a slow flame, add the raw rice and saute till the mixture turns brown. Cool.
- 4) Grind the mixture alongwith tamarind to a semi coarse paste, add water as required.
- 5) Remove the paste and add to the cooked breadfruit alongwith salt to taste, add water to get a thick gravy.
- 6) Bring the gravy to a boil. Heat oil in a karahi, add mustard seeds, once they splutter add curry leaves and pour over the ghashi. Cover.
- 7) Serve hot with rice and dalitoi.



NEWS FROM SISTER ORGANISATIONS

Annadaana by GSB Samaj, Dombivli

If everything around you seems dark, look again.
You may be the light- Rumi

This is exactly what the youth of Dombivli Kalyan GSB have accomplished! In these dark times of Corona, when everything around looks gloomy and sad, our team has managed to give smiles to more than 10,000 people.



Volunteers working whole heartedly

The lockdown was announced and no one knew how long it will extend. But one thing was certain. It was going to affect many, many lives. Many families belonging to the lower income groups would be affected due to lack of earning.

It began with just an idea on Gudi Padwa. During discussions, the team felt that needy GSB families can be helped to some extent by providing them essential groceries. More and more people came on-board to contribute and in about 7 days, we managed to raise around

One lakh rupees. We decided to deliver essential grocery kit to needy GSB families in Kalyan and Dombivli. With the help of our dedicated team, grocery kits were provided in April, May and June. As on 6th June, we have crossed delivery of 375 grocery kits to various needy families.

The smiles and blessings that we get in return are priceless!!

In the meanwhile, during one of the meetings, someone happened to ask us whether we give cooked food. And this is when the team felt that help can be extended to many more people by providing them cooked food. This was also the time when migrant labourers had started their journey back home. We felt the need to start a Community Kitchen to help even more people.

On 14th May, Annadana Seva was initiated at GSB School. With the help of our donors and our passionate team, we decided to provide packed meals for lunch and dinner during weekends and dinner during weekdays.

We are extremely proud and happy to have served 10,000 packets of meals as on 6th June.

Our team has taken every precaution of social distancing and wearing of masks, gloves and sanitizing hands during packing and distribution of food. The school area where the packing takes place is cleaned and sanitized by a third party. We also recently had thermal screening for all our volunteers who come everyday for the Seva.



We intend to continue this initiative and hope to serve as many needy people as possible during this lockdown period.

The smiles and blessings that we get in return are priceless!! A huge shout-out to our donors and our entire army of volunteers who have helped us achieve this. **Annadaana Shreshtadaana**

CHATURMAS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chaturmas Vrita 2020 of

- His Holiness Shrimad Samyamindra Thirtha Swamiji, Mathadipati of Shri Kashi Math Samsthan, Varanasi, will be held at Konchady Shri Kashi Math, Mangaluru, from Ashada Vadya Panchami, Friday 10th July, 2020.

All Samajbandhavas have been cordially requested to support and participate in the various rituals, subject to various regulations and restrictions.

- His Holiness Vidyadhiraj Teertha Shripad Vader Swamiji, Mathadipati of Shri Samsthan Gokarna Partagali Math, with Pattashishya Vidyadheesh Teertha Swamiji will be held at Central Math of Shree Samsthan Gokarna Partagali Jeevotama Math, Goa, commencing from AshadaVadya Panchami, Friday 10th July, 2020 and concluding on Bhadrapada Poornima, Wednesday, 2nd September, 2020.

H.H.Swamiji have conveyed message to the Samaj, wishing them not to take any risk and trouble of travelling and partake in the Hari Guru Seva during this crucial situation.

- His Holiness Shrimad Shivanand Saraswati Swamiji, Mathadipati of Shree Saunsthan Gaudapadacharya Kaivalya Math, will be held at Shree Aadishakti Mahalakshmi Devasthan, Karkala commencing on 1st July, 2020 and concluding on 2nd September, 2020.

In view of Covid-19, devotees are requested to strictly follow Govt Regulations in respect of wearing Mask & maintaining Social Distancing norms.

The Abhijeet Kini Section



Instagram: @abhikini and @kinistudios

Twitter: @abhikini

Facebook: Abhijeet Kini Studios

www.abhijeetkini.com

www.kinistudios.com

Abhijeet Kini, founder of Abhijeet Kini Studios, is a Mumbai based illustrator, animator and independent comics publisher, known for his comic series “Angry Maushi” and “Fanboys”. Winner of the Best Illustrator Awards Bronze (2018 and 2019) at the Comic Con India awards, Abhijeet has been a regular participant in all the Indian comic cons and has also participated in international editions. Along with cartooning for magazines and newspapers like Timesgroup, Hindustan

Times, Timeout Mumbai, Timeout Delhi, National Geographic Traveller, Verve and the like for over 2 decades, he is a regular illustrator with Tinkle comics since 2004. Along with art, he also runs a merchandise line along with his wife, featuring his artworks. Abhijeet has been conducting workshops across all age groups on ideation, creative writing and drawing and comic making and is also a visiting faculty at Whistling Woods International and Usha Pravin Gandhi College.



“I have been taking a slightly lighter look at Covid19, since everything has become gloomy and negative. So this one looks at how mothers are reacting now vs what it was before.” says Abhijeet.



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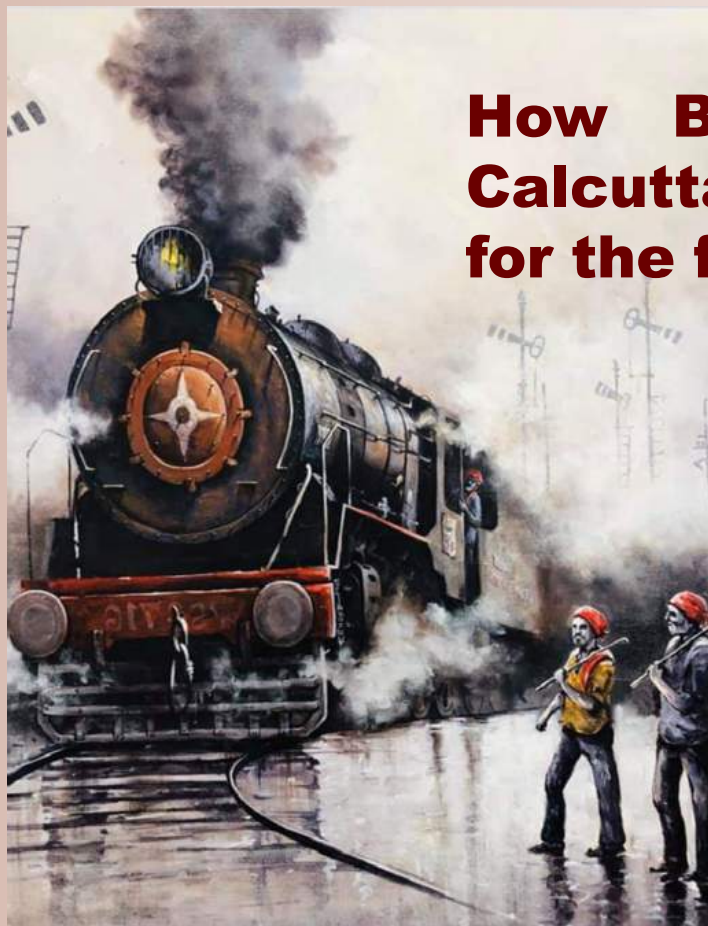
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How Bombay beat Calcutta in the race for the first Rail line?

by Subhas Rao Mallya



The first war of independence in 1857 shook the very foundations of the dream of the British Empire. Lord Dalhousie had seen it coming long before. He had advocated the need for the railways to the Board of Directors of East India Company in his correspondence to them from late 1840's. It became evident that forces loyal to the company would have to be moved quickly across the land to flash points as not all the rulers were with the mutineers. The other question that arose was to provide shelter to the troops, arms and the white populace at these points, for which the solution was the railways for movement. It was decided that the railway terminus be built akin to a castle strong enough to provide some safety during an attack.

The single most important person to get railways to India was none other but Lord Dalhousie the architect of the infamous 'Doctrine of Lapse'. Dalhousie penned extensive documents,

written personally in long hand running into 216 pages and penned with a vision for future railway planners. He tried to learn from the errors of the British government which had haphazardly built a railway network back home. He did not attempt to disguise the fact that there were good commercial reasons for the establishment of railways, which would open up coalfields and other sources of minerals for exploitation. One of the objectives would be to reduce the travel time saved if there were a line linking Calcutta with Bombay, obviating the need for the long sea voyage through the Palk Strait between Ceylon and India. The railways was a blatant Imperial project, the benefits to the natives were only incidental but nevertheless substantial.

By this time, the East India Company had lost its mandate to rule India and although railways would add to their profits, they would not be in charge. This fact caused lot of heart burn amongst the Board of Directors. Construction of railways was risky business and direct subsidy from the Victorian government was out of question. The only way out was to secure private investment with a guaranteed return of 5%.

Several objections were raised from the beginning and continued for a long time. One was spanning of large rivers which would swell during the torrential rains causing inundation of rail tracks, sometimes even washing away large sections. Second was a concept called the

'Vertical Sun', the British who themselves used to escape to hill stations during summer, were unsure of the effects of the Indian summer on the tracks and engines. Third was very cultural specific, the question was would the natives who did not mingle with people from other caste, travel together in the same compartment ? From the onset the Railway companies were clear

One unusual incident that put Bombay Thana route in the annals of history was thanks to a great classic error of early railway history.

that it would not make economic sense to have separate compartments to accommodate the vagaries of the caste system.

On the other hand, Indian merchants especially the one dealing in cotton, the likes of Sir Jamshedji Jeejeeboy and Nana Sunker Shet formed the Indian Railway Club and were using their good offices to influence the Raj to hasten the process of laying of the first railway lines.

Two experimental lines were planned. One of them were a rather random choice: a short 21-mile-long suburban line stretching from the centre of Bombay to Thana, and the other commercially planned route a 100-mile-long main line from Howrah, the other side of the Hooghly River from Calcutta (since the crossing the river was initially deemed to be too difficult and expensive). It was intended to reach Burdwan in order to transport the coal from the Raniganj coalfields through to the port of Calcutta.

A debate raged on what would power the first railways. Would it be horses or steam engine?

Clark, an engineer did some back of the hand calculations. It would require 10 steam engines or 334 horses in active service at any time to run the Bombay Thana railway. Simple economics dictated the use of steam engines as much as speed and a steam engine was shipped from Britain for running test runs.

Two companies, the Great Indian Peninsula Railway (GIPR) for the Bombay leg and East Indian Railway (EIR) for the Calcutta leg was formed. GIPR, keen to get started, appointed James Berkley as 'Chief Resident Engineer', and despatched him to Bombay. These trials started in February 1852. The first locomotive was named after the then Governor of Bombay, Lord Falkland.

Faviell & Fowler, a British engineering contracting company, started the work on the Bombay leg with nearly 10,000 workers. And, inevitably, the cultural differences that were to dog much railway construction on the subcontinent appeared almost immediately. The workers divided themselves into multifarious divisions and sub-divisions of castes, whose members refused to work with those of another caste and at times even tried to prevent others from working at all. Faviell found himself on a wrong footing when he drank water from a pot meant for workmen (he thought it as a team building exercise), to find that no one would drink water from the pot anymore. He realised he was a one amongst the list of pariahs.

As the trials began rumours started flying in the air. The locomotive was referred to as 'Lokhandi Rakshash' which translates to 'Iron Demon'. The most popular rumour was that the engine run on powers derived from black magic. As the locals could not comprehend how the engine could move without any obvious source of power. Children and young couples

had to be buried under the tracks to power these engines, and British sepoys were tasked with the job of kidnapping, killing and burying them. The rumour was so strong that Bombay would have a deserted look after dark.

Amongst many objections were the warnings that the travellers life span would dramatically reduce 'If one reached so much faster, one was bound to speed up life and age'.

The EIR won the right to build the second experimental lines, a 121-mile track in West Bengal. Transportation of coal from Raniganj coalfields to the port would provide much of the income for the railway and bring profits to the company from day one. As with the GIPR investors were guaranteed the generous 5 per cent rate of return, which would be paid by the Government of India if revenues were insufficient. Hence, all eyes were on EIR to start operations.

Various difficulties beset the EIR, leading to delays. The rail line had to pass through Chandernagar which was a French territory. The British had battled the French right from 1756 for control of that region with little success, now it was time for tedious negotiations.

One unusual incident that put Bombay Thana route in the annals of history was thanks to the great classic errors of early railway history. As one of the funny quirks in railway history, a clerk responsible for shipping the first locomotive to EIR, intended to haul their first train shipped it to Australia instead of Calcutta.

Bombay was second time lucky when the ship carrying the first passenger coaches suffered an even worse fate as the ship carrying them from England sank. Their replacements were hurriedly built in India, the first produced on the subcontinent. If it had not been for the twin

mishaps suffered by the rolling stock intended for Howrah, the inaugural service would have been on the EIR, which was, after all, a far more important line than the Bombay suburban run by the GIPR.

Surprisingly compared to today's track record (Pun intended) the line was completed on time and under budget. The inaugural run was held at the afternoon of 16 April 1853. Around 400 guests were invited, which included members of royalty, Zamindars and rich local merchants. These guests were treated to a fastest ride of their lifetime till then, taking them from Bori Bunder to Thana. The train was hauled by three locomotives called (according to legend but not officially recorded) Sindh, Sultan and Sahib, all from the Vulcan Foundry in Newton-le-Willows near Liverpool. The passengers were seated in fourteen fairly primitive carriages that had just four wheels each assembled on primitive shock absorbers on manually aligned tracks making for a bumpy ride. All the coaches and engines were shipped from Britain. The engines were manufactured at a firm in which Robert Stephenson was a partner, the person who had nominated James Berkley as 'Chief Resident Engineer' of the GIPR. Nepotism was not unknown in the Raj.

There was, though, a notable VIP absentee. Lord Falkland, the governor of Bombay, who did not turn up to the ceremony, preferring to remain in the cool of the local hill station, despite repeated requests from the Board of directors of GIPR and representation of merchants led by Sir Jeejeeboy and Bankers led by Nana Sunker Shet. One of the reasons may be the fact that the inaugural run of train was not powered by the locomotive named Lord Falkland, which had carried out a number of successful trial runs. He immortalised his name in Indian Railway history by remaining absent on

that historical day. His absence now immortalised as a phrase in Marathi used to describe someone acting pricey.

“Swatala Lord Falkland samajtho kay”

Along the track, the natives *salaamed* the omnipotent steam engines as it passed. A few saw the engine as a Divine being and left offerings of food (Prasad) and money on the footplate, and offered flowers to the engines and the tracks.

By the end of the year passengers flocked to the line, with more than 4,000 per day travelling on the railway to Thana and in the subsequent year right up to Kalyan. The luxury of every passenger being accommodated on a seat disappeared in a few days and the GIPR officials learned that the natives were ready to pay the same fare travel standing throughout the journey. The fares had been relatively subsidised as the company knew that Government was contractually bound to

reimburse the company with 5% guaranteed return. The matter of subsidising passenger fares goes back to this time. The tickets ranged from 4 rupees 4 annas for first class (not cheap in those days) to 8 annas 6 pies for third class for the thirty-three-mile journey from Bori Bunder to Kalyan

The response received was so overwhelming that the fact that the Bombay - Thana leg was an experimental line was soon forgotten and the plans were drawn to extend the line to Poona and beyond was taken up. The taming of Bhor Ghats itself is another great story in annals of Indian Rail history. The benevolent ‘**Lokhandi Rakshas**’ was now unstoppable and to this day keeps spreading it’s ‘**Samrajya**’.

Inputs from :

PRO Central Railway, Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus

IRFCA Indian Railway fan club association

Railways and the Raj by Christian Wolmer

Subhas is a Chemical and Electronic engineer working in a large Public Sector Undertaking. He is a history enthusiast and also a trainer, guest lecturer and visiting faculty. He is a Managing Committee member of G.S.B.Sabha, Mumbai.

THE PRINTING PRESS

The sofa is placed strategically next to the window, allowing for better surveillance over the people entering and exiting the building. It is a sunny evening, with buzzing streets and crowded shops. The rays of the sun are inching back towards the window as if they are retreating their steps to go back home. Sipping from a cup, my Grandfather slowly tells me about the benefits of adding tiny slivers of ginger, into the vessel while making tea. Tea, warm and sultry afternoons, and recalling old memories are the only things, which make

By Aditi Vivek Kamath

the times I spend with my Grandfather, more unforgettable. He slowly strays away from his favorite brew to telling me (for the umpteenth time) how strong a bond, Mother Nature shares with our body. She has the power to cure it and bring it back to its original demeanour without leaving a trace. Somewhere in the middle of



a discussion over the idea of manufacturing 'Haldi' milk cough syrup, he fondly recalls his childhood. And like any other member of the previous generation, tells me, how maintaining healthy eating and exercise habits in one's youth, keeps a person fit for life and frees him from the drudgery of ailments. These are issues that are showing in people of my age as well. After all, cholesterol and diabetes are some of our worries, along with grades and books. Thanks to him, I stay away from medicines as much as I can, often opting for home remedies to get better. Well, he does have a point. And as far as Grandpa is concerned, for someone of his generation, he is fit and scoffs upon the idea of having to take blood pressure pills. I am amazed at how he changes the topic that soon. These are stories that I've heard before, stories that my Grandpa has told me before. Still, surprisingly, I never seem to tire of listening to them again. I have grown up listening to them, and I would never want to forget these. Being part of my family has always made me feel proud. We never back down quickly in the face of adversity, and I have always drawn inspiration from their resilience. Have you heard of some people, whose words take you to a different world through their experiences? That's how I feel when I hear Grandpa talk. I can visualize him as a young boy, running in the fields, with his siblings chasing him. I can see the spark in his eyes when he talks about annoying teachers. They (upon further explanation) were his uncles and granduncles, from the extended family on the other side of the village.

I can see the sadness in his eyes, which dreamt of a better life and a chance at a better education. To alleviate his mood, I ask him about

the legendary 'Maruti Press' that our family had once owned in their better days. Instantly he smiles and tells me how his father would take him along to check the quality of the paper and the printing machines that came from Germany. A fair chunk of the family worked in the press, often as an after school chore. My family had been the 'crème de la crème' of the whole village. But, as Grandpa likes to say 'overpopulation did us no good, neither did wrong choices'. The increasing number of mouths to feed and lousy business choices, led to the ultimate death of the printing press, leaving the family in poverty. As the eldest, my Grandpa had to discard all dreams of further education, and work immediately after finishing his degree; just to support the family.

*She has the power to cure
it and bring it back to its
original demeanour without
leaving a trace.*

Nonetheless, he says that it was worth the struggle, considering that my father and aunt have received the proper education and are doing well for themselves. He's lived a long and simple life, and probably doesn't hold a grudge or many regrets. I just keep staring at him throughout his monologue, visualizing life as it would have been in those days. I ask him one final question; "do you want to start the Maruti Printing Press again, Ajja?" He broadly smiles and asks me to go do my homework, while humming an old Kishore Kumar song. My cup lies abandoned and empty as the sun finally sets on my city.

Aditi Vivek Kamath is studying 3rd year B.Tech Aeronautical Engineering at MIT Manipal. She is an avid aviation enthusiast and has tremendous flair to read and write English content. During this lockdown she has taken up writing very seriously and is the content writer for Corona Warriors

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The Ocean's Blues

The ocean was feeling sick. It clutched its belly as it roiled and grumbled. Finally, with a huge heave, the ocean came up to the shore and vomited up the stuff that was making it feel so sick. What a relief!

On the shore, pieces of half digested Ganesha murthis mixed with the crap that nearby slum dwellers had deposited that morning. It shamed the ocean to see what it had been forced to do, but the discomfort in its belly had left it with no choice. It just couldn't have borne the pain any longer.

And as the ocean tried to digest what remained in its belly, it ruminated on what had brought it to this sorry state of tummy sickness

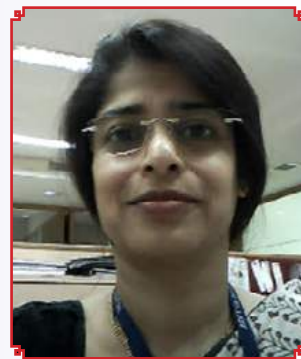
Once upon a time, it remembered the beach used to be a quiet place, where people came to enjoy the evening breeze and brought their children to play. Sure, nearby slum dwellers used the rocky outcrops on the beach to do their morning business back then also. But the ocean could handle that – after all, it believed in the maxim of “dust to dust”. Organic matter did not give it a tummy ache – in fact, it fed some of the marine life it housed. Hearing activists scream at people doing their morning business on the shore, and then having those same activists come and drop chunks of Plaster of Paris in its tummy made the ocean snarl at the hypocrites. How it wished it could speak in the human tongue and tell them so.

As the ocean continued to spasm gently with the indigestible mass in its tummy, it wondered when this practice of dropping huge big chunks of Plaster of Paris in it had started.

After much thought, it remembered. It was somewhere around the time when people used to shout slogans against the British Rule. It remembered hearing the name of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who used something called Sarvajanik worship in the bylanes of Pune to break down ancient caste barriers and unite people to fight for independence from the British. Clever Tilak – he had realized way back then that this was a work around the then prevalent British ban on public gatherings. And so, the practice had caught the imagination of a nation (or at least, Maharashtra) and the annual event had taken on a life of its own.

The ocean thought it didn't mind at first. After all, it understood the need for an “India for Indians” and was willing to do its bit for the cause. But why was it continuing now? As it understood it, it was now many years since the British had left the country. And why was it that over the years, the indigestible material deposited in its belly had also grown? And why were the celebrations so noisy, continuing till the wee hours of the morning that it added to the unease of the ocean.

The ocean forced its aching head to figure out this puzzle. The sickness was making it irritable and unable to focus its thoughts, but it did want to get to the bottom of this mystery. It shook its head to clear it and the people on the shore shouted to see the spray flying up from what they perceived as an extra huge wave.



by Ajita Kini

The ocean wanted answers to its questions. It noticed a father and his school going boy of 6 or 7 years walking on the beach. The boy was holding his Dads hand and talking very agitatedly. The ocean decided to offer them the calming influence of a surging and ebbing tide at their feet. It gradually crept towards the two. It could not help but listen to their conversation.

The Sun was rising now and with it, the ocean got hope that in some years from now, people would switch completely to eco-friendly celebrations.

The boy was telling his father “Dad, we were here yesterday night watching all the pomp and splendor of the immersions. Our building Ganapati and the Ganapatis of all the neighboring buildings had been got for immersion. We had such a great time. Now, the beach looks so desolate with the half broken Ganesha idols strewn all over.” The Dad said “Sunil, I knew you would be disturbed coming here, so I was telling you that we will go to some other place for walking today. But, you insisted and here we are.”

The ocean was already liking Sunil and was interested in this conversation. Sunil said “But, why does it happen like this, Father?” To which his Dad replied “Plaster of Paris (POP) is not water soluble. However, it is light weight and easy to mould in various shapes and bigger sizes, which is why a large proportion of the idols are made using POP.”

Sunil said “Dad, I remember our teacher telling us about eco-friendly Ganeshas yesterday.” His Dad said “Oh, that sounds interesting. What did she tell you?” Sunil said “She gave us various practical tips, especially for home and society Ganeshas. She told us not to use Plaster of Paris, plastic and thermocol but opt for biodegradable materials like clay and paper Mache instead. She said that idols should not be more than 5 feet in size, it is our emotions that should be big and not the idol. She told us to use Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFLS) as they save electricity and money. She said that we should use use biodegradable colours such as turmeric, henna, rice powder, coloured dal and gulaal to make rangoli. We should avoid playing loud music which can cause disturbance in our society but instead try playing instruments that are soft and soothing. We should skip plastic and serve food in natural plates such as banana leaves instead.”

The ocean felt good listening to Sunil. His dad said “Yes, what your teacher said makes sense and is very important. The Government had, in fact, announced a ban on POP Ganesha idols, but due to the COVID pandemic, the ban has been stayed for a year now. Sooner or later, these measures will be put in place.” Hearing this, Sunil was very happy and gave a shout of joy. Father and son walked back hand in hand.

While its belly was more at ease now, the ocean reflected on all that it had heard. The Sun was rising now and with it, the ocean got hope that in some years from now, people would switch completely to eco-friendly celebrations.

Ajita Kini is a Mumbai based thinker and a dreamer.



My New found love affair with.....

by ApoorvaPai

It is easier said than done, about a comeback, after a cancer treatment, which involves firstshocking diagnosis, surgery, chemotherapies, radiation, medication and so on, and on, and on.....

Yes, life was going on very busy. There was no scope for anything else between Jet lags, travelling, packing, unpacking, cooking, meeting different people in different countries etc.

In the middle of all this, a shocking news of early stage of breast cancer strikes, disturbing totally everyone connected. Life comes to a halt. Treatment starts with house arrest for 7 to 8 months and a toll on physical and psychological health. It was a very tough and difficult phase of my life. The journey was very smooth and easy with moral and emotional support of dear husband and family and friends. Everyone around me took great care to make me comfortable in all possible ways.

Ok, now when once the treatment got over, what next? Actual come-back starts. It is in terms of getting back all my original and earlier traits. For example blood counts, routine activities like cooking, going out for daily grocery, travelling outside country, fitness schedule, hobbies, psychological state of mind and last but not the least is getting back my hair.

It is been 4 months from completing my breast cancer treatment. Along with everyone there was this constant force/support with me, which was giving me assurance, company and confidence whenever I needed.

*I am going to have
live-in-relationship with
this new friend for rest of
my life without the
objection of my
husband I suppose.*

I realised slowly that I was very lucky to have that support. Ok, who is that support? You must have already guessed by now!

When first the diagnosis hit me, I was totally shattered. All questions like how can it be me, why now, etc were troubling me. When I cooled down and listened to my inner voice, it told me to accept it totally and go with the treatment as early as possible. It gave me assurance that this phase too shall pass. Timely told me to go for surgery first and then chemo. From second chemo onwards I started getting less sleep. Used to be awake at midnight. It guided me to readbooks and to do meditation/

japaa etc. It also told me to go for counseling which really helped later on. I was guided to be brave and face one day at a time.

After 3rd chemo, I was feeling so irritated that at one point I decided not to continue with further chemo. Enough is enough,, that time it told me,, see so many people in this world are facing this problem and undergoing chemo. Now when it is your turn you cannot deny so you have to face the challenge and be brave. Let us see what happens. There is medical field to take care of every problem, have faith in the system of treatment and have faith in doctors. During all the side effects it timely guided me to contact doctors, chemo support friends, sisters of the day care, family members etc. etc. whenever required.

During 5th chemo when body ache was unbearable it consoled me saying that, take it as another labour pain, after 2-3 days it will reduce, go for massages. Sometimes when I was feeling very tired it used to tell me to try with one or the other solution till the problem is fixed.

While cooking I was taking rest between every 15 minutes. After completing every work it was encouraging me by telling, well done, good job, you can do it. When I had to go for shaving of head, it told me don't worry about physical looks, hair will come later on but what if it is not thick like before? For that I was told "something is better than nothing" also you are looking good without hair also. Mental health and feeling good are more important than looks.

Thank you dear, I really value your advice.

I am slowly realising that I am having an affair with this dear friend of mine, "my inner voice" I am in love with myself. Thank you cancer for making me realise this fact. Even after being married for 30 years I have fallen in love once again. I am going to have a live-in-relationship with this new friend for rest of my life without the objection of my husband I suppose.

Thank you.

Apoorva Pai, a banker who worked for one of India's largest PSU bank, gave up a lucrative career to pursue her hobby in Gemology and design of Jewelry. She now spends her time in Mumbai and also in The Hague to be with her husband Vinayak who is the President of a MNC.

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STORYTELLING AND A STORY

by **Bunty Ashok Pai**



This story began 12 years back when my sister Madhuri, who was in Singapore, called me to ask for ideas about how to help her son Dhruv settle down in a new school and make friends. He loved reading and so I thought it would be great to use this to bring together kids who shared his interest in books. “How about a book club ?” I suggested. This instantly appealed to her and she was filled with great joy at the prospect of bringing the joy of reading to a group of enthusiastic kids. Was it only for the kids that she took this up or was she also trying to relive her wondrous childhood filled with books and characters who transported her to magical lands of fairies and animals that could talk ? I have yet to ask her this question !

Soon the book club began and news spread fast in the neighbourhood when enthusiastic readers waited for the weekly book club discussions while reluctant readers, forced by their mothers, were no longer reluctant after a few sessions. After all, there was an exciting book waiting to be read, to be discussed with their friends and equally amazing activities based on the book. As a treat, Madhuri aunty even ensured a delicious food item(samosa or hot chocolate, depending on what the character in the story liked!) was eaten while discussing the story with friends. She made sure each child got a copy of the same book in advance and read the book before coming for the session.

The family moved to London. Dhruv grew up and began to read stories on his own. But now he had a naughty little brother Madhav, who was equally in love with books. And you guessed it right !! Madhuri began her book clubs in London

to the delight of her new neighbours and friends. Meanwhile, her cousin Nayana who stayed in Goregaon in Mumbai, encountered the same situation of keeping her son Prakalp occupied productively. She got into book clubs too and

Who does not know about the smart devices addiction and who does not want their child to be transported into the world of books ?

was a big hit with the children and of course, the mothers of the children ! Who does not know about the smart devices addiction and who does not want their child to be transported into the world of books ? One thing led to another and Nayana approached Jogeshwari Education Trust, a school in Jogeshwari. Kiran Kamath, the trustee of the school with his progressive thinking, welcomed the idea of a book club in his school. Within a few weeks, Nayana-didi was a hot favourite with the students 🌟 As I write this article, Nayana has run the book club for grades 3 and 4 for three years in the school. And the school has requested her to continue it for the fourth year, in an online format due to the COVID pandemic. While there is a bit of compromise here since the books will be in an online format, she wants to ensure the connection with the dear children

continues and they get to read rich children's literature while they stay at home.

This is the story so far. The latest turn of events is as follows – All three sisters (Madhuri, Nayana and the author of this story Bunty), grateful for the opportunity of being able to bring the joy of reading into the lives of children, felt very strongly that this needs to spread to as many children as possible. The passion was so strong that Madhuri decided to take a career break from her senior role as Director of Diversity and Inclusion at Unilever, in London, and focus on her lifelong love of books and how she could

ensure a huge number of children benefit from it. Nayana and Bunty were just waiting for this opportunity to form a team, which they did ! So was born Turning Pages, with a vision to bring the joy of reading into children's lives with the hope of making them not just good readers, but imbibe lifelong values which exemplify a good human being. Turning Pages is currently available for schools in Maharashtra and an online version is available for schools anywhere and for small groups of children too. The website is still under construction, but if you have any questions, please reach out to Bunty Pai at buntypai4167@gmail.com

Bunty Ashok Pai is a Punekar who has been working in the non-profit sector in education. She strongly believes that society and governments should ensure that every single child has access to a good education -- of the mind, body and soul. She loves good books and eating, especially Amchi food :)



By Madhuri Pai

Dhruv, in the course of preparing relevant work experience for his University application in a course related to Politics and IR, had done a few days of internship at the Royal Commonwealth Society. Also, he had been attending something called “Kensington Salon” which is basically a gathering of interesting people in the house of a young man (Dhruv's friend). It is held every 2 months and interesting people just come, drink wine, chat and then go to a nearby restaurant where the conversation continues over dinner.

“Kensington” because that's where the home is that hosts these gatherings and “salon” in the tradition of the French salons where intellectuals of those times met.

During the course of these salons, Dhruv got to know a guy called David Banks rather well. David is the Head of PR for the Commonwealth society and would keep Dhruv informed of events that he thought might be of interest to him.

The Mark Tully talk, then, was one of these events. It happened at the beautiful Royal Overseas League, a club, and in a room called the “Hall of India and Pakistan”.

I have really been a big admirer of Tully from the day I read “No Full stops in India”. His deep insights and love for his adopted country shone through brightly in his writing and earned him immediately a place on my list of heroes. I also read “The heart of India” by him and tried to find other books - most of these were sadly out of print.

When we reached, there were a number of people already there sipping wine and gathered in small groups. My eyes were looking only for one person and I knew his strong jaw line and high cheekbones would be easy to spot. I didn't see him at first. But within 5 minutes, we spotted him at the front of the hall with another person. I was a bit surprised by how much he seemed to have aged. He is 83 but looks older. He now has a hearing aid and a voice that is a bit weaker than I would have expected. But his eyes twinkle and he has no problems with comprehending or responding to questions.

I walked straight up to him and told him I was a huge admirer of his work and that I was deeply honoured to meet him. Dhruv told him that he was going to start at Trinity Hall (which is also where Mark studied). He looked happy to hear his college name and asked Dhruv what course he was going to study. We then had to leave him because he was getting ready for his talk, the topic was “Policies, Politics and People - the role of media in India”. He gave an incisive 25 minute talk and addressed the big issues facing press freedom in India today. He reminisced about the past and spoke with great fondness about cartoonists Lakshman and Sudhir Dhar (who he said was his personal favourite!). And he praised Vinod Dua's talk series “Jan Man Gankibaat”. he said it was a

complete delight and said it was the sign of the health of press freedom in India that when he met Vinod Dua recently and asked him if he had received threats for his shows critical of Modi - Dua actually said he had had no threats and was broadcasting as he pleased.

After the talk, there was some interesting audience Q&A. And then, after the talk formally finished, I said to Dhruv “should we ask Mark why the BBC has an anti India bias”. And he said “yes, this is your opportunity”. I wasn't so sure and it almost seemed like an excuse to seek him back again. But we went to him anyway. He was seated and chatting with someone else. I got him to autograph my copy of “No Full Stops” and while we were looking for a break in the conversation to start chatting to him ourselves - David Banks came to us and said “would you like to join us for dinner with Mark? Just 10 of us and I will pay for you”. WHAT?!!! I was a bit flummoxed and had visions of Modak and Madhav going to bed without any context on what the day had been about. But then I was like “What the heck, this isn't going to happen ever again”. And I said “YES”.

From then on, this becomes a dream like sequence.

David, Dhruv and I walked to the restaurant - an Italian one which was a 7-8 minute walk away, The others brought Mark along - likely in a taxi. Since we reached first, David was trying to figure out the seating arrangement and very kindly plotted to have me sit next to Mark

It went to plan and Mark did sit next to me! I managed to chat to him about various topics. we spoke about my Delhi (he was surprised girls were not safe in Delhi even when I was

a teenager) and about his Delhi (he lives in Nizamuddin).

Of course, I could not monopolise him. The person sitting on his other side (an elderly lady) was giving me dagger looks. So I started to converse with the man on my right. Who ended up being character STRAIGHT out of 'Yes, Minister'. Mark Robinson - a 2 time MP and minister under Margaret Thatcher.

I ordered Ravioli. When the waitress asked Mark what he wanted, he asked me what I was having, he wanted to eat vegetarian too. I said I had ordered the Ravioli and told him there were some other veg options too. He said he would also order the Ravioli because if it was a bad choice - at least we would have company in the other who had also made a bad choice (I am still trying to figure that one out). So, my hero and I had a rather mediocre Ravioli as did my son across the table.

Alas, there are almost none of that breed left anymore.

As the evening wound down, one of the people at the dinner came around and spoke in slightly hushed tones, trying to figure out how Mark could be dropped home, No one was going to accompany him, but they wanted to pay

the taxi in advance for dropping him. On impulse I asked where he needed to be dropped. Turned out it wasn't awfully far from our home (about 1.5 miles) and so I said we would drop him!

We took a black cab and had about 30 minutes to chat some more with him. He spoke about his days at Trinity Hall and how he completely wasted his time there but had a lot of fun. He spoke again about Vinod Dua and about reading the Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi) every day. I get the sneaking suspicion his Hindi might be better than mine. Mark spoke about how he himself is not a natural writer and broadcasting comes more easily to him.

We dropped him off and watched him slowly crossing the road as our cab sped away. A surreal evening had drawn to an end.

It had been an unexpectedly memorable evening. Thanks to a sequence of nice events triggered by Dhruv, we had managed to spend quality time with a great journalist, a genuine Indophile and a lovely, humorous human being. I don't think Mark is a mega celebrity but is a shining example of a journalist in the classic, honest, intellectual mould. When real, thoughtful, well considered news coverage was valued and delivered by journalists such as him. Alas, there are almost none of that breed left anymore.

Madhuri Pai lives in London and is the co-founder of Turning Pages, a social entrepreneurship that works on building strong reading habits in under privileged children. She is an IIM Bangalore alumnus, loves good Aamchi food, great books and at this point wants nothing more than to be back with family in India.

***Quarantine has made my Delhi routine too boring.
Venice this going to get over?***

Women in the Corporate World

by Poornima Mallya



As the train heaves itself off platform no. 3 at the Chatrapati Shivaji Terminus, the woman next to me in the II Class “streeyansathi” only bogie speaks animatedly over the phone, rebuking her daughter. The child needs print-outs of wildlife for her school project to be submitted the next morning. “Pinky, it is too late now for me to get print-outs now, I will draw them for you. Stop crying Pinky, I will be home in an hour” she says and hangs up with a sigh and then looks at me with a tired smile. A seemingly new recruit /intern sitting opposite me, is busy on her phone giving a rather brutal description of her boss in expletive filled sentences. Suddenly, she looks at the phone to take the call on wait. “Yes sir, yes sir, you will definitely receive the report tomorrow. I have a draft of it ready and just need to fill in some missing numbers”, she says in her most polite, executive tone!

Here is this bogie full of women rushing to their home duty after a full day of work - someone is giving instructions to the cook, someone is giving a monthly list to her grocer, someone is getting a travel request approved, someone is selling plastic card pouches of a variety of sizes – almost all of them are working women. As I toy with the mangalsutra and office ID, their strings entwined around my neck, a fast train chugs by us with a compartment full of men singing abhangs as they make their way home too. I wonder if they worry as much about what to cook for dinner or their child’s school project.

A lot is being written and discussed about diversity and inclusion, women empowerment and role of women in the corporate world.

As late as October 2019, McKinsey released a report - “Women in the Workplace 2019”. They have been doing this survey for the last five years (starting 2015) and the key takeaways from the last report are that while women are knocking at the glass ceiling and making a small ripple with respect to finding positions on the C Suite, the lower level promotions at the manager level are stagnant. The culture at work is also developing as a key success factor - all employees need to feel respected and that they have an equal opportunity to grow and advance. When a company’s culture is fair and inclusive, women and under-represented groups are happier and more likely to thrive. This study is based on surveys in the Western World.

Before we go ahead to what is happening in India let us dwell a little more on the term “glass ceiling” A glass ceiling is an invisible barrier to advancement that women face at higher levels at the workplace. What are these barriers? The number one barrier still remains the demands for child care, housework and other life chores outside of work - these fall more heavily on women than on men. Higher paying occupations are more inflexible and require more time commitment. Women have a harder time with this inflexibility because they remain disproportionately responsible for taking care of the home, including raising children. Indeed, childcare is one of the most prominent factors holding back women’s earnings at the executive level. While more companies are



including women friendly policies such as childcare, flexible working hours and work from home facilities (now everyone's benefit, owing COVID 19), the middle level promotion opportunities for women are very often lost, when they have children who are up-to school going age. These lost promotions, add up to the line of missed opportunities as they aspire for bigger roles within the organisation.

Coming closer home, the question which comes to mind is where are "We Indians" in all of this? The role of any Government is the starting point for any movement and the focus on the role of women in society needed a push in India too. In 2015, the Indian Government ran their catchy "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" campaign aimed to generate awareness and improve the efficiency of welfare services intended for girls. Having planted the first seeds of gender equality in our nation, where a girl child did not have an opportunity to seek education, it paved the path for an all-inclusive "Padhega India tabhi to badhega India!" campaign which did not differentiate between a boy and girl for right to education. The right to education for the girl child is the start point for a working women in the future as more educated girls means more women building professional careers.

Last year in the SSC examinations in Maharashtra, the total passing percentage of students was 77%. The passing percentage of girls was higher at 83% with an overall performance across all students being 72.18%. If this entire batch receives equal opportunities to pursue higher education, then in 7 years from now more girls will be reaching out for corporate jobs.

At the other end of the spectrum of women empowerment the Government amended the Indian Companies' Act of 2013 and brought in the

rule of at least one female director on the board of listed companies and any public company having a paid-up share capital of 100 crore or more rupees or a turnover of 300 crore or more rupees. This has put an onus on Indian Boards to recognise and get hard-nosed female talent at Board level positions pan India. Several companies, have used this opportunity to elevate outstanding senior woman employees from within their companies to this post. So finally Indian boardrooms are literally seeing colour in the boardrooms, from century old monotone, stiff cut suits.


There is a long way to go to an ideal time, where resumes will not contain names and genders, and best fit for the role will be purely based on qualification and experience.


Traditionally, the Indian male has been looked on as the provider and the Indian female as the nourisher. The son would have access to education and daughters were raised to be married. There was limited formal service sector where women could work in the earlier days. A daughter was considered "Paraya Dhan" so spending on her education would be a sunk investment. In many families a woman pursuing a profession was considered a taboo. When it started getting more acceptable for women to work job interviews would begin with "are you married" and if yes "what are your plans to start a family". This was effectively used to reject female candidates.

Women have often been lost behind the screens or found in significant supporting roles (behind every successful man there is a woman), but hardly ever as the protagonist. Women are often risk averse and less mobile. The willingness to take risks and the ability to be mobile catapults employees to higher paying jobs and gives premise to negotiate higher salaries. There is a long way to go to an ideal time, where resumes will not contain names and genders, and best fit for the role will be purely based on qualification and experience.

It is heartening to note that women are now making their way to shop-floors and are on work teams that have traditionally been male-dominated, such as in oil and gas, manufacturing, construction, finance and engineering (it's equally uncommon to find men in traditionally female jobs, such as elementary education and nursing). In many cities especially in South India, several restaurants now employ ladies as waiters, we see women as petrol pump attendants and also driving cabs, rickshaws and planes.

Stereotypes are breaking and women are finding themselves in corner offices with a 'C' attached to their job titles. When we talk of women in the corporate world the first set of names that come to mind are Indra Nooyi, Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Zia Mody, Naina Lal Kidwai, Mallika Srinivasan, Kaku Nakhate, Shobhana Bhartia – these women have successfully shattered the glass ceiling and have made their own rules to reach the pinnacle of their professional career.

One sector which stands out is the banking and finance sector in India wherein a lot of women bankers are at the helm. The credit for sowing the seeds goes to ICICI Bank and the

several women-friendly initiatives implemented by its former chairman, Kundapur Vaman Kamath, now the chief of the New Development Bank of BRICS countries. Zarin Daruwala (CEO of Standard Chartered), Kalpana Morparia (CEO of JP Morgan, India), Renuka Ramnath (CEO of venture fund, Multiples) Chanda Kochhar (ex CEO and MD of ICICI Bank) and Shikha Sharma (ex CEO of Axis Bank), – all these flag bearers of women in corporate India were all incubated at the ICICI Bank to be leaders. These women often citewomen friendly policies and gender neutral environment at their workplace as the prime reason for their success.

So, is there a secret sauce to climb the corporate ladder as a woman? Indian cinema tends to stereotype a woman's fast track growth in a company by labelling them as sexy sirens or as damsels in distress. In the real world, a more reliable route would be to get yourself the most appropriate educational qualification based on the career path you want to follow and continually stay cutting edge. Nothing can replace education and state-of-the-art knowledge of your chosen career. Every day is a learning opportunity – and it need not be just topical education but also continually nourishing your soft skills to grow in the organisation. Let your work speak and hence be visible in the organisation, so more opportunities maybe offered to you. Most workplaces offer mentorig, do not hesitate to take advantage by learning from thementor. A strong and reliable support system within your family, neighbours and friends is also crucial to your success.

Above all don't be too hard on yourself and compete with superwoman. There will be

mistakes, things will go wrong – it is perfectly fine to pick yourself up and keep on moving. Giving up makes failure permanent. Do not impose limits on yourself ladies for growing in your organisation – you go just as far as you believe.

Hope continues to burn bright. I look forward to a shining India when the headlines about women will be about multimillion dollar deals being signed, awards being won and on pioneering technology, medical and engineering inventions – not headlines about female foeticide, trafficking, honour killings and rape.

I would like to leave you with this thought, as women – as daughters, wives, mothers, daughters-in-law and as managers it is quite a challenge to score a perfect 10 on all counts. Perhaps we will need to give some family weddings and school concerts and offsites at work a miss. When this happens do not layer yourself with guilt and feeling of inadequacy. Choose wisely – life is about choices. I wish that you are proud of your choices more often than those you regret. *Ya devi sarvabhuteshu buddhi-rupena samsthita, namas tasyai, namas tasyai, namas tasyai namo namah....*

Poornima Mallya is a Chartered Accountant and currently the Vice President at Tata Sons Pvt. Ltd. She works as part of the Chairman's Office. Prior to this she worked for 18 years with Tata Consultancy Services.



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"Sanskhaar" - Moral norms and values

This incident happened a few months ago. I was travelling by a rickshaw, and I observed that the rickshaw driver was not following traffic rules and was driving a bit rash. Before I could tell him to follow the traffic rules and drive slowly /carefully, he collided with a motorcycle. A young man of about 20 to 22 years was riding the motorcycle. The young man was extremely annoyed. Meanwhile the signal caused the traffic to halt. The young man got down from the motorcycle and approached our rickshaw and started abusing the rickshaw driver with the foulest of the abuses I have ever heard of. He appeared to be an educated person from a good family and hence I was aghast at his abusive language. No doubt, the rickshaw driver was at fault, but that doesn't mean the young man should use such abusive language.

Meanwhile, the traffic policeman came and took the rickshaw driver (I was still sitting in the rickshaw) and the young man to the corner for questioning. I was getting late and did not wish to sit in the rickshaw and hence got down from the rickshaw and paid the driver. After paying the rickshaw driver, I casually looked at the young man. He was a handsome young man and appeared to be well educated. I wanted to give him a piece of my mind, but politely told him, that although the rickshaw driver was at fault, he (the young man) should not have used such abusive language. The policemen standing nearby were also smiling when I was talking to the young man (these are routine/regular incidents for them). However the boy was in no mood to listen and told me that these people (rickshaw drivers) understand only abusive language. I did not say anything, but quietly

by Veena Shenoy



took another rickshaw and returned home. While in the rickshaw, I just couldn't stop thinking of the young man and his abusive language. Agreed that the rickshaw driver was at fault, but how can anybody use such foul language?

Good values have to be imbibed in children at a very young age and imbibing good values in children starts at home.

I am of the opinion that we give best of everything to our children like good education, good living and all the modern amenities. However, we will fail as parents, if we do not inculcate in them moral values, ethics, good behavior etc. No wonder, our ancient scriptures give immense importance to "Sanskhar" (Moral norms and values). Many a times we observe that educated people and people holding high posts treat the lesser privileged people like peons, sweepers etc. with contempt and think it is fine, if we treat them in a shabby manner because they hold low posts. However, a person with high moral values, ethics treats all his/her colleagues with respect irrespective of their posts. It is rightly said in our scriptures "Vidya Vinayen Shobhite".

Good values have to be imbibed in children at a very young age and imbibing good values in children starts at home. It is the

parents and the elders in the house who imbibe good values in children. This is the reason, when someone behaves in a bad manner; people blame their parents for not imbibing good manners/values in them. To inculcate good values in children, the parents should lead by example

because, usually children emulate the parents. If parents use abusive language the children also learn the same language.

I am of the opinion that our education and intelligence is of no use without possessing values, ethics and moral norms.

Smt. Veena Shenoy regularly writes for newspapers.

Till date, 600 of her articles and letters have been printed in the newspapers

Readers Write on our Lockdown Special Issue



Innovative Edition during difficult times carrying interesting information. Hearty Congratulations to Trustees & office bearers of GSB Sabha, Mumbai.

Kamalakh Saraf

My warm compliments to the President and his team to bring out our worthy VoG at this most difficult time.

Every articles are very touchy, pleasurable to read. Words may be too small to appreciate each and every article contributed by respective writers.

Dear President, it requires lot of courage, hard work to bring out such VOG rich in every respect.

Every member should feel proud that in this most difficult time which changed the whole humanitarian behavior of our country, here is a community who put it efforts to bring out their quarterly e-magazine covering current topics and other worthy articles on various topics.

With regards

B G. Nayak

Thank you for special issue of Voice of GSB. It is creditable that this issue is published despite constraints 🙌🙌.

Take care. Stay safe.

Jagannath Prabhu

I congratulate the GSB Sabha, Mumbai's committee for bringing out an online issue of the VoG. Using technology and an innovative mindset, this issue has reached all of us during the lockdown. The issue is relevant and topical; it has articles from members about their experiences during the lockdown and their pursuits to keep themselves busy. I too have contributed my bit. My best wishes to all in the Sabha and especially to the Committee members to continue their good work to the community.

Durga Shenoy (Ex-President, Mahila Shakha)

But the whole feel of the e-magazine looks so professional and well done.. love it.. an the articles are a great treat in this hour to read and sneak peep into each other's experience... feels really good reading them all.

Truly appreciate the efforts! 🥰

Vidhya Shenoy.

This special issue is a very innovative and creative initiative 🙌🙌. Perspectives from across the world make this a very interesting read 🙌🙌. Honored and humbled to be part of it 🙏🙏. Thank you. Best wishes,

Pratima Bhandarkar

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List of important dates in the quarter July to September 2020

Dates	Day	Festival	Dates	Day	Festival
1 st July 2020	Wednesday	Devashyani Ashadi Ekadashi	15 th August 2020	Saturday	74 th Independence Day
5 th July 2020	Sunday	Guru Purnima	21 st August 2020	Friday	Hartalika Trutiya (Vaiyna Puja)
8 th July 2020	Wednesday	Sankashta Chaturthi	22 nd August 2020	Saturday	Ganesh Chaturthi
21 st July 2020	Tuesday	Shravan Arambh	23 rd August 2020	Sunday	Rishi Panchami
25 th July 2020	Saturday	Nag Panchami	1 st September 2020	Tuesday	Anant Chaturdashi
3 rd August 2020	Monday	Suta Punnav	2 nd September 2020	Wednesday	Pitru Paksha Aarambh (Mhaalu)
3 rd August 2020	Monday	Raksha Bandhan	5 th September 2020	Saturday	Sankashta Chaturthi
7 th August 2020	Friday	Sankashta Chaturthi	18 th September 2020	Friday	Ashwin Adhikmas Arambh
11 th August 2020	Tuesday	Sri Krishna Jayanti (Janmashthami)	2 nd October 2020	Tuesday	Gandhi Jayanti
12 th August 2020	Wednesday	Gopal-Kaala - Dahi Handi	5 th October 2020	Monday	Sankashta Chaturthi

Articles contributed by various members, published in VoG, do not necessarily reflect the views of G.S.B. Sabha & its editorial team.

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KIDS ART GALLERY



Our Child Artists for this Quarter



Drawing by
Maithili Nayak
Age
11 years



Drawing by
Arjun Pai
Age
7 years



Drawing by
Nithya Nayak
Age
16 years



Drawing by
Vedant Gadiyar
Age
11 years



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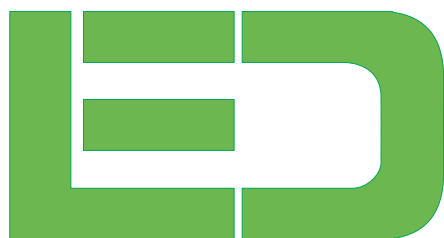
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