



XPRESSIONS

AN ASE-SHUATS MAGAZINE



PREPARING FOR THE POST-PANDEMIC

The challenges put forth during the Covid-19 pandemic and preparing for the 'new normal'

THE PANDEMIC BATCH

The experience of a student at SHUATS through virtual media

THE SHIFT TO ONLINE

The importance of virtual spaces. Has it given us the freedom that we always wished for or does it have us enchained?

"Be joyful in hope, patient in afflictions and faithful in prayer."
Romans 12:12

THE EDITORIAL TEAM

CONTENTS



Faculty Editorial Board

Dr. Kirti Cutting
Dr. Seema Mallick
Dr. Avis Chintamani
Dr. Jyotsana Jaiswal



Students' Editorial Board

Ms. Rachel Alice
Ms. Shilpi Dwivedi
Ms. Azla Alvi
Ms. Jessica Ruth Maurice
Mr. Vincent Peter

Contact:

Email: ase.shuats@gmail.com
Follow us: aseshuats

3
The Editorial

4
From the Faculty Desk's Desk

5
From the Dean's Desk

6
From the HOD's Desk

7
Phubbing among Youth
Dr. Syed Hasan Qasim

8
Pandemic & Education System
Dr. Chetna Pandey

9
On Knowledge
Dr. Kirti Cutting

10
Preparing for the Post-Pandemic
Rachel Alice

11
The Pandemic Batch
Angelina Mitra

12
The Shift to Online
Shilpi Dwivedi

13
The Plant Palette
Jessica Ruth Maurice

14
The Hare who Lost
Vincent Peter

15
The Poetry Pen

17
Artists's Corner

18
Precious Memories

20
Fun Page

EDITORIAL

In this academic session, we're excited to release another issue of our digital journal 'Xpressions', which highlights the Department of Teacher Education's academic as well as nonacademic activities. To begin with, I express thanks and praise to our Almighty God for His kindness and mercy and for carrying us through these trying times. This year has brought lots of challenges as well as hardships but we have managed to survive.

The Department of teacher education has impeccably carried out academic work during the ongoing pandemic. Our department's main goal is to bring out the best in each student teacher using any means necessary. Digital magazine is another platform where their creative abilities, literary and cultural performances are showcased. We have made a comeback after a brief hiatus and continue in our endeavour to reflect the values and the qualities that we as an educational institution uphold. All of this is made possible by the faculty and students working together to create and achieve a shared goal.

We extend our sincere thanks to all for the contribution and support rendered towards the publication. Henry Ford has rightly said, "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success." In order to achieve our primary goal of showcasing our student teachers' aesthetic and literary abilities, we have worked hard to include their proficient articulations in this edition. Have a wonderful reading time and God bless y'all.

Warmly,
The Editorial Team,
DTE, ASE, SHUATS

FROM THE FACULTY DEAN'S DESK

PROF. (DR.) J.N. MISHRA



संकायाध्यक्ष

प्रबंधन, मानविकी एवं सामाजिक विज्ञान

मुझे अति प्रसन्नता हो रही है कि शिक्षा विभाग अपनी विभागीय गतिविधियों को उजागर करने के उद्देश्य से अंकीय आंगुलिक समाचार बुलेटिन (Digital News Bulletin) का प्रकाशन कर रहा है। इसके लिए विभाग के संकाय प्रमुख, विभागाध्यक्ष, अध्यापक, एवं विद्यार्थी बधाई के पात्र हैं। विगत ढाई वर्ष विश्वविद्यालय एवं पूरे देश के शिक्षकों तथा विद्यार्थियों के लिए चुनौतीपूर्ण वर्ष रहे हैं। कोविड-19 की महामारी ने जहाँ चुनौतियाँ एवं समस्याएं खड़ी की, वहीं एक नयी व्यवस्था एवं कार्य संस्कृति को जन्म दिया। अध्यापकों एवं विद्यार्थियों ने इस चुनौती को स्वीकारा तथा पठन-पाठन निर्बाध रूप से जारी रखा।

इस बदलते परिवेश में आज शिक्षक वर्ग के समक्ष अनेक चुनौतियाँ हैं, जिसका हमारे शिक्षक दृढ़तापूर्वक सामना करते हुए अपने दायित्वों का निर्वहन कर रहे हैं। विश्वविद्यालय का हमारा शिक्षा विभाग शिक्षकों के निर्माण का एक कुशल शिल्पी है, जो कि मानवीय एवं नैतिक गुणों से परिपूर्ण हमारी तरुण एवं युवा पीढ़ी के लिए कुशल शिक्षक प्रशिक्षित कर रहा है।

अतः मैं इस पुनीत कार्य के लिए सम्पादक मण्डल को बधाई एवं शुभकामनाएं देता हूँ।

शुभकामनाओं सहित,

डॉ. जे. एन. मिश्र

आचार्य एवं संकायाध्यक्ष

प्रबंधन, मानविकी, एवं सामाजिक विज्ञान संकाय

FROM THE DEAN'S DESK

PROF. (DR.) SR. MARION MATHEW CJ



“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it”
Proverbs 22:6

CHALLENGE FOR TEACHERS WHICH NEVER EXISTED BEFORE

Perhaps at no other time were these challenges more apparent than during the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools across the country competed to provide the best digital educational environment to the students and the challenge of transacting the curriculum fell on the shoulders of the teachers. Teachers today have to stay ahead of the curve to provide a competency-based education amid the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Breakthroughs in technology and the emergence of fresh approaches in pedagogy are perpetually transforming teaching. Highly skilled teachers are the demand of modern society to impart education to a digital generation.

The present society looks for a teacher with a keen intellect, having competence, creativity, dynamism, determination, maturity, and one who has the ability to be focused on the goal. Today's teacher's challenge is to cultivate a passion for achieving professional excellence which has to be reflected in his or her interaction with the students. The present-day pedagogical practice is another emerging challenge for teachers. Some of these challenges include the skill to match the instructional materials in a manner that meets the developmental needs of children, time management of a classroom session, effectively managing the behaviour of students who are least interested in studies, continually monitoring student needs, and responding instantaneously to demanding situations.

“The world we leave to our children depends in large measure on the children we leave to our world,” says the UNESCO Report on Teacher Training. We, at Allahabad School of Education, ought to feel privileged that we are fortunate to train future leaders and professionals for the education sector. It is our challenge to provide the pupil teachers with varied academic experiences as well as skill training so that the pupil teachers will become skilled personnel and compassionate human beings to serve society. I am happy; the Department of Teacher Education is bringing out a digital news bulletin that highlights the activities of the college. I wish the editorial board all the best.

Prof. (Dr.) Sr. Marion Mathew CJ
Dean, ASE, SHUATS.

FROM THE HOD'S DESK

DR. SAMALA SUNEETHA MASIH



No one could have guessed that COVID-19 would spread over the world and change the way we live, interact, work, teach, and learn when it first hit Wuhan in early 2020. The repercussions and effects of the pandemic on education are uncertain, but they will surely be more challenging for educators and students in more vulnerable and unsafe contexts. Most countries throughout the world saw unprecedented total or partial lockdowns, forcing universities and schools to close immediately. It challenged the whole structure of imparting education by leading to an immediate switch from offline to online.

The influence of teacher competency, sensitivity, and motivation on the quality and degree of learner achievement is well-documented. Teacher education is a programme that aims to improve teacher proficiency and competency so that they are better prepared to deal with the demands of their profession and the challenges that come with them.

Internships in schools are an important phase of the teacher education programme. Both teachers and pupil teachers must quickly learn how to adapt to the classroom situation. And the best way to bring in the expertise in the pupil teachers is through face-to-face communication as it broadens the arena of teaching: verbally, visually, written, facial expressions, body language, gestures, and several teaching aids.

The online mode of education shook the standard teaching approach but didn't handicap the competency of the teachers. It introduced a new format and culture of education, which was adapted gloriously by the teachers with the help of technological support. However, at SHUATS, we didn't fail to utilise the little period that we got for switching back to the offline mode of education. In the duration of two to three months, when we got an opportunity to begin offline classes, teachers ensured maximum utilisation of this period in delivering and preparing the pupil teachers for forthcoming days.

The necessity to quickly adjust to new contexts of teaching and learning online has highlighted how teacher education institutes and educators have dealt with the challenges and opportunities of continuing to conduct their professions in such unusual situations. The cooperation of our academic colleagues and pupil teachers is tremendous in this regard, due to which we were able to complete the Autumn Semester of 2021 successfully. During these challenging times, Almighty God protected us and strengthened us to rise to the situation. We all work together with the same commitment, passion, and integrity to educate our pupil teachers and serve the nation.

With the best wishes,

Dr. Samala Suneetha Masih
Head & Associate Dean
Department of Teacher Education
Allahabad School of Education
SHUATS



PHUBBING AMONG YOUTH

DR. SYED HASAN QASIM

One specific phenomenon the widespread accessibility of smartphones has caused is phubbing, which refers to an individual's obsessive use of the smartphone instead of having interpersonal conversations with other individuals in a social setting (Karadağ et al., 2015). Phubbing is a term created by the combination of the words phone and snubbing. It refers to a person interacting with their phone (or other device) rather than interacting with a human being. The use of this, and other terms around mobile device use, showcases a growing issue with different kinds of technology, including the delicate balance of sharing time and attention when facing two very different interactions at the same time. Smart phones, which have the properties of pocket computers, possess various features, from Internet to camera, from writing and drawing programs to game applications, chatting etc. and they have caused new trouble in real life: phubbing. Phubbing can be described as an individual looking at his or her mobile phone during a conversation with other individuals, dealing with the mobile phone and escaping from interpersonal communication.

We don't realise the impact of this deadly habit. It has the power to derail relationships, disengage teams, and reduce productivity, peeve customers and cause errors. When someone phubs you, you may feel rejected, excluded, and not important. That can have a significant impact on your mental health. Research also shows that people who are phubbed are more likely to reach for their phones and try to engage with their social media network in order to fill that void. This is the start of a vicious cycle. In the Indian scenario, smartphone's addiction and problematic internet use among adolescents are on the increase, which indicates the possibility of phubbing behaviour among adolescents and youth. Moreover, it has also been seen that in the age of E-learning, only a few Indian students often use their smartphones to enhance their learning. In a recent survey conducted in Prayagraj (Khare, S. 2020), it was found that an astonishing population of 90% spends more than 3 hours on smartphone use and around 86% of undergraduate students are very particular about keeping their phones updated with all latest applications to be put to immediate use. Around 63% students' population was in favour of social media and found social media platform more compatible over personalized meeting. It was scrutinized that overall phubbing behaviour in undergraduate males (52%) is lagging far behind when compared with females (68%).

The technology that was designed to bring humans closer to each other has isolated us from these very same people. To reduce the negative effects of smartphone usage and phubbing behaviour it is advisable for users to establish "smartphone-free" zones; establish social contracts (and penalties) regarding phone use at certain places; and downloading apps that track, monitor and control smartphone use.



The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the world in many ways which were unimaginable. As we look back on the past two years and the harsh repercussions of the pandemic that continue till today, it is apparent that one of the most impacted sectors was that of education. It's easy to lose your hopes and brood over the negative side effects of any event, especially when as a community we're battling a global pandemic.

But for every low, there's a high – and it's true that even this current scenario has a silver lining to it. Neither the world nor educational institutions were prepared to embrace the shift to online platforms brought on at lightning speed. Though the loss was irreparable but still some positive outcome was also seen which has changed the entire education system, few are as follows:

Moving towards online teaching learning process

In a very short period of time students moved from physical spaces that provided them to being seated behind a screen for hours on end. Students learn, retain and apply information most effectively when they have received personalized education paths and when sufficient resources are made available to them.

Development of Online Tutoring platforms

There was challenge to provide online education, which has resulted in the development of various e learning applications to provide online education on various platforms.

Modification in the teaching methodologies of teacher

The teachers have taken great effort and enhanced their creativity, to reach every child and help the learner to learn in the new modified version of school

Development of self-help habit

The students and the teachers who were honestly involved in the teaching learning process started searching for news and authentic ways of learning and teaching

Time management and responsibility

The children and the teachers have learned well how to manage time, as they have to access different classes through online mode and this has made them more responsible towards their teaching learning.

Technical Skill development

All the stakeholders of the education system whether the teacher, student, parents or anyone else has learned different technical skills to manage this entirely new version of teaching and learning during the pandemic.



ON KNOWLEDGE



DR. KIRTI CUTTING

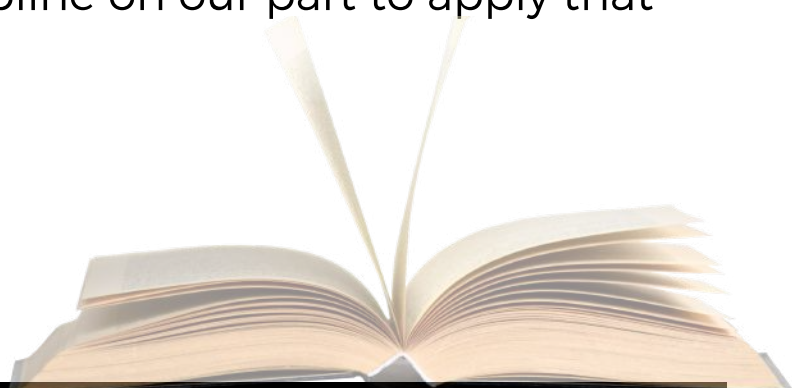
Whoever loves instruction and discipline loves knowledge..."

Proverbs 12:1

Unlike a computer that can accumulate information worth millions of words in an instant, our minds do not acquire knowledge overnight. Even though you may be gifted with an amazing memory, at the end of the day it is only information, not knowledge.

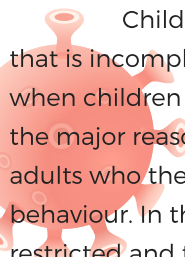
To be knowledgeable in an area requires one to be humble and disciplined.

Our learning stops the moment we think that we know better than others. Humility makes us receptive to instruction and correction. Then, discipline helps us to apply what we have learnt in our lives, so that we grow experientially in knowledge. This proves true of heavenly wisdom as well. God looks in favour on those who are humble and contrite in spirit. To them, He opens his storehouse of wisdom and knowledge. It, then, takes discipline on our part to apply that knowledge in our lives.



PREPARING FOR THE POST-PANDEMIC

RACHEL ALICE



Childhood is often seen as an inferior, transition phase that is incomplete in itself and can only reach its true potential when children blossom into 'mature' adults. It is probably one of the major reasons why their voices often go unheard while the adults who they 'belong to' exercise their control over their behaviour. In the Summer of 2021, when all movements were restricted and the world had fallen into a strange silence, I was adding the final touches to my Masters' Dissertation, my masterpiece that was all about the experiences of children during the Covid19 pandemic. This article is a summary of my experiences and observations as a researcher and my views about how teachers can help children adjust to this new normal.

"Kabhi kabhi aisa lagta hai jaise saari duniya computer mein hi sama gayi hai" was a statement made by a 9 year old boy in Prayagraj. His words were a reflection of his feelings of suffocation and entrapment as a result to the restrictions imposed by the government to protect everyone from the deadly virus. In the pre-pandemic world, an average child's world used to revolve around his school, co-curriculum, games and most importantly, his peers. However, the pandemic had deprived him of all those necessities and left him with just a peephole in the form of a computer, a smartphone or a digital tablet. Digital devices were the only means of communication and the only source of formal education. It had more cons than pros.

However, this time did not prove to be all bad as the children got to spend a lot of time with their parents who used to be usually busy in the prepandemic times. Most of them got to learn a lot of new recipes, developed stronger bonds with parents, discovered new talents within themselves, worked on a lot of DIY projects and understood the importance of relationships. Despite the hardships and the negative surroundings, many children developed resilience and were able to bounce back from the times of adversity and challenges.

Now, that the educational institutions have finally opened their gates to welcome back students, it is very necessary for the teachers to be extremely sensitive to them. This adjustment can be tough for them as they had gotten used to the environment at home. A lot of children might not do very well academically and that is okay. The fact that they didn't give up is what matters. Now, a new approach is required to make things fun for children. All this time time, they had been learning not only from the online classes but also from various movies, documentaries and other resources that had been very rich in sensory stimulation. Therefore, the competition, now, is between teachers and digital devices.

It is indeed difficult but not impossible. Let us now forget that man is a social being and despite the attractive qualities of digital resources, teachers can offer a lot more. In addition to using innovative and excellent teaching aids, teachers can give to them warmth, love, care and affection. Children may look all okay on the outside. However, most of them are neither mentally nor emotionally prepared for the post-pandemic new normal.

Teachers can take the following steps to support them and help them smoothly transition to in-person classroom learning.

1. Listen to children's concerns- it is necessary to understand what they're going through to help them do better in class.
2. Check how children are doing- It may be difficult for them to concentrate fully in the class at first. Therefore, try to make classes more interactive and activity-based instead of lecture-based.
3. Seek suggestions- We may try but we can't fully put ourselves into the shoes of a young child. Therefore, ask them about what they require to make the class a more comfortable and secure space.
4. Watch out for any warning signs- Any significant changes in a child's behaviour could be a result to an underlying problem. Do not hesitate to refer him to the concerned professional for help.
5. Peer Interaction- Incorporate several games and icebreaking activities to facilitate interaction among the classmates.
6. Self-Care- Being a teacher to these children can be a stressful task. Make sure to enjoy your life and indulge in self care. As a teacher, you're also a role-model to your students. Therefore, make sure that you teach the children to value rest in addition to valuing academia and co-curriculum.

To conclude, think of teaching in the post pandemic world as a healthy challenge and use it as a chance to reconnect with your inner child. Get in touch with your creative self and just as you are there for all your students, don't forget to be there for yourself.



THE PANDEMIC BATCH

ANGELINA MITRA

During my graduation days, I always dreamt of studying in SHUATS because of the amazing reviews that I had heard from the alumni. I was fortunate enough to take admission in 2020 but the lockdown was in effect and we were known as the "Pandemic Batch".

The college campus is huge and very well maintained. It is a multidisciplinary university and it even offers courses that are not offered anywhere else in the state. It is a well-known, esteemed university not only among national aspirants but also among international students. There are various scholarships and schemes to provide financial aid to the meritorious students who might need some financial assistance.

The B.Ed department is well equipped with teaching materials, aids and books in the library. The faculty and the staff are all really nice and understanding. Although most part of my programme was online, everything was well-organized. In addition to classes, the study materials too had to be digitalized. Not everybody was tech-savvy in our batch and initially, we did have difficulties with regards to logging in, screen recording, sharing screens, online tests, submitting assignments, etc. However, the management committee was really helpful throughout and all students in the batch collectively helped each other in whatever ways they could.

This online learning was definitely a major challenge. However, it taught us many things- the most important one being, 'openness to change'. As we are going to be teachers very soon, we learnt how technology helped us in these unpredictable, inevitable times, The entire education system throughout the world was totally dependent on technology. It is also an important lesson for all 'grown ups' and teachers who've always criticized digital devices. Yes, the addiction or excess of anything can do more harm than good. However, if used in moderation, it is a great tool for the advancement of human civilization and for sustenance.



THE SHIFT TO ONLINE

SHILPI DWIVEDI

On 24 March 2020 evening, the Indian Government announced a nationwide lockdown for the next 21 days, limiting the movement of the entire nation of 138 crore people, as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. It was the last day when approximately 32 crore students attended the schools physically in India. And we converted the whole education system into an online setup. Not only did students, but teachers too scuffle through all the new developments. This scenario wasn't just limited to our nation, but most countries had to go through this phase, and the struggle continues to date. According to UNESCO, these closures in several nations affected about 73.8% of enrolled learners. While we mostly talked about the transition from offline schooling to online, its pros and cons, the challenges, etc., did we miss to shed light on the effects of this distant learning on the emotional development of our children? As adults, we never failed to boast to glory our know-it-all attitude; we talked about our challenges, discovered new ways to work, realised our potential, and did a lot in many ways! But, did that same happen with our kids? We became alert parents, equipping our kids with technology to help them learn this new method of education; we played the role of their teachers even became their friends, along with parents. Somehow, still, this question comes to my conscience: was that enough to cater to their emotional needs? It is generally believed education is a process of learning and acquiring knowledge, skills, and morals to bring

in the overall development of a child. The overall development is not limited to academic skills or knowledge but comprises physical, mental, social, communicative, and spiritual growth.

School is an institution where kids spend most of their time learning and working on these skills. The atmosphere, the interaction with teachers and peers play a massive role in developing these skills. The online setup took care of the academics, but kids suffered unsaid. Some schools could manage to provide an engaging learning session, including co-scholastic activities and interactive sessions within the peer groups, breaking the monotony of the limitations of an online classroom. The number of such schools was negligible. Nevertheless, the distinction was visible between the students who studied in this structure and those who attended bookish online classrooms, especially regarding emotional development and better mental health.

Children are conversant, smart but do not necessarily recognise the factors causing changes in their behaviour or lifestyle. Offline classes let them have social learning by talking to friends, teamwork, building relationships, and developing a sense of security. In a world where we are already running towards materialism and artificialities, the lockdown locked the kids in the cage of technology. With already lessening spaces and creating more-and-more concrete jungles, the suffering was enormous for kids because they were moving further away from nature. Online education introduced the necessity of phones, tabs, and the internet, hammering the overall health scenario. The screen time increased on the necessity for education, turning the kids'


regime into robotic and mechanical, along with physical issues like headache, fatigue, eye strain, sleep disorder, etc. No contact from outsiders confined them in a nutshell. Cartoon characters replaced the friends, which we have no idea how affected their young, innocent minds. Indeed, studies happened, research happened, still going on, and we will learn someday about the whole of it. The one who will not understand is the child, in the present, what happened and how it changed the course of their life.

Several mental and emotional anxiety cases came to notice because of social distancing. The catastrophe occurred because several kids witnessed economic breakdown, illness of family members, even death, which they were not supposed to experience in a way they did. And what makes it even more pitiful is that here we are talking only of those students who had or have access to resources, who have literate parents to help them. Many students suffered or struggled due to the lack of resources or helplessness. No study will ever understand what exactly happened to this particular group. There is a lot to learn from this lockdown situation, not through the materialistic approach of strengthening our kids but by freshly defining independence and freedom, enabling them to connect to themselves, where any external lockdown wouldn't lock them down within.



THE PLANT PALETTE

JESSICA RUTH MAURICE



In a world of diminishing expectations, where hope is often in short supply, the green fairy bursts with promise and delight. Regardless of your beliefs and direction, you discover that growing is an act of faith, a seed that, when placed in soil nurtured with love and care makes it rewarding to witness the seedling as a poetic symbol of transformation. In fact, gardening is as satisfying as raising our own children, watching them grow and blossom into individuals that bear fruits and have seasons of growth as well as dormancy.

It is a thrill to watch them grow in a different hue of emotion every day. The effortless attention of gardening may even help improve the symptoms of depression.

According to a research article by Dr. Benjamin Rush in the late 1700s, garden or garden-like settings on a balcony, terrace, patio, or even activities like digging in soil served to be a significant factor in recovery of patients with mental illnesses. As a result, interest in therapeutic landscapes emerged, and gardening was born as a rehabilitation intervention.

Even the simple act of viewing trees can have impressive therapeutic results. Post-surgery patients of a hospital who viewed trees outside their windows showed quicker recovery results than similar patients who just looked at walls. Not only the hospital stay shortened, tree-viewing patients had fewer complications, took lesser painkillers,

and got fewer negative chart comments from attending staff.

Oh, the powerful benefits of plants! We, too, live in concrete jungles, restricted by space, and sometimes, circumstances may discourage us from growing our own plants at our abode.

I am reminded of when I lived on the first floor, and my American neighbors were constantly at war with any new plants or pots brought in. I tried to turn away my head whenever any gardening ideas popped up, but you see, for a plant maniac, gardening can never be limited by space or any other obstacle.

Therefore, all my windowsills and brightly lit room corners became the new gardening spaces for me.

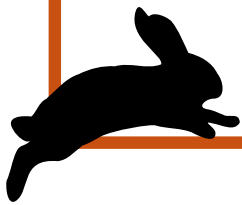
Once again, the green spark was kindled in me. Watching a lot of green content like hydroponic systems, vertical, window, container, terrace, balcony and hanging gardens inspired me.

I also came across brilliant concepts like 'permaculture', where a suburban home with a backyard garden measuring only 100 square per meter produces over 300-400 kilograms of food year-round. It requires vertical and bio-intensive growing; the goal is for city dwellers to be resilient in the face of natural, financial, and social crises. I was inspired by how one's day-to-day efforts (approximately 4-5 hours) of farming per week goes into creating such an abundance of food. Be it Pinterest or Youtube; I cherished the posts of gardeners and channels by plantsman like Geeks of green, Garden up, Fun gardening, container gardening, Urban gardening, and many others.

Today I am a very proud plant parent to 84 plants growing in soil and some hydroponically. Some significant contributors for me to own these many plants are my local nursery, a lot of pots and plants from my mom's garden, random cuttings of plants with the owner's prior permission. My plant tale did not stop here, and I went on to buy some rare houseplants like the Calathea (Stromanthe triostar), Peperomia albovittata, Aglaonema Lipstick, and Fittonia, the nerve plant. I have tried upcycling all the old containers, plastics, broken cups, worn-out tires into beautiful planters. Yet, every time I look at these green beauties in my house, my unsatisfied plantsman soul wants more.

I try to use plants for indoor décor than showpieces or artifacts as I find them aesthetically appealing and uplifting. Unlike us human beings who only know how to 'take' have so much to give. A showpiece would look dull after a few weeks only, but a plant instead would have blossomed or changed its shape. It is a living piece of art.





THE HARE WHO LOST

(A twist in the folktale of the Tortoise and the Hare)



VINCENT PETER

Yes, I am the hare who lost.

No, I did not get 'lazy' or 'complacent.'

And I didn't lose the race by taking a nap. Well... not exactly. Let me explain.

I was in a zone, running the fastest I'd ever run. It was really a sprint for the ages, I tell you. Hopping over the meadows near the hills, I looked back and realised the tortoise was nowhere to be seen.

Assured of my healthy lead, I decided to take a short nap under the large banyan tree near the pond.

See, the thing is, the anticipation of the race had kept me up all night.

For days, that silly tortoise had boasted about his ability to plod for hundreds of miles without stopping.

"Life is a marathon," he said, "not a sprint." I was sick of it. I wanted to show him that I could run both far and fast. But the tree!

The shade of that banyan was like an umbrella. I found an almost oval rock, covered it with grass, and turned it into a makeshift pillow. It was perfect.

I could hear the leaves rustling and the bees buzzing – it felt as if they were collaborating, even conspiring to put me to sleep. And they would've succeeded if it weren't for the old monkey walking by. The old monkey stopped short in his walk, turned to me with an all-knowing smile, and asked:

"Who are you?"

"I am a hare. I am running a race."

"Why?"

"To prove to all the creatures in the jungle that I am the fastest."

"Why do you want to prove that you are the fastest?" Again with the smile.

"So that I get a medal which will give me status which will give me money which will get me food..."

I could feel myself trailing off. Less convinced of my motivations with each word I spoke.

"There is already so much food around." He pointed to the forest in the distance. "Look at all those trees laden with fruits and nuts, all those leafy branches"

"I also want respect. I want to be remembered as the fastest hare who ever lived." I snapped back

"Do you know the name of the fastest deer or the largest elephant or the strongest lion who lived a thousand years before you?"

"Well... no."

"Today you have been challenged by a tortoise. Tomorrow, it will be a snake. Then it will be a zebra. Will you keep racing all your life to prove that you are the fastest?"

I was shocked.

"Hmm. I hadn't thought about it like that. I don't want to race all my life. Nope."

"What do you want to do?"

I thought for what felt like minutes, but the response escaped me before I even realised it.

"I want to sleep under a banyan tree on a makeshift pillow while the leaves rustle and the bees buzz. I want to hop over the meadows near the hills and swim in the pond. I want to be friends with the ducks. They seem fun."

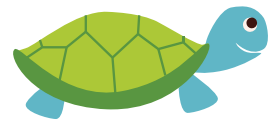
"You can do all these things at this very moment. Forget the race. You are here today but you will be gone tomorrow."

Without a moment's hesitation, I ran from the tree and straight to the pond. I dove in, startling the ducks for a moment.

They looked at me quizzically.

"Weren't you supposed to be racing the tortoise today?"

"Nah, it doesn't matter. I'd rather be here."





Fear Not, Be Still

I have seen people passing,
And flowers fading.
The joy replaced by morose,
the thorns succeeding rose.
When doubts start to arise
and you begin to believe in their lies,
walk not on sight
but take a step of faith
For even the world believes
In the triumph of justice

I have seen people passing
And flowers fading
There will be times when
even the close ones
Would seem afar
when it would be just you
against everyone
But fear not, Be still
For if God is with you
None can stop you
And nothing can stand against.
-Rachel Alice

ईश्वर को है मैंने देखा

ईश्वर को है मैंने देखा
कहीं नहीं,
इस जहाँ में ही देखा
माता-पिता के रूप में
गुरुओं के चरणों में
बड़े बुजुर्गों में
छोटे के आदर्शों में
भाई-बेहेन के रिश्तों में
बेकार और रद्दी में
इस जहाँ की सारी बस्ती में
मैंने है ईश्वर को देखा
कीट व पतंगों में
वनो और जंगलों में
इस जहाँ के सारे फलों में
दिन के उजालों में
नदी और नालों में
दो प्यार करने वालों में
पत्ती और फूलों में
डाली और झूलों में
ईश्वर को है मैंने देखा
ईश्वर को है मैंने देखा
-कामिनी मिश्रा

एक बच्चे की जिज्ञासा

पंख लगा दो पक्षी के ,
परवाज़ हमे भी करने दो
तोड़ के लाये तारे हमभी,
आकाश हमे भी छूने दो
यह जिज्ञासा है मन में,
पूरा इसको करने दो
राहों से काटों को हटाकर ,
सुंदरता को भरने दो
जीवन की बगिया में अपने ,
फूल हमे भी चुनने दो
यह जिज्ञासा है मन में,
पूरा इसको करने दो
पथरीली जो राहें है,
रोक हमको ना पाएंगी
मेरा साहस देख हमे,
मार्ग स्वयं दिखलाएंगी
यह जिज्ञासा है मन में,
पूरा इसको करने दो
एक-एक कदम उठाकर मैं,
मंज़िल अपनी पाऊँगी
यह सपना मैंने देखा है,
पूरा इसको करने दो
अन्धकार की काली दाया,
दूर हमे भी करने दो
यह जिज्ञासा है मन में,
पूरा इसको करने दो
-शफ़क़त ज़ेहरा

Thoughts for life
As long as you feel
pain,
you're still alive
As long as you make
mistakes,
you're still human
As long as you're
trying,
there is still a hope.
-Jessica Amue



Wings to Freedom

The bird I thought I saw at night
Was sitting on attic on the skylight
The moon was lit, the stars shine bright
'Twas for eyes a perfect sight
Didn't know in years what was delight
Until saw the bird perch right upright
I waved my hands to make invite
Be my guest and pal for this very night
The lonely night was full of fright
Companion though was my only light
The bird didn't seem convinced alright
I moved from my bed to make invite
The bird moved up to take a flight
But I wanted it to hold on tight
After all these years of dizzy night
Wanted I the bird to see my plight
Tried hard to reach the high skylight
Was couple 'f feet to reach the height
Flew the bird away, in my next sight
The bird I thought I saw at night!

Weaving the thoughts that happened last night
Saw a number of birds fluttering on the skylight
Last night I saw, that was may be the one
Were several others before the setting of sun
I wasn't alone in the rising day
Sunshine was there to stay and play
I blinked my eyes to come out of dream
I was wide awake, the day was full of gleam
Morning was true, lot of birds were there
They'd come to me, to meet and share
Share the freedom that once I too had known
Before trammelling the self to be all alone
They brought me wings to fly in sky
To flap my wings and rise high and high
You've got to choose, life is small or big
It's a three act play or a whole new gig
Come fly with us, we will take you away
Through the skylight up,
you can make your way
I took the wings they had brought for me
I had a whole new world to see and glee
I stretched my wings to take a whimsy flight
With the bird I thought I saw last night!

-Shilpi Dwivedi

XPRESSIONS | 2



गुरु

खुदा का नूर है गुरु
ज्ञान का भंडार है गुरु
अंधेरों में जलती शमा है गुरु
हमें इंसानियत सिखाता है गुरु
ज़िन्दगी में जीना सिखाता है गुरु
ज़मीन पर रहने वाला भगवान् है गुरु
हमारी ज़िन्दगी का
मार्गदर्शक है गुरु
दुनिया से हमें
वाकिफ़ कराता है गुरु
हर कला में हमें निपुण
बनाता है गुरु
मन में विश्वास,
रंगों में साहस भरता है गुरु
मुश्किलों में हिम्मत रखना
सिखाता है गुरु
हमें सही बोलने का सलीका
सिखाता है गुरु
अपने रिश्तों की सफलता में
खुश होता है गुरु

-आरती पाण्डेय

Faith in times of Uncertainty

When you don't
understand what's
happening in your life,
and you feel empty. Just
close your eyes take a
deep breath pray and cry
to GOD tell him all the
problems you have and
say, "O GOD, I know this
is your plan just help me
through it." He always
knows what is best for
you sometimes he tests
us to make us stronger
to make us the better
person. Your entire
thoughts will be changed
and you can feel the
truth of this life. You will
be a mature person. So
in hard times learn from
that and have faith in
your GOD.

-Mantasha Khanam



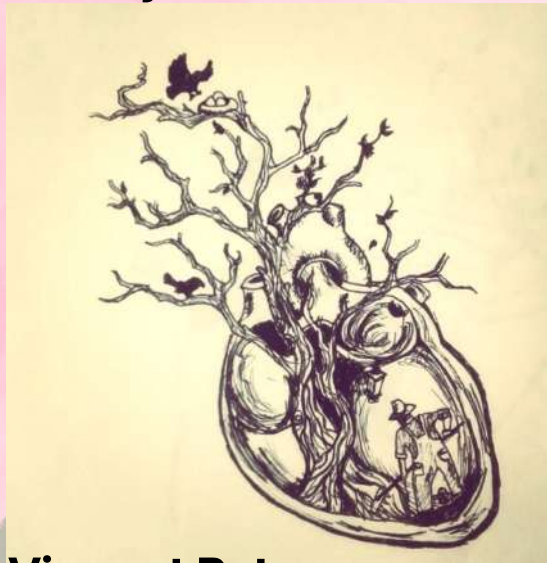
Artists' Corner



Soumya Srivastava



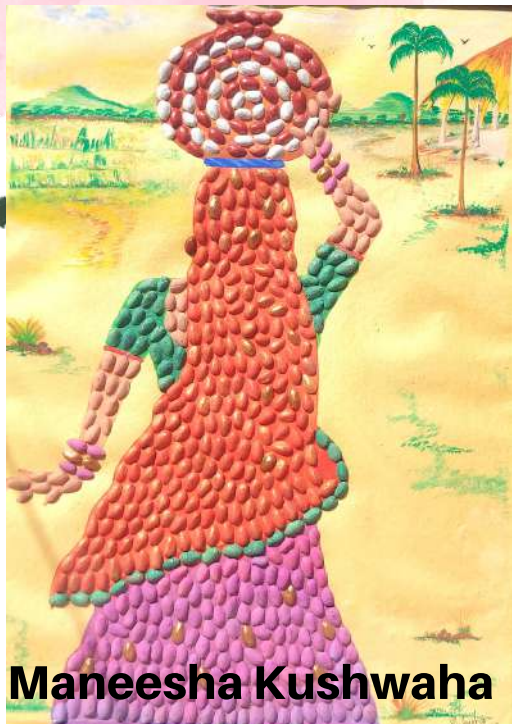
Shahana Begum



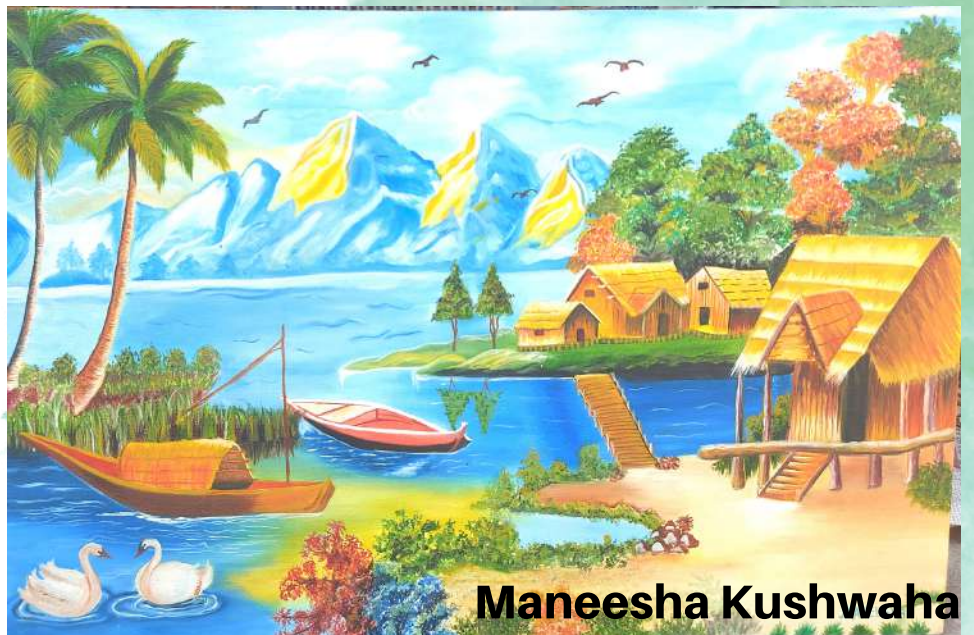
Vincent Peter



Rachel Alice



Maneesha Kushwaha



Maneesha Kushwaha

Precious Memories

Collage Making Competition



Saima Zainub



Aqsa Musheer



Vertika Prasad

Christmas Celebration



Precious Memories

Picture Gallery



Facts about Brains



The cerebrum makes up 85% of the brain's weight, and the brain makes up about 2% of a human's body weight. The texture of the brain is like a firm jelly. The heaviest normal human brain weighed 4.43 pounds. It belonged to the Russian Writer Ivan Turgenev.²

Building Vocab

Abate: to become less active, less intense or less in amount

Usage: As I began my speech, my feelings of nervousness quickly abated.

Bittersweet: tinged with a feeling of sadness.

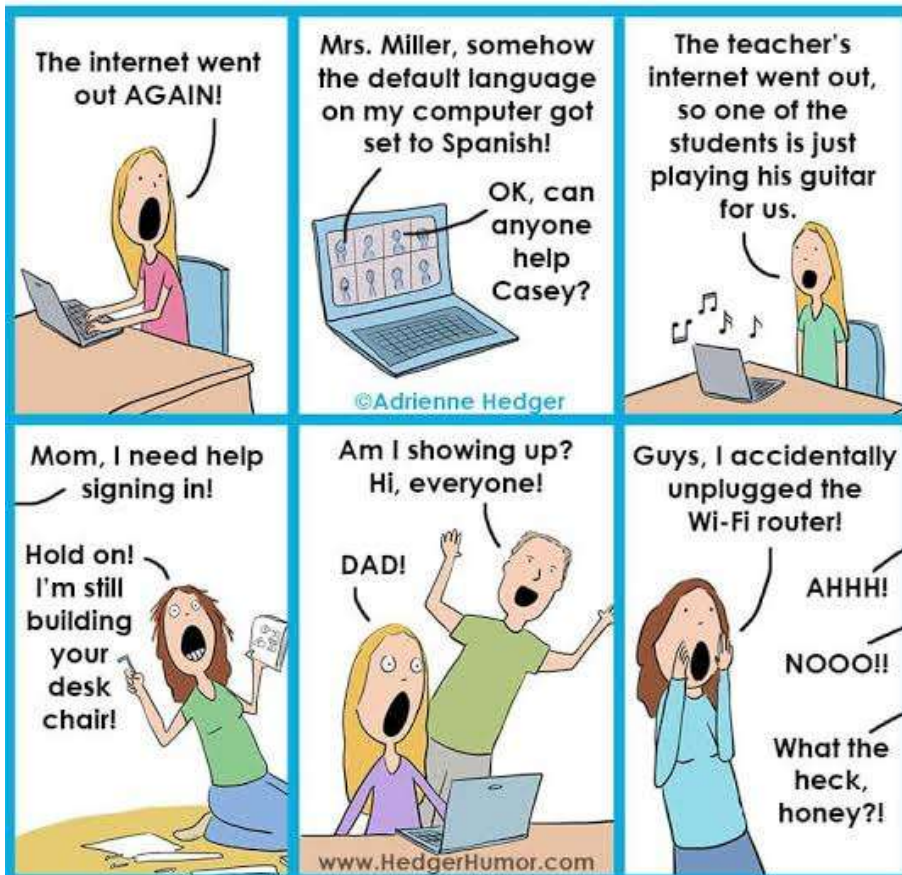
Usage: The ending of the movie was bittersweet.

Clout: special advantage or power.

Usage: The children of rich and famous people believe they have a lot of clout.



Scenes from Schooling At My House



"For me, becoming isn't about arriving somewhere or achieving a certain aim. I see it instead as forward motion, a means of evolving, a way to reach continuously toward a better self. The journey doesn't end."

-Michelle Obama

