RENAISSANCE

With a look into the modern world

VOLUME-3   2024-25

DELHI PUBLIC SCHOOL BANGALORE EAST

Message From:
Sri. K. Rahman Khan

Founder and Chairman KKECT

Pro-Vice Chairman DPS Bangalore/ Mysore

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." - Nelson Mandela

I am delighted to announce the launch of the third edition of "Renaissance" at Delhi Public School Bangalore East, showcasing the remarkable contributions of our talented students. The study of humanities plays a pivotal role in expanding our horizons, fostering meaningful connections, and laying the foundation for civic engagement. It equips individuals with the tools to think creatively and critically, empowering them to navigate the ever-evolving world with relevance and a little insight. Humanities illuminates the intricate web of knowledge, demonstrating how various disciplines interconnect and contribute to our collective wisdom. By examining and contrasting our values with those of others, it sharpens our moral compass. Furthermore, it enriches our wisdom by showcasing how others have confronted life's challenges, be it their failures, successes, adversities, or triumphs. Humanities instills an appreciation for enduring truths, helping us distinguish between the trivial and the profound.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to **Principal Dr. Manila Carvalho** and her dedicated team of educators for their unwavering commitment to nurturing responsible and conscientious citizens. I firmly believe that the school will continue to pioneer new horizons in education. I also convey my warmest felicitations to the Humanities team on the launch of the third edition of "Renaissance." I wish the team every success in all their future endeavours.

Message from
Mr. Mansoor Ali Khan

Treasurer KKECT
Member
Board of Management
DPS Bangalore/Mysore

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."
~Mahatma Gandhi

It fills me with immense pleasure and pride to announce the launch of the third edition of "Renaissance," the Humanities Publication, at Delhi Public School Bangalore East. This marks a significant milestone in our ongoing journey to cultivate well-rounded individuals who appreciate the transformative power of exploring the depths of human existence. The Humanities, as a field of study, serve as a mirror reflecting our humanity. They unravel the intricacies of human interaction, cooperation, and sometimes, discord.

Through the Humanities, we gain profound insights into our collective identity, societal structures, and the rich tapestry of cultures that shape our world. Furthermore, they guide us in organising our societies to achieve our shared goals and dreams. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Principal Dr. Manila Carvalho and her exceptional team of educators for their unwavering commitment to creating an environment where students are encouraged to explore the multifaceted aspects of life. Their dedication to transcending the curriculum and igniting a passion for learning is truly commendable.

As we unveil the third edition of Renaissance, I am confident that this publication will serve as a guiding light, illuminating the path to a deeper understanding of the humanities. My sincere best wishes for its success and for the continued growth of knowledge and creativity within our school community.

Message from
Mr. Maqsood Ali Khan

Secretary KKECT Member Board of Management
DPS Bangalore/Mysore

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." ~Dr. Seuss

I am brimming with pride and joy as we introduce the third edition of "Renaissance," a profound exploration of the world of Humanities at Delhi Public School Bangalore East. This publication is a testament to the boundless creativity that resides within our students across various facets of Humanities.

Within these pages, you will embark on a journey through a world where students are encouraged to think freely, to express themselves with unwavering confidence, and to showcase their unique talents. The flame of curiosity and knowledge burns brightly within our students, and this Publication is a tribute to the fires that have been ignited.

My heartfelt best wishes go out to Principal Dr. Manila Carvalho, Vice Principal Ms. Priti Ssoota, our dedicated teachers, the brilliant students, and the diligent editorial team of Renaissance. Together, you have crafted a masterpiece that celebrates the power of curiosity and the beauty of intellectual exploration.

From the Principal's Desk
Dr. Manila Carvalho

"Once you learn to read, you will be forever free. Knowledge makes a man unfit to be a slave, and education provides that knowledge. Education means emancipation. It means light and liberty. It means the uplifting of the soul of man into the glorious light of truth."~Frederick Douglass

We're pleased to announce the launch of the third edition of Renaissance, a student-led publication run for, and by the students at Delhi Public School Bangalore East. We have been inspired by the voices of the students, their views, perspectives, and stories.

Our mission is to bring their thoughtful and engaging commentary on political, social and cultural issues, while also displaying the campus's creative side through the arts, literary and otherwise.

By the means of the Humanities Publication, we carry forward our school's mission to encourage creativity and innovation within each child for the all-round development of children into well disciplined, academically oriented and self – confident individuals who will move on to make a mark in the global society and achieve excellence in all walks of life. My best wishes to the Humanities team.

From the Vice-Principal's Desk
Ms. Priti Ssoota

"The beautiful thing about learning is that nobody can take it away from you. Education provides not only knowledge but also empowerment, strength, and freedom. It's the foundation upon which we build our future."~B.B. King

Renaissance published by the Humanities department is a creative expression of the students that demonstrate their curiosity, research skills and technical skills. The students of today are digital natives and we at Delhi Public School Bangalore East provide suitable avenues of utilising and honing the multifarious skills of our students.

This was an opportunity for every learner not just to gain knowledge about the subject but to also think critically and creatively in order to be future-ready and be kindled to rise above one's own expectations. I congratulate the Humanities department for bringing the vision to fruition by encouraging students to work as a team and display their creative skills and research prowess. Wish you all a successful future.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

# Cultural Preservation: The Resilient Tibetan Buddhists in Karnataka

-Keerat Gandhi XII B

In 1950, China annexed Tibet, leading countless peace-seeking Buddhists and Tibetan exiles who were fleeing persecution to seek refuge and to preserve their history, their culture, and their practices. The first settlements exist in Himachal Pradesh, established in 1961 right after the Tibetan uprising of 1959. However, the largest is one that will be discussed with great detail below.

Bylakuppe, located in the Mysuru district of Karnataka, is an example of this preservation effort; it is one of the largest Buddhist settlements in the world outside Tibet and holds significant cultural and religious importance for the Buddhists.

Under the guidance of the 14th Dalai Lama, the Indian government provided land for these refugees, leading to the establishment of this vibrant community. Thought of as a singular settlement, the land is actually divided into two: Lugsum Samdupling, which was established in 1961, and Dickyi Larsoe, established in 1969. They served the purpose of expansion; as more Tibetan refugees escaped to the area, they required more land to accommodate them.
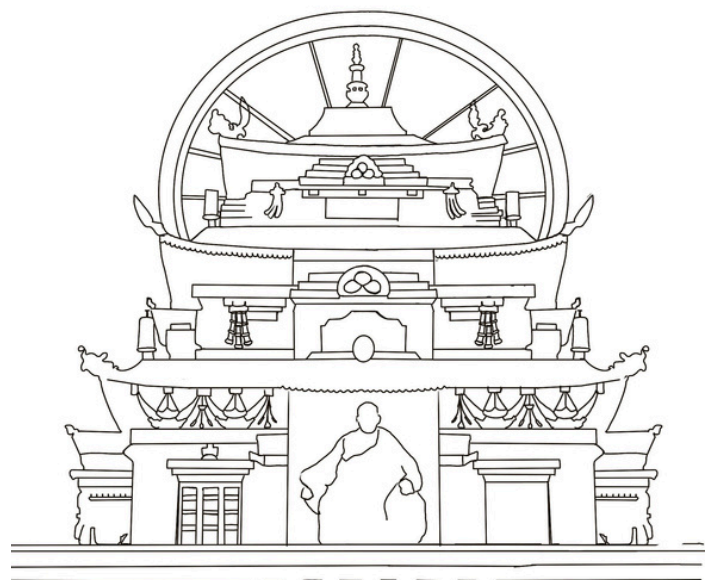
The settlement consists of several Tibetan monasteries, built as they would be in their home country, the most prominent being the Namdroling Monastery, built in 1963, which is also known as the Golden Temple. It is seen as one of the largest teaching centers of the Nyingma lineage of Tibetan Buddhism and is now home to a large number of monks and nuns. The architecture of the monastery reflects the roots of the community with its intricate murals, statues of Buddha, and golden stupas; it showcases the traditional Tibetan art and craftsmanship.

The teachings of Tibet have been preserved by these people, along with the ancient astrological and medical knowledge of the region. Practitioners of Sowa-Rigpa, the holistic healing practice for spiritual and physical wellbeing, are housed in the region. They also participate in a debate tradition in the Sera monastery, which helps in exploring the different interpretations of Buddhist texts and understanding of Buddhist doctrines.

Bylakuppe is not just a religious centre but also a hub, a museum city of Tibetan culture. The settlement has schools, hospitals, and handicraft centres that support the livelihood of the Tibetan community through their own practices and culture. The Tibetan New Year, Losar, is celebrated with great enthusiasm, drawing visitors from across the country to witness the vibrant rituals and ceremonies that are a recreation of the larger celebration.

Foreign visitors require special permits to visit the area, the Protected Area Permit (PAP); however, Indian citizens are free to do so; however, an overnight stay may also require a similar permit.

Over the years, Bylakuppe has become a symbol of resilience and cultural preservation, offering a unique glimpse into the nature of Tibetan life. Despite being far from their homeland, the Tibetan settlers in Bylakuppe have successfully maintained their traditions, cultural practices, and way of life, making it a vital centre to learn and understand Tibetan Buddhism and culture right on our doorsteps in India.

Katha Kahe Toh Kathak Kahave

-by Ananya Shetty XI A

Dance brims in every corner of India, through the various land forms, soil types, weather conditions, regions, social structure, and religion; it is the monsoon rain that irrigates the field of Indian culture and tradition.

Dipping toes into this ice-cold body of water is no simple task. It hounds you, haunts you, and follows you everywhere—you can hear the beat in the rustle of the leaves, the cries of the birds, the sound of flowing water, the chatter of people, the clatter of utensils. Everywhere, every day, every second.

But it also nurtures you, takes your hand, and travels back in time, jumping through the landmarks of history. For me, the hand that took mine was Kathak. It gripped onto me tightly, against my will in the beginning, but as time went on, I fell in love with every aspect of it.

The name of the dance form Kathak comes from the Sanskrit word 'Katha' which means story. The dance originated from a band of traveling bards from ancient northern India known as 'Kathakar' who communicated stories from Hindu epics and mythology through dance, songs, and music. The art of Kathak was intrinsically connected to ancient storytelling practices, where Abhinaya took center stage, vividly painting emotions and narratives on the canvas of imagination.

A while back, I'd traveled to Rajasthan, which is home to one of the Gharanas of Kathak, the Jaipur Gharana. It is a land brimming with colours, history, talent, story, and culture.

The music I heard, the dances I saw, the weather I experienced, the people I met, and the forts I visited all made me want to get up and dance. Because I was so sure I'd be able to see history play its rhythm for my dance, just so that I could go back in time and see life as it was.

While exploring the forts over there (which are quite magnificent; I could spend hours just staring at every aspect and thought of architecture and design), I deeply poured over the history of Jodha and Akbar, their interfaith arrangement, and the changes and accommodations that followed.

It reminded me of the evolution of Kathak as a dance form, particularly the Mughal era. The Mughal period marked a significant turning point for Kathak's evolution. As Kathak found favor in the opulent courts of Mughal rulers, the dance underwent a breathtaking transformation. Influences from Persian and Central Asian cultures beautifully entwined with the art, elevating it to new heights of refinement and elegance.

During this era, Kathak gracefully glided from its spiritual and devotional roots to embrace more secular themes. The Kathakars artfully interwove courtly love stories and captivating tales from Persian literature into their performances. Intricate footwork patterns, known as tatkars, added rhythmic complexity, leaving audiences spellbound with every step.

Beyond the courts, Kathak also thrived as a communal art, with the tawaifs playing a vital role in preserving and passing down the dance to generations. The tawaifs, accomplished artists themselves, masterfully blended Hindu and Muslim cultural influences, infusing Kathak with sensuality, grace, and a harmonious fusion of traditions. Kathak is one of the only Indian Classical dance forms to carry Persian elements.

As I moved on from the forts to the streets of Rajasthan, Jaipur in particular, I felt a newfound appreciation for the Jaipur Gharana of Kathak. I tried to see the characteristics of the dance form in everyday life over there, in the behaviour of the people, the hustle of life, the colourful clothing, the cuisine, the tradition, etc.

How the Gharana's were born:
After decline of the Mughal rulers, and proliferation of small principalities, Kathak dancers went to villages or in search of patronage under Nawabs (Muslim rulers) and Hindu Rajput kings. Lucknow and Jaipur became two major centres of Kathak in India.

The dance style that flourished under the Rajput kings of Jaipur is called Jaipur Gharana. In this Gharana, special emphases on powerful footwork, chakars, kavita's, layakari, can be seen. A particular zeal or fastness is seen in Jaipur Gharana; the dancers can easily dance on difficult taals such as Dhamar, Choutal, Rudra, Bramha etc.

When I came back to Bangalore from the short trip, it was a bittersweet moment. I would've loved to stay back and learn more about the history of dance, the history of the Rajputs and the common people.

But alas, I had to come back to learn about the national movement in school. However, the trip did provide me with a lot of insight and added more purpose to my dancing. I felt more connected with the dance form—a little tirade with history that provided me with new ways to shine.

Exploring the Psychological and Cultural Impact of Dystopian Fiction

- by Sonia Basrani XI M

Dystopian fiction, characterized by its portrayal of oppressive, nightmarish futures, serves as a powerful lens through which we can explore contemporary anxieties and societal concerns. By presenting exaggerated or fictionalised versions of potential futures, dystopian narratives often reflect and critique current socio-political and technological trends. This paper delves into the psychological and cultural impact of dystopian fiction, examining how these narratives shape and mirror societal fears, influence public perception, and contribute to cultural dialogue.

The Nature of Dystopian Fiction

Dystopian fiction is a genre that presents a vision of the future where society is characterized by totalitarianism, environmental collapse, or other forms of systemic degradation. Prominent examples include George Orwell's '1984', Aldous Huxley's 'Brave New World', and Margaret Atwood's 'The Handmaid's Tale'.

These works are often set in worlds where human freedoms are severely restricted, and the central theme revolves around resistance, survival, or the critique of current trends that could lead to such futures.

Psychological Impact of Dystopian Fiction
Fear and Anxiety

Dystopian fiction frequently evokes strong emotional responses, including fear and anxiety. By depicting plausible or extreme consequences of current issues such as climate change, technological surveillance, or political corruption—these narratives can heighten readers' awareness and concern about real-world issues. For instance, Orwell's '1984' has been cited as a catalyst for discussions on privacy and state surveillance, resonating with readers; fears about government overreach.

> **"The Ultimate Dystopia is the one inside our own heads"**

Catharsis and Reflection

Reading dystopian fiction can also serve as a form of catharsis, allowing readers to confront and process their fears in a controlled environment. The extreme situations depicted in these stories provide a safe space to explore feelings of helplessness, anger, and resistance. Additionally, dystopian narratives often offer a form of reflection on personal and societal values, prompting readers to question their own beliefs and behaviors.

Influence on Mental Health

The intense emotional experiences elicited by dystopian fiction can impact mental health in various ways. For some, these narratives can deepen feelings of existential dread or pessimism about the future. Others might find that engaging with dystopian themes fosters resilience or a sense of agency by inspiring proactive measures or social activism.

Cultural Impact of Dystopian Fiction
Reflection of Societal Concerns

Dystopian fiction often mirrors the anxieties of its time, providing a cultural critique of contemporary issues. For example, the rise of surveillance technology has been a central theme in dystopian works, reflecting growing concerns about privacy and state control. Similarly, environmental collapse is a recurring motif in dystopian literature, highlighting fears related to climate change and ecological degradation.

Influence on Public Discourse

Dystopian narratives can influence public discourse by shaping perceptions of technological and political developments. By dramatizing potential consequences, these stories can provoke debate and raise awareness about pressing issues. Works like 'The Handmaid's Tale' have sparked discussions about gender equality and reproductive rights, demonstrating the genre's capacity to influence social and political conversations.

Impact on Popular Culture

Dystopian fiction has left a significant mark on popular culture, influencing other media forms such as film, television, and video games. The genre's themes and tropes have become deeply ingrained in modern storytelling, contributing to a broader cultural lexicon. The success of dystopian franchises like 'The Hunger Games' has not only popularized the genre but also amplified its impact on cultural and societal attitudes.

Comparative Analysis: Dystopian Fiction vs. Utopian Fiction
Contrasting Visions

Dystopian fiction contrasts sharply with utopian fiction, which presents idealised visions of the future. While utopian narratives focus on the realization of perfect societies, dystopian works highlight the potential pitfalls and failures of such visions. This dichotomy allows for a more nuanced exploration of human nature and societal structures, providing a comprehensive view of possible futures.

The Role of Dystopian Fiction in Societal Progress

Dystopian fiction often serves as a cautionary tale, warning readers of potential dangers and encouraging societal reflection. By addressing the shortcomings of utopian ideals, dystopian narratives contribute to discussions about how to achieve positive change and avoid undesirable outcomes.

Conclusion

Dystopian fiction plays a critical role in exploring and shaping psychological and cultural perspectives on contemporary issues. By presenting exaggerated scenarios of societal collapse or oppression, these narratives engage readers with their fears, provoke reflection, and influence public discourse. Understanding the impact of dystopian fiction helps illuminate the ways in which literature can both mirror and shape societal anxieties, providing valuable insights into our collective concerns and aspirations for the future.

On Existentialism
"I rebel; therefore, I exist "

–by Muneeza Ansari XI A

Human beings are meaning-producing and interpretative creatures, and they process the world through systems of meanings that may be termed variously as discourses, paradigms, frameworks, perspectives, and so on. The same social phenomenon may be interpreted differently through Marxist, feminist, environmentalist, anti-race, indigenous, queer, etc. lenses, leading to severe contestations in the public sphere. As Nietzsche famously quipped, "There are no facts, only interpretations."

This question: **"What is the meaning of life?"** has constantly confronted humanity. Some of us tend to seek an answer to this perennial question in philosophy or science, but most seek answers in religion. However, despite our best efforts in trying to answer this question, the answer often proves elusive, and in the end, we are left with more questions than answers.

In the marketplace of ideas, existentialism provides us with a unique perspective. Rather than answering the question, it challenges us to come to terms with the fact that life has no profound meaning attached to it. It proposes that the meaning of life is nonexistent because we are not here to find it; we are here to create it by living. In the words of the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, "Life has no meaning a priori... It is up to you to give it a meaning, and value is nothing but the meaning that you choose."

What is Existentialism?

Existentialism is an intellectual movement that gained attention in mid-20th-century France. It is often viewed as a philosophical movement that arose in response to the context of the second world war (1939–1945), the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (6 and 9 August 1945), and the Nazi concentration camps (1933–1945). These events contributed to what Baert calls "the existentialist movement," a period where an entire generation struggled with the fundamental aspects of human life, including the anxiety-inducing realities of death, freedom, and meaninglessness.

The term existentialism was coined by Soren Kierkegaard, a Danish theologian and philosopher known as the "father of existentialism." According to Soren Kierkegaard, existentialism "is a rejection of all purely abstract thinking, of a purely logical or scientific philosophy; in short, a rejection of the absoluteness of reason." Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche laid the groundwork, and the most well-known voices of this movement were French philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, along with literary figures such as Albert Camus, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Franz Kafka, José Ortega, and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

The Conceptual Landscape
To understand existentialism, we need to explore certain core concepts that are briefly discussed below:

The Absurd
The idea of the absurd suggests that the world has no meaning beyond what we give it. Absurdism is a philosophical theory that the universe is irrational and has no meaning attached to it. It states that when humans try to find meaning, it leads to conflict with the world. Absurdism claims that existence is absurd.

Existence precedes Essence
Existentialists see us as constantly evolving creatures instead of thinking of ourselves as having a fixed or unchanging essence. Simply put, we are not born with a set of purposes or identities. Instead, our identity is something that we create throughout our lives through the actions we take and the choices we make. We are thrown into this world without any predetermined path, and the power to shape ourselves rests with us.

Freedom and Responsibility

The existentialist perspective states that with freedom comes responsibility; hence, when we talk about freedom, we talk about the responsibility that comes with it. What distinguishes us from other beings is that we are self-conscious and exist solely for ourselves, which means we are responsible for everything we do. Yet, it is common for people to seek freedom without holding themselves accountable for avoiding responsibility. At times, it appears that some people will be able to succeed at this, but they cannot run away from the psychological consequences their actions can have.

Authenticity

Existentialists are against the idea of falling into the steps of norms set up by society because they prevent us from being true to ourselves. They believe that the true meaning of life is breaking away from the tradition we were born in. It's all about making choices that reflect what truly matters to us and embracing our freedom.

The Impact of Existentialism on Literature and Art

Existentialism has dramatically influenced art and literature, impacting how we view various themes like freedom, meaning, and life. Many key literary works delve into ideas of the complexity of life and human experience in this absurd world. A prime example of this is 'The Stranger' by Albert Camus, which explains the philosophy of absurdism, claiming that there is no inherent meaning in life. One must find a way to confront meaninglessness and indifference in life.

Jean-Paul Sartre's **'No Exit'** explores existential themes like freedom and responsibility, loneliness, and the failure of religion by presenting characters trapped in a room that symbolises the inescapable nature of human freedom and the responsibility and torment that follows it. These literary works challenge the readers to accept that life has no inherent meaning and the burden of creating its purpose.
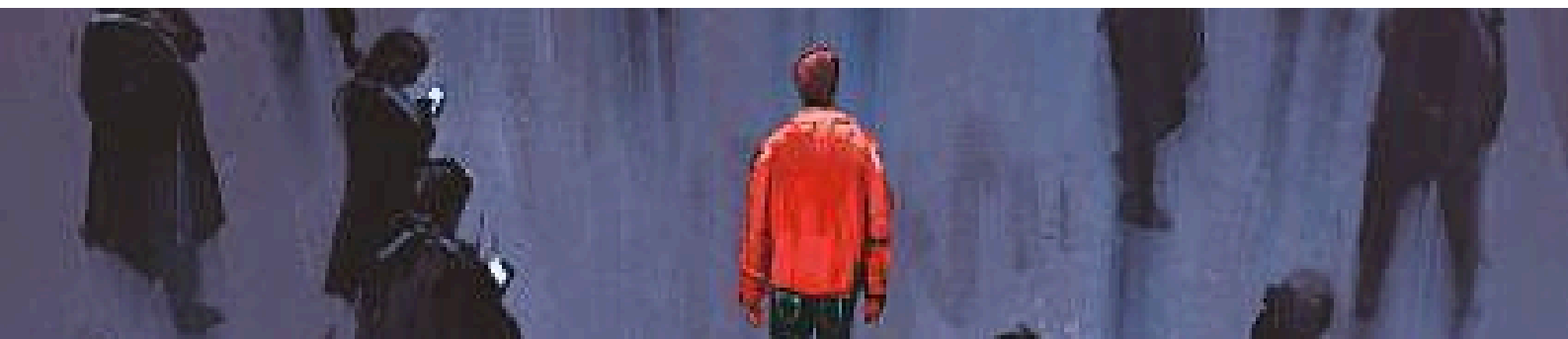
Existentialism in modern art, theatre, and film encourages us to question and challenge our values and existence. It also enables us to express our meanings and values by creating art; art meets philosophy. Artists like Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko used abstract forms and colours to express existential themes. Francis Bacon's disturbing figures reflect existential angst, suffering, isolation, etc. When we talk about theatre, there is a movement called the **Theatre of the Absurd**, which was very much influenced by existentialist ideas.

Samuel Beckett's 'Waiting for Godot' portrays the absurdity of human existence, the purposelessness of life, and how suffering increases with time. Eugène Ionesco's 'The Bald Soprano' tends to express the futility of meaningful communication in modern society. In the film world, Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968) delves into questions about human evolution, the nature of existence, etc., making the viewers ponder the vastness and uncertainty of this universe. The film Solaris (1972), directed by Andrei Tarkovsky, is based on Stanislaw Lem's book. Solaris explores themes of memory, grief, and the nature of human consciousness, and it is considered a deeply philosophical and existential work. Of course, the list is never-ending, but these are some examples.

Is Existentialism a Philosophy for a "Brave New World"?

The relevance of existentialism in modern society lies in its ability to encourage us to navigate challenges and the complex nature of life by providing us with an open framework. We live in a progressing society, and dealing with that existentialism encourages us to pause, ponder, and make conscious choices that align with our aspirations and values. The modern generation is deeply immersed in the digital world; hence, we face many new challenges.

The digital world, like anything, comes with pros and cons; while it can make us feel less lonely, at the same time, it can also make us feel isolated from the physical world around us because many of us use it as a distraction. Once we get too immersed, it'll make it difficult for us to communicate with people and deal with situations in the physical world, making us feel more isolated than before.

Existentialism encourages us to express our authentic selves in the digital world and emphasises genuine connections beyond our digital world. Its relevance in today's world lies in its ability to guide us toward our authentic selves rather than away from them. By applying principles laid down by existentialism in both the physical and digital worlds, one can make coherent choices, frame one's meanings, etc.

Like any existing thing in this world, even existentialism has its critiques. While it significantly influences literature, philosophy, theatre, etc., many philosophers and thinkers still challenge its core ideas like perceived nihilism, hyper-freedom, overemphasis on individualism, lack of practical guidance, etc. The filmmaker Woody Allen echoed these sentiments when he jibed: "I took a test in Existentialism. I left all the answers blank and got 100."

In conclusion, existentialism challenges us to confront the uncertainties of life by not offering us any profound answer or meaning but rather by giving us the freedom to create our own. It suggests that life has no inherent meaning, which means that the power to create meaning lies in our hands and depends on the choices that we make throughout it. Existentialism encourages us to live authentically, even in a chaotic world, by embracing our freedom and considering the accountability that comes with it. It reminds us that meaning is something that we create by living, urging us to live fully despite the unknown. While Descartes emphasised thought when he wrote Cogito, Ergo Sum (I think therefore I am) and Rousseau emphasised emotions when he wrote, "I feel therefore I am," the existentialist novelist Albert Camus emphasised rebellion when he encapsulated his philosophy in the phrase, "I rebel, therefore I exist."
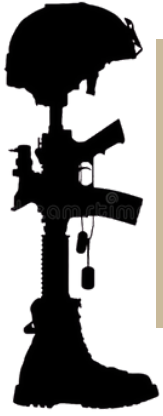
Attack of the Dead Men

–by Reyansh Balan XII A

WWI saw many horrendous atrocities, and most of them can be linked to chemical warfare. A prominent example of these atrocities is the Battle of Osowiec Fortress, which took place on August 6, 1915. 12 battalions of 76th Landwehr division battalions, consisting of over 7,000 men under Generalfeldmarschall Paul von Hindenburg's command, set their sights on taking the prized Osowiec fortress from the weakened Russian army. The Germans, however, had a dangerous weapon in the form of gas. The Russian army was ill-equipped and unprepared to deal with gas attacks, and the absence of gas masks for their personnel spelled certain doom for every Russian fighting on the Western front. In the early hours of August 6, when the winds favoured the Germans, the gas batteries opened up.

A dark green wave of smog rolled over the enemy lines, creating a death zone. The gas was a mixture of Chlorine gas and Bromine. The bromine acts as a respiratory irritant, and the chlorine gas, combined with moisture in the air, forms hydrochloric acid, which bites into the membranes and flesh of the lungs. The Russian soldiers choked on their blood, and every breath they took destroyed their lungs, leading to many agonizing deaths, but the horrors didn't stop there. The Acid attacked their eyes and noses as well, leading to chemical burns in those areas as well. Those further away from the initial attack tied wet rags and soaked shirts to their faces in a desperate attempt for protection but that ended up helping little.

The defenders suffered heavy casualties, with only 100 men surviving, all burned.

As the gas dissipated, the Germans formed infantry battalions. While other units went to secure the nearby railway line, it was up to the 7000 men of the 76th Landwehr division to storm the fortress in what was thought to be an easy victory.

As the Germans moved on, they came under heavy fire from the fortress as artillery and machine gun fire opened up holes in their ranks. Then it happened. The remaining Russian reserve companies joined forces with the 100 survivors and launched a counterattack, which can only be described as something from a nightmare.

"You need to kill a Russian twice. Once to kill him, and once to stop him".

They emerged from the trenches with rifles and bayonets in hand. The dead returned to life as the Russians gasped heavily for air through destroyed lungs, their faces hidden behind bloodied rags. They only had one purpose: revenge. Their eyes were red and bloodied, and they spat blood and parts of their lungs as they advanced, croaking and coughing like the living dead. The Russian countercharge halted the Germans as deep panic set in. They hastily withdrew, soon running away in terror as the panic spread through their ranks, pushing their comrades aside, trampling over each other, stumbling over barbed wire, as Russian artillery shells fell in between them. This was the Attack of the Dead Men. Accompanied by a bayonet charge of the reserves, they regained the lost trenches by 11:00 AM.

The Spider and Learned Helplessness

–by Mydhili Kallemuchikal Renjith XI B

"Try and try until you succeed"

An adage that people never seem to tire of saying. We've all heard the story of the king who waged a war over and over again, inspired by a spider that kept trying to weave a web, irrespective of its initial failures. But there's a reason that motivation is hard to come by after repeated failure, a reason that has psychological backing, one that has been studied time and time again: learned helplessness. A quick Google search will equip you with the knowledge that learned helplessness is a mental state in which an organism repeatedly subjected to aversive stimuli becomes incapable of or unwilling to avoid such stimuli, even if they become 'escapable'.

To illustrate this, consider an experiment conducted in a classroom where students were given 3 words to make anagrams out of and asked to solve them one at a time after receiving the start signal. Unbeknownst to them, they were divided into two groups, and each group received a different set of words. One group was given a set where the first two words could be easily rearranged to form an anagram; the other group was given a set in which it was impossible for the first two words to form anagrams. The third word was the same for both groups. The experimenter asked people to raise their hands once they had solved the first word. The entirety of the second group remained still, while one by one, those around them raised their hands. They were then asked to move onto the second word. A similar scenario ensued. By the time they reached the third word, although it was solvable, the second group still struggled.

What happened was achingly simple. When the second group saw hands go up around them as they struggled, they felt—in their own words —"stupid" and "rushed." They became increasingly confused as they reached the second word and struggled with that too, while the first group breezed through it. So, although the first group wasn't significantly more intelligent than the second, the second group had a lot more difficulty with the third word, simply because they believed that they were bound to fail. When we fail once, we tell ourselves to brush it off. Then we fail again, and we say, "Well, maybe next time." But when we fail the next time too, our self-esteem begins to plummet. We lose hope and lose confidence.

Eventually, we come to see our failure as a given outcome of a situation. If a student performs poorly in one exam, and then the next one, and the next one, no matter how much effort they put in, they come to believe that they are incapable of succeeding. If you raise your voice over and over again and nobody hears you, you learn to be quiet, because what difference did it make anyway?
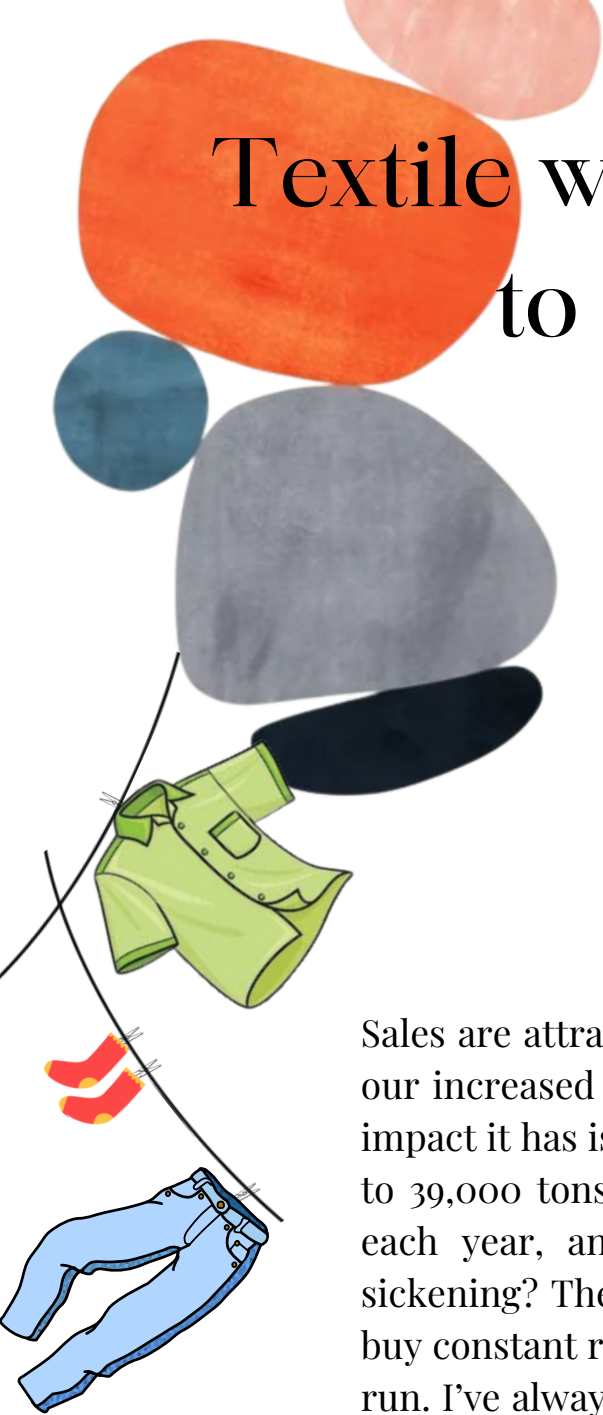
This is not to say that perseverance is worthless. Sometimes, like the fabled spider, it is only on the 8th try

that we get through. But instead of telling people that failure is only due to a lack of effort, maybe we should start telling each other to find out why we failed. Increasing the number of hours you study makes no difference if your study strategy is flawed. Instead, if you fail after that increase, all that teaches you is learned helplessness. It will do no good to keep trying when your methods are wrong and your understanding is inadequate.

It is very difficult to keep trying and to keep faith. But if we remind ourselves to look around, to comprehend our failure, perhaps we will notice that the third word does have an anagram, notice that the web we were weaving had a little knot that made it fray, and then we will succeed, whether on the 3rd try or the 8th.

Textile waste- too torn to be true

-by Pejavar Vinaya XIB

Last year, the 1st day of Prime Day was the single largest sales day in company history. Across both days, customers purchased a total of 375 million items, when the normal everyday sales rate sits at about 6 million. And most of that statistic was cheap clothes and accessories. Textiles take over 200 years to decompose in landfills; only about half the time even plastic takes to break down into miniscule fragments! Only 15% of these textiles even see the light of day again.

Sales are attractive, and cheaper clothes are enticing, leading to our increased patronage of fast fashion sites like Shein, but the impact it has is choking the waterways of developing nations. Up to 39,000 tons of unwanted clothing get dumped in the desert each year, and that number is only on the rise. Isn't that sickening? These clothes wear out so quickly that you'll have to buy constant replacements, making it costlier for you in the long run. I've always held that buying nothing is cheaper than buying things that are on sale that you didn't need anyway. Too much is always too bad, especially when it ends up in landfills!

Overconsumption is trending on shortform platforms. After all, the lifespan of these clothes is so short, they'll be done with by the time the next season rolls around with a new trend! With each new season comes a new wardrobe with the same obsessive need to remain relevant. Thrift shops, while common in the US, are a rich influencer's playground, the ideal treasure hunt for 'steals' that are bound to succumb to the same fate. In India, where a majority of our population remains sunken in poverty, second-hand clothing consists only of worn-out hand-me-downs that, very sustainably, play a variety of roles from tablecloth to cleaning rag before they are discarded.

Kumaraswamy Kamaraj The Kind Hearted Kingmaker

*–by Hrithikaa Kiran Shetty XII A*
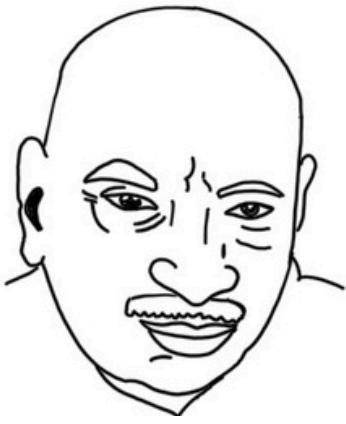
"Leadership is service, not position."

Reading this title, Dear Reader, you may wonder whether or not I am telling you a story. Well, I am, but unlike other stories, this is a true story of a man who is not quite heard of but made a true and impactful difference in society.

Kamaraj was born as Kamatchi on 15 July 1903 in Virudhupatti, Madras Presidency, to Kumaraswami Nadar and Sivakami Ammal. He was a Nadar, one of the most depressed castes of Hindu society. Due to his family circumstances, he dropped out of school at the age of 12 and joined to work in a cloth shop. This is the time he really understood and was fascinated by politics. He was attracted to Annie Besant's Home Rule Movement and empowered by writers like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Bharati. His family feared this political inclination and sent him to work at a timber shop in Kerala. But if you think our future kingmaker's political career is over, you are in for a surprise.

Being in Kerala, Kamaraj also participated in the Vaikom Satyagraha, which aimed at giving access to all caste groups to temples, which eventually succeeded. With a newfound determination and his first success in hand, there was no looking back for Kamaraj. He joined the Indian National Congress at the age of 16 and took part in the Non-cooperation Movement and the Salt Satyagraha. At 20, he met Satyamurthy, one of the greatest orators and a leading figure of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, who would become Kamaraj's political guru.
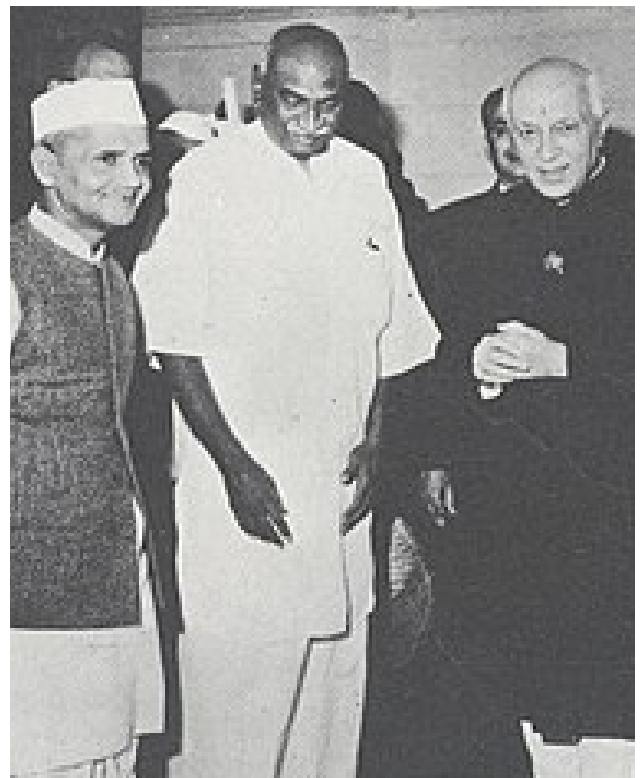
During this period, he went to prison six times and spent more than 3,000 days in British jails, which is approximately around eight years of his life. He also met revolutionaries like Jaidev Kapoor and Kamal Nath Tiwari during his time in jail.

He went on to become Chief Minister of Madras in 1954. He was the first non-English-speaking Chief Minister of India. But it was during the 9 years of his administration that Tamil Nadu came to be known as one of the best administered states in India, which is why his rule was considered by some as "The Golden Age."

His first major reform was to provide free and compulsory primary education to all children in the rural areas, ensuring that there was no village in the whole state that didn't have at least one school and a teacher. To encourage parents to send their children to school, he introduced the Free Midday Meal Scheme for both rural and urban children. He also developed irrigation and industries in the state. Due to this, He was known as 'Kalvi Thanthai' (Father of Education)."

He is also known for his **Kamaraj Plan,** which he proposed to Jawaharlal Nehru. The plan stated that all the senior most leaders should leave their posts and take up organisational work so as to bust the myth that Congress party members were lured by money.

He also played a significant role in bringing Lal Bahadur Shastri and Indira Gandhi to the position of prime minister. He was known as the Kingmaker because of this.

Throughout his life, he was a very humble and simple man. There was an incident that happened when he was the CM of Tamil Nadu, where his mother asked for a pipe to be installed in front of their house because she could not go to collect water every day, which the public works department did successfully. But when Kamaraj saw it, he asked to remove it, saying that all the women in Tamil Nadu were his mothers, and he would not install it unless they all did. He also followed Gandhian principles, wore a simple Khadi shirt and dhoti, and was often referred to as 'Black Gandhi' by the people.

Kamaraj did not own any property and had a mere ₹130 of money, two pairs of sandals, four pairs of shirts, and dhotis, apart from a few books in his possession when he died. Kumaraswami Kamaraj died in 1975.

This is where my story ends, but today's politics is synonymous with corruption and bribery. But Kamaraj showed us a different kind of politics. After reading this story, I want you to ask yourself the question:

"Do you still view politics only with corruption and bribery?"

Project 39A: Bridging the gap in India's Criminal Justice System

–by Diya Pallath XII B

'Equal Justice, Equal Opportunity'

Project 39A is an initiative by National Law University, Delhi, that focuses on criminal justice research and legal aid. It is inspired by Article 39A of the constitution, which mandates free legal aid and equal justice to all sections of society, especially the marginalised communities. Their recent online exhibition called "Capital Letters from Death Row, India" seeks to bring attention to the experiences and stories of countless prisoners on the death row, as it features letters, audio recordings, and photographs, among other material created by these prisoners.

Such an experiment on an engaging platform aims to humanise criminals and do away with capital punishment. Project 39A is dedicated to addressing the lacunae in the statistical reports and hence providing a comprehensive analysis of the plight of prisoners sentenced to death in India. It undertakes numerous empirical research projects to collect data on the socio-economic, mental, and legal representation of these prisoners. Their aim is to highlight the implications of the death sentence by emphasising the psychological effects of prolonged periods on death row. One of the landmark publications, "Death Penalty India Report" (2016), was the first statistical study of its kind, entailing the meticulous details of the socio-economic conditions of the prisoners and the arbitrariness in awarding capital punishments to prisoners.

Project 39A also engages in advocacy efforts to promote legal and policy reforms aimed at ensuring fair trials and humane treatment for death row prisoners. Their findings also indicate that the prisoners come from marginalised communities and from poor socio-economic backgrounds, often without enough legal representation. The project has underscored the severe psychological distress experienced by death row inmates, which is exacerbated by the uncertainty and prolonged wait for execution. The findings have been critical in supporting systemic reforms such as better legal representation for poor prisoners and death row inmates under more humane conditions.

While Project 39A has substantially contributed to the discourse, it has been a huge challenge to translate the findings of its research into policy reforms proven to change the lives of death row detainees within a system that is not easily malleable. Key challenges to dealing with data rest first in the difficulty of obtaining clear, reliable, and up-to-date data on people sentenced to death and their cases due to the opaque nature of the criminal justice system, let alone any inclination by those in authority to share information in the first place.

It is sure to further scale up efforts in the space of policy advocacy aimed at influencing legislative and judicial reforms within India's Death Penalty Framework. Project 39A plays an important role in the law schools of India, particularly in the case of the death penalty laws of India. Research and legal aid work by Project 39A and aspects of advocacy are important constituents of the ongoing debates on reforms concerning India's criminal justice framework. It is a continuing enabler in the fight for a more just and fair system, focusing on the most vulnerable and marginalized sections of society.

The Uniform Civil Code Uniformly Diverse

–by Gayathri Krishnan XII A

"The only stable state is the one in which all men are equal before the law." Laws are a system of rules through which a particular community or state regulates behaviour. According to Greek mythology, Themis is the personification of justice, divine order, law, and custom. The weighed fold in her hand shows that justice should be impartial and cannot be influenced by factors like money, gender, caste, religion, etc. This is the basic principle in Indian law. During June 2023, the 22nd Law Commission of India has invited opinions from different stakeholders, including personnel as well as religious groups, on a uniform civil code for the country. This has made the uniform civil code once again one of the top agendas for the nation in the coming months.

This is after five years when 21st Law commission ruled "UCC was neither desirable nor necessary at this stage" for the country.

The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) aims to provide a legal framework governing personal matters such as divorce, marriage, inheritance, and adoption for all citizens. The constitution of India, in article 44, under one of the Directive Principles of State Policy states that the state shall do its best to secure a uniform civil code for its citizens. The UCC has been a subject of controversy and debate since its introduction. The UCC can be tracked to when the constitution was being framed. A section of the Constituent Assembly, including BR Ambedkar and KM Munshi, strongly believed that the implementation of UCC will lead to gender equality, secularism, and integration of the nation. Other members, like Nazirrudin Ahmad, were against this motion, as they believed that the religious laws of communities should not be interfered with.

This is due to India's diversity playing a key factor. There are various religious communities following their own personal laws. For example, there is no uniformity in the marriageable age concerning women. While some religious and customary personal laws permit polygamy and polyandry, others do not. The constitution makers did not stress the implementation of the UCC until there was a certain level of maturity in the mindsets of the citizens. Although there are states like Gujarat, Assam, and Madhya Pradesh that have expressed their willingness to implement the UCC, none of them have actually adopted it. We can see a form of UCC in the state of Goa. It follows the Portuguese Civil Code of 1867, which means that people of all religions in Goa are subject to the same laws on marriage, divorce, and succession. The Goa Daman and Diu Administration Act of 1962, which was passed after Goa joined the union as a territory in 1961, gave Goa permission to apply the Civil Code.

By implementing the UCC, there would be an eradication of confusion and conflict arising from the application of different personal laws. For example, the Shaho Bhano case, wherein the Supreme Court ruled that Shah Bano, who was divorced by her husband, be given financial support. This led to a backlash since this was against Muslim personal laws. UCC can also help in bringing about a sense of national unity by implementing a set of uniform laws irrespective of the gender, caste, or religion of an individual.

UCC would help in simplifying the legal system by consolidating and harmonising laws into a single code. This would enhance clarity, ease of implementation, and reduce the burden on the judiciary, leading to a more efficient legal system. Many countries across the world, like France, have implemented a uniform civil code. A UCC is the sign of a modern progressive nation, implying that it has moved away from caste and religious personal laws that may not be concurrent and align with contemporary values. By implementing UCC, there is a better upholding of gender equality. For example, men and women have equal rights of inheritance on the property, succession, etc. However, there are two sides to a coin.
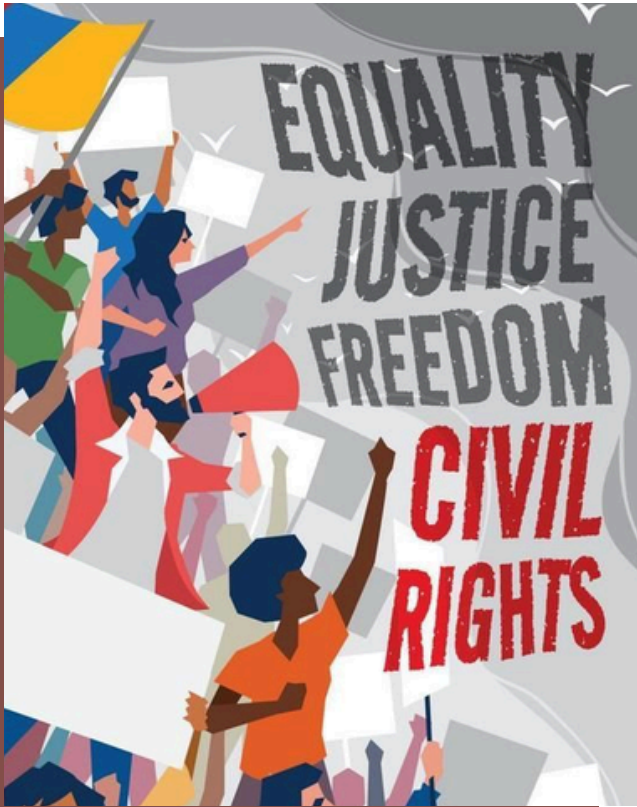
Many policymakers believe that by introducing UCC, we would be infringing with the religious and cultural autonomy of the people. There are concerns that the UCC will implement a dominant law that could result in the loss of the unique identities and features of the personal laws. The minority communities and tribals believe that the government cannot be the institution that can decide what laws are perfect and what needs to be reformed. Another argument is based on the fact that India takes pride in the religious diversity and national integrity. For maintaining diversity, we need to respect every minority community's personal choices. Some of the political and religious groups argue that the UCC will impose a 'Hinduized' code for all communities.

For example, a UCC could include provisions for family disputes on property inheritance, which may be in line with Hindu customs and will legally force other communities to follow the same. It is also argued that if codified civil laws and criminal laws like the CrPC and IPC don't follow 'one nation, one law', then how can this diktat be applied to diverse personal laws of various communities? For example, the Indian Evidence Act of 1872, a federal act, was amended by the governments of West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. With respect to criminal law, note that different states have different legal ages for drinking alcohol. There is a third dimension to UCC, which argues the current draft is not addressing the LGBTQIA sections of society.

The implementation of the UCC is one that is complex and requires a lot of deliberation. Here are a few suggestions to ensure that UCC will cater to the needs of a wider section of people.

- The minority communities would feel like their opinions would not be valued when the UCC is implemented. Hence, the UCC needs to be more inclusive of the various communities. Any formulation of UCC should include consultation from stakeholders, religious leaders, or scholars who have expert knowledge on this matter.
- The implementation of the UCC should be gradual due to the cultural diversity and religious identity of the citizens. The sentiments and opinions of the people from various communities need to be kept in mind, and they shouldn't feel their personal rights have been infringed at any point.
- It is critical to make the citizens aware of the UCC, as the UCC involves important changes to the personal laws of religious communities. It is a sensitive issue that needs to be handled with care.

I would like to conclude hoping the Nation understands the need of the hour is a uniform civil code. At the same time, I do believe that the religious personal laws also need reform so as to align with modern values and realities. I hope this debate will help in exposing the prejudices and stereotypes regarding personal laws, and we can come up with a codified law that complies with the true spirit of democracy.

In the Streets of Hindustan

–by Charvi Sachdeva XII A

In the streets of Hindustan
where solidarity and sunny days glow
Does it shine there again like it used to?
Guess again I'd never know.

Right under a starless night,
When I was barely five
I'd packed my favorite plaything,
The people around me pacing

The sun soon started to rise
As I watched my neighbor, in front of my eyes
Usually he'd smile,
But now his eyes had hatred and a gleam of vie.

Then me, my brother and mother
Got onto a vehicle of our rescue
It took the Hindus and started the truck
Apparently, the land was no longer our refuge.

Atleast I had my plaything, a marionette,
But in the rush, its strings lied broken
The army men on the truck tried to help
Without even realizing they were in a similar web.

In the streets of Hindustan,
The truck made its way east towards our new house.
But what was the difference, I tried and thought
The land was the same, no matter how people fought.

I had a lot of fun that time.
To me the truck was a small joy ride
And though the streets were coloured red with blood
All I felt was my mother's comforting touch.

Preface

This summer, I met my grandpa who loves telling me stories, and asked him to tell me the story of the day he came from Pakistan. I'd been reading about the sanguinary event in my textbook, and wanted to know about it from someone who had experienced it first hand. I expected a very sad story, considering the things I'd read, But my grandpa was beyond happy to tell me the story. He told me that it was one of the most eventful days of his life, he even had fun!

He described how his neighbours and him made their way out of their houses deserting the Hindu street they lived in and about how a truck came from the Indian military to take the Hindu population to the trains out of Pakistan safely.

I passed by, seeing faces distraught,
And dances between men, with guns and swords
Some embraced the bodies unmoving
And some claimed victorious in the midst of ruins

In the streets of Hindustan
Once brothers killed and were killed
Their love so precious,
In which emptiness now filled.

But how could one win,
And how could one lose?
Now that I realize
The earth was never built by religions and rules

And as I closed my eyes that night
Everyone around me closed their hearts
And with the new found freedom attained
We also created of it two separate parts.

I slept finally
And forgot Pakistan

August 15th,
And I woke up in
A new country.

It was still my Hindustan,
As was the other side
Because in the streets of Hindustan
My heart resides.

And In the streets of Hindustan
Where religions divide,
Half of my heart remains with me
And the other lies on the another side.

He recalls seeing the experience through the eyes of a child, who was not aware of why all of it was happening.

Today, my grandpa misses the land of Pakistan. He thinks of the land longingly, wishing he could visit the streets him and his brother grew up in. The story stuck with me for a long, long time afterward. It made me value the mind of a child, after all the partition wouldn't have made sense to a child who doesn't understand the divide based on religion, a child who doesn't even know religion.

I made this poem inspired by his story, of a child traveling from India to Pakistan, and how today he dwells upon the incident years later, realizing the gravity of what happened during that time. I have weaved his simple story in between my take on the event, the bigger picture of the gruesome reality.

# History of the Indian Automobile Industry

–by Divyanshu Panda XII A

1. Colonizer Background and Early Invasions (1897-1947):

When the very first car was imported by an elite citizen of Calcutta in 1897, the Indian automobile industry began. Cars, even in the British colonial period, were still branded to be a luxury for the elite class and symbolized wealth and status, though most of the early cars used to be imported from Britain and Europe, like Rolls-Royce, which became the car of choice for Indian royalty. India had no industrial infrastructure and till this point, no local manufacturing of auto-mobiles. Cars were more of a luxury, and even the slightest attempt to have a home auto industry was unheard of.
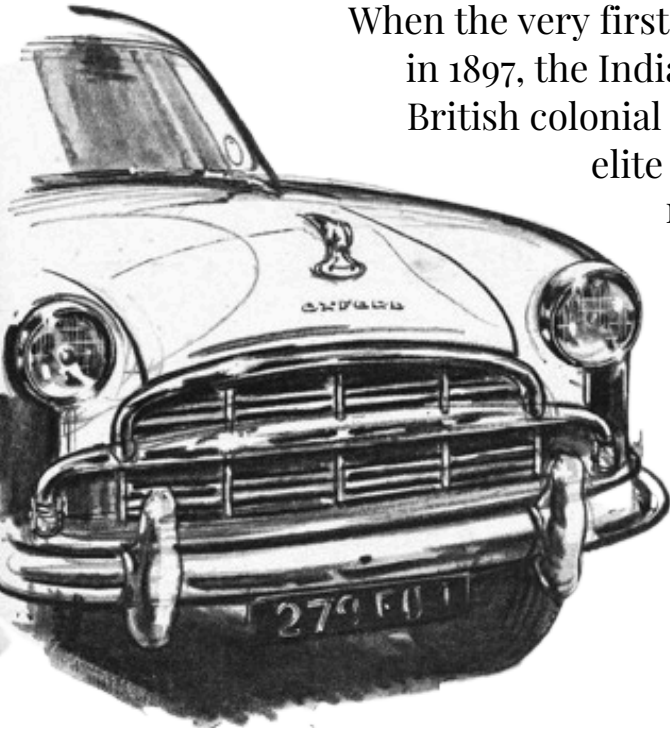
2. Freedom and the beginning of Indian industrialization (1947-1960s):

India gained independence in 1947, and the newly formed government focused all its energy on building domestic industries—including the automobile sector. Building up an automobile sector with indigenous technology and manufacturing capabilities proved difficult. Hindustan Motors, established in 1942, offered the Hindustan Ambassador in 1958. Designed on the British Morris Oxford lines, it happened to be one of the most iconic cars in the country. It was rugged, spacious, and exactly what was needed for Indian roads, and it was the prized possession of government officers and taxi drivers. Even though it was hopelessly obsolete in terms of technology, it outlived its life span because the Ambassador provided a tough and frugal ride. By then, Premier Automobiles was also manufacturing the Indian version of the Fiat 1100, the Premier Padmini, which soon became a popular substitute for an honest and affordable car, thus filling the gap in the domestic market. And with both Hindustan Motors and Premier Automobiles savoring the benefits of India's protectionist import substitution policy in keeping foreign competition at bay.

3. Licence Raj and Stagnation (1960's-1980's):

The Indian auto industry was characterized by License Raj between the 1960s and the early 1980s due to heavy government regulation. The producers were licensed to manufacture vehicles, and they were strictly regulated in terms of quotas on production. Such an environment made little space for much competition, and there was little incentive towards innovation. Hindustan Motors and Premier Automobiles still dominated the market, but there was no innovation in their technologies due to the absence of competition. The market had fewer models, and old designs continued. However, by then, commercial vehicles did start to develop in India. Tata Motors and Ashok Leyland began manufacturing trucks and buses to support the developing infrastructure of the nation. They were the first organizations that shaped the future of what would later become India's success story in the commercial vehicle segment.
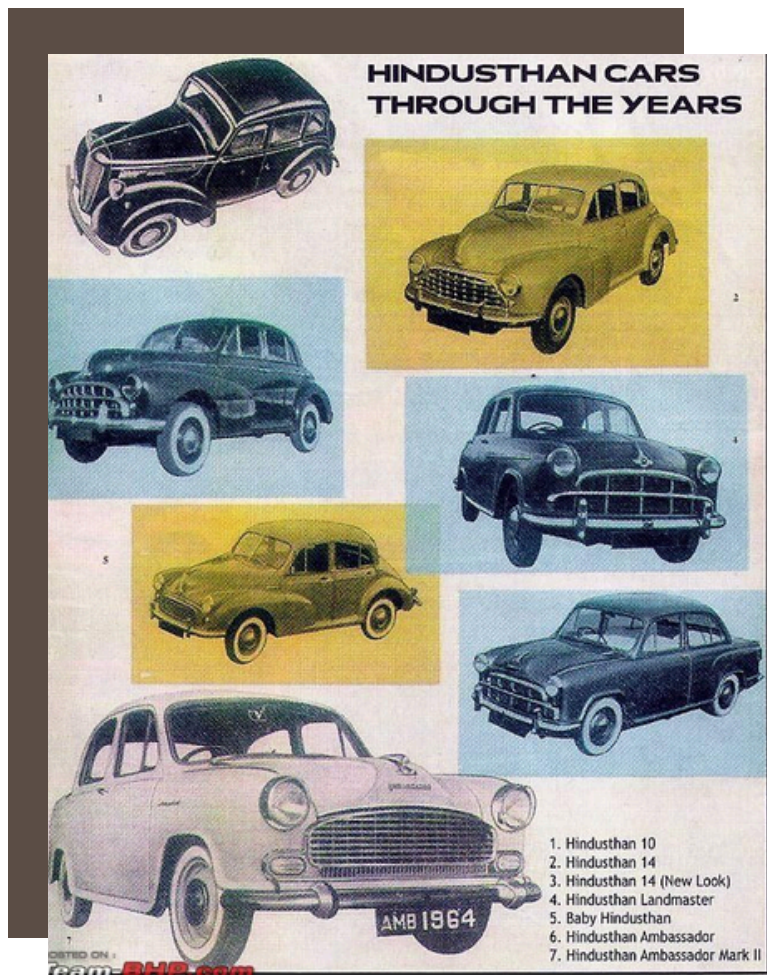

4. Economic Liberalization and the Coming of Maruti (1980s – 1990s):

Maruti Udyog Ltd., now known as Maruti Suzuki, gave India's automobile sector a new face in the 1980s. The Indian government believed that people needed a car of

humble tastes and thus initiated Maruti Udyog jointly with Suzuki Motor Corporation of Japan. The first one to be launched was the Maruti 800 in 1983. The attraction of affordable, fuel-efficient, and modern designs meant the car was accessible to a bigger chunk of Indian society. Its success changed the landscape of the Indian automobile industry toward more efficient and more reliable vehicles. The popularity of the Maruti 800 spelled bad fortune for Hindustan Motors and Premier Automobiles, which had nothing in their stables to dislodge the onslaught of modern designs.

HINDUSTHAN CARS THROUGH THE YEARS

1. Hindusthan 10
2. Hindusthan 14
3. Hindusthan 14 (New Look)
4. Hindusthan Landmaster
5. Baby Hindusthan
6. Hindusthan Ambassador
7. Hindusthan Ambassador Mark II

India liberalized its economy in 1991. This is how, in the automobile industry, some revolutionary changes took place.

Firstly, with the lowering of barriers to international trade, companies from abroad made it very quick to reach Indian shores with better technology, innovation, and competition. The global brands Hyundai and Honda, followed by Toyota and Ford, launched mass production ventures in the country. Today, more variants are available, giving consumers their own choice. Increased competition has modernized the Indian automobile industry, new manufacturing practices, and innovation in the country's domestic manufacture.

6. Giants from India: Rise and Electric Future (2000s-Present):

Indian automakers like Tata Motors and Mahindra & Mahindra enter the 2000s as major players, not only in their country but also abroad. Introduced in 2008 as the world's cheapest car, the Tata Nano is not exactly a commercial success but represents India's intent to make car ownership a reality for millions. Mahindra & Mahindra is a company that is more or less known for rugged SUV's in India, bought the companies SsangYong and Pininfarina, and has now marketed them all around the world. Due to environmental concerns, Indian automobile firms have lately joined the electric vehicle bandwagon, as these offers were made by the government. Tata, Mahindra, and now the new start-ups like Ola Electric make India a probable leader in leading it towards electrification.

The Hindustan Ten

Van Gogh's Blue Period

–by Asmi Jain XI B

Vincent van Gogh, the ultimate tortured artist, wasn't just any painter —he was the guy who made "feeling blue" a career. Long before Instagram had filters or therapists offered Zoom sessions, Van Gogh was pouring his soul out on canvas in a way that screamed, *"I'm not okay, but I'll make it art."*

Let's talk about the Blue Period (Oh wait, that wasn't him. That was Picasso!) But with Van Gogh, almost every period feels like it should have been blue, right? His signature colour was somewhere between the sadness of midnight and the desperation of a rainy Monday that you have go out and work instead of drinking a cup of steaming hot coffee in your bed wrapped up in warm, fuzzy blankets and questioning about your depressed life and trauma as you zone out by the window. Van Gogh didn't need an official Blue Period — he lived it.

(He invented 'EMO' and took it on a whole next level before it was even a thing!)

A Brush with Darkness

You've got to love a guy who's basically a one-man meme factory before memes were even a thing (*We do, don't we?*). "Starry Night," "The Bedroom," "Sunflowers" — all iconic, but behind the swirls of genius was the reality that Van Gogh wasn't exactly living the #blessed life. His journey could be summed up in one line: "How can I feel everything and nothing at the same time?"

And he sure felt it. Van Gogh's infamous ear incident (yes, the one he sliced off and gifted like a sad Valentine's Day surprise, what a lover.) Poor guy... In this generation of romanticising dark romance, he would surely be famous (and loved dearly) is a perfect metaphor for his art: intensely personal, a little tragic, and the kind of thing you laugh about as it feels cringe because otherwise, it's just too real... It's as if Van Gogh took the phrase, "What's the worst that could happen?" and turned it into his life motto.

Words That Cut as Deep as His Brushstrokes

Van Gogh's letters to his brother Theo were masterpieces in themselves — filled with existential dread, optimism, and the kind of dark humour we all use when life keeps handing us lemons and we're out of sugar for lemonade. He once said, "I put my heart and soul into my work, and I have lost my mind in the process."
Relatable, right? It's the kind of line that belongs on a motivational poster in your office, except it's actually kind of terrifying because Van Gogh wasn't kidding. He felt life so intensely that it sometimes broke him, but in a way, we've all been there. Just maybe without the whole ear thing.
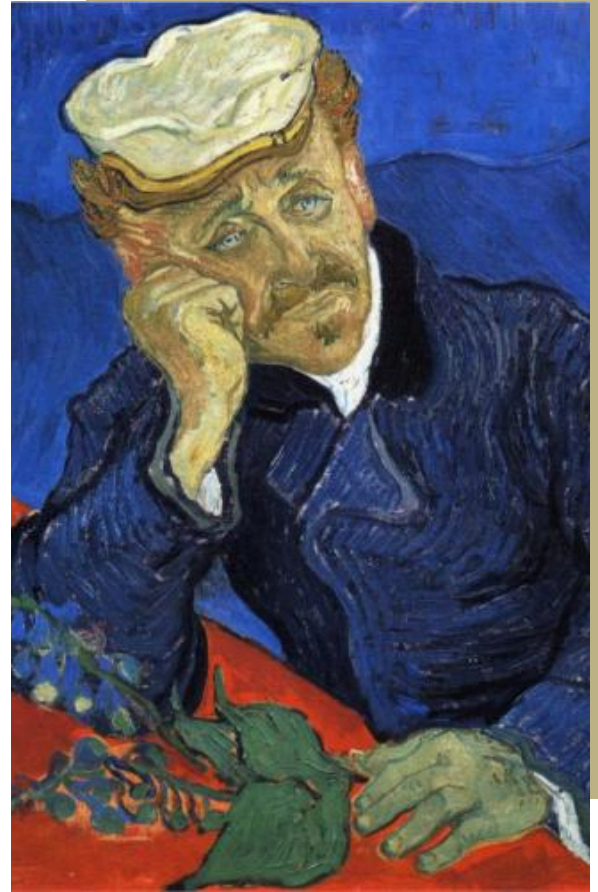
His Art: The Ultimate Overshare

His paintings were not just art; they were emotional overshares. Take "Starry Night" that swirling sky? It's like he looked at a peaceful evening and said, "Nah, this isn't chaotic enough," and gave it the energy of someone having a panic attack at 3 a.m. But here's the thing — we get it. We've all had those nights where our mind is a mess of thoughts, and Van Gogh just happened to paint his.
Van Gogh's genius was turning personal agony into something strangely beautiful. His life was messy, tragic, and at times utterly baffling, but his work makes us feel less alone in our chaos. He's like the friend who says, "I've had a rough day," and proceeds to tell you about the absolute dumpster fire of events that makes you feel slightly better about your own disasters.

The Legacy: Still Blue, Still Brilliant

Though Van Gogh never got to see his own fame (in classic tragic-artist style), today, we hang his art in museums like trophies of a man who was both broken and brilliant. His work isn't just a collection of pretty pictures; it's the diary of a guy who wasn't afraid to put his vulnerabilities on full display and turn his pain into Art in its true sense.

In a world that's often obsessed with perfection, Van Gogh reminds us that sometimes, it's okay to be a little messy, a little lost, and a little blue. After all, isn't that where the most interesting art comes from?

And remember, if you're ever feeling down, at least you didn't cut off your own ear...right?

"For my part i know nothing with any certainty, but the sight of the stars makes me dream" -Vincent Van Gogh

Unification of Knowledge
The Da Vinci way

–by Asmi Jain XI B

Leonardo da Vinci was the original "Renaissance man," dabbling in just about everything—art, science, anatomy, and even crazy inventions that may or may not have been practical (Yes! The flying machines!). Some of his famous masterpieces include The Last Supper, Mona Lisa, and Saint John the Baptist. But here's the kicker: Da Vinci didn't just learn. He devoured knowledge like it was the last slice of pizza at an Italian feast that he went on with an empty stomach just because it was free and organic, and god, it was delicious! With a passion so intense that his notebooks were filled with backwards scribbles, cryptic diagrams, and, quite frankly, doodles that would make even a modern–day multitasker weep!

In Michael J. Gelb's book "Think Like Da Vinci," the unification of creativity and logic is key. The message is loud and clear: be curious, connect ideas, and never stop questioning and limiting yourself. (Freedom is the key!) Da Vinci himself once said, **"Learning never exhausts the mind."** Now, that's a bold claim, but let's be real. Had he lived in the age of cat videos and TikTok trends, who knows?
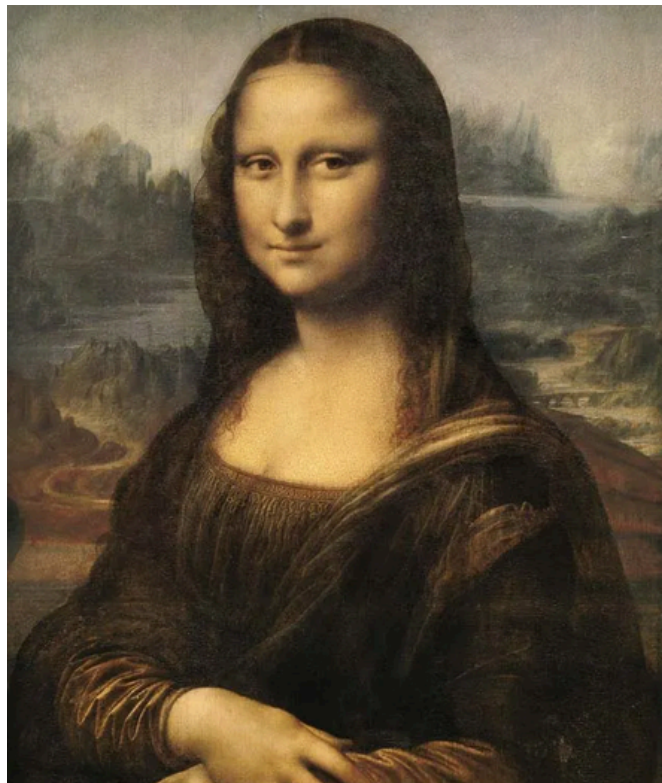
Curiosity: Da Vinci's Dangerous Yet Rewarding Junkie Superpower

Let's take Da Vinci's unhealthy obsession with the human body. Not in a creepy way (okay, maybe a little creepy—he did dissect human cadavers). But he did it because he believed understanding the mechanics of the body would unlock the mysteries of movement and form in his art. This insatiable curiosity was the driving force behind everything he did. He wasn't content with superficial knowledge; he dove deep, approached life through this curiosity and sparked on the unrelenting journey for continuous learning, even when society gave him the side-eye for doing things like, well, cutting open dead bodies.

Unification of Art and Science: Why Choose?

For da Vinci, the split between science and art was as nonsensical as pineapple on pizza (unless you're into that). In his mind, there was no real difference between sketching the perfect muscle and understanding how that muscle functions. They were just two sides of the same magnificent coin, why create myriad divides in the realm of knowledge when it's all just different tributaries following into main river to the path of attainment and sustenance of self and life filled with hunger of curiosity? His works, like The Vitruvian Man, show how perfectly he melded scientific precision with artistic genius. That sketch isn't just a naked guy with nice proportions—it's a brilliant marriage of human anatomy, symmetry, and philosophy. It's like he was saying, "Hey, science nerds and art lovers, can we all just get along and stop this cold war once and for all?"
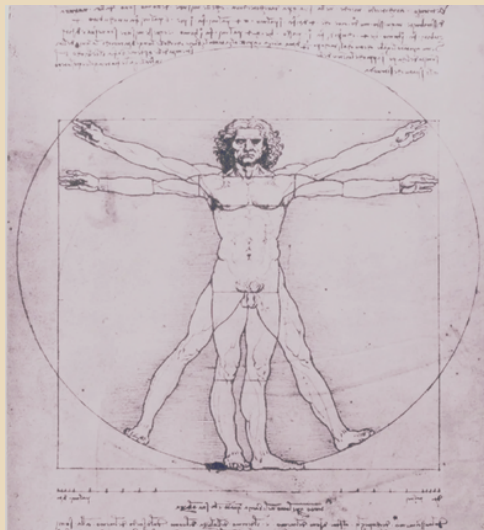
Conclusion: Thinking like Da Vinci

So, what can we learn from Da Vinci, aside from the fact that dissection is not an ideal hobby for a first date? Gelb's "Think Like Da Vinci" suggests that it's all about embracing curiosity, willing to learn, never not being curious (even if it scares or annoys the other), connecting ideas, and, frankly, never being satisfied with the first draft. That's where the real learning happens.

Leonardo wasn't just an artist or a scientist; he was the ultimate knowledge glutton. And honestly, if he can spend years perfecting a smile, Mona Lisa was a decade-long project. (Imagine spending 16 years on perfecting a woman's smile who still looked mildly disappointed in the end), then maybe we can afford to spend a little more time fine-tuning our own work—whether that's a painting or just trying to figure out how to study without not studying but still getting good marks.

In the spirit of Da Vinci, let's embrace learning for what it is—a glorious, sometimes chaotic mess that unifies everything we know, from art to science, and maybe, just maybe, teaches us to laugh at our own imperfections along the way. After all, if Da Vinci was a perfectionist who still thought he wasn't good enough, the rest of us are doing just fine, aren't we? [P.S.: Are we?]
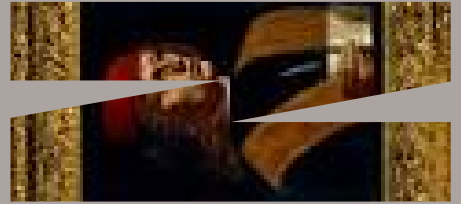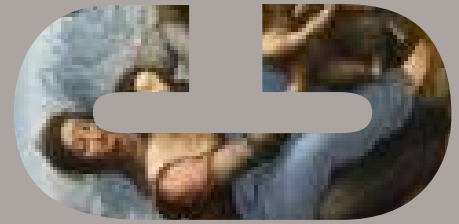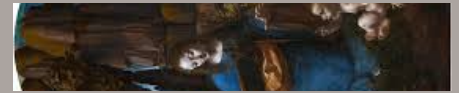
Ideology of Photography:
A Traveler through Time

-by Divyanshu Panda XII A

Being both an art and a science, with deep concepts revolving around the existence of our very being, photography offers an understanding of the world. For nearly two centuries, it has allowed us to freeze moments in time, bringing along a semblance of order in the seemingly chaotic world. It is indeed this research that explores significant developments and philosophical concepts pushing forward the ontology of photography.

The Birth of Photography

The long history of photography starts with the camera obscura, an instrument known since ancient times that projects an inverted image of the outside world onto a surface. Such early observation of light and shadow forms the basis for photography. Techniques to permanently capture images, however, developed only during the 19th century. It was through the method of heliography that Joseph Nicéphore Niépce produced the first permanent photograph in the world, "View from the Window at Le Gras" (1826), with an exposure time of almost eight hours—a tension between the timelessness of the image and the transience of life itself. Here, interplay raises issues of how we experience time and memory in photographic images.

The Daguerreotype: Reality vs. Representation

It was in 1839 that Louis Daguerre's invention of the daguerreotype greatly changed photography. While it created more clear images with exposure times much shorter than before, it brought up the questions of authenticity and the telling of reality. Additionally, since each image remained unique, issues of identity surfaced, particularly in self-portraiture. It challenged the conventional notions of photographic truth and, therefore, threw more questions into whether a photograph is the real representation or just something even lesser, formed and to some extent colored by the photographer's choice.

Negative and Positive Processes: Mass Production and Meaning

Frederick Scott Archer invented the collodion wet plate process during the 1850s, which marked a tremendous shift towards mass reproduction. It changed the dynamic of the photographer's relationship with the subject and the audience; the focus is now on the power of collective memory. Photographers are now able to take and reproduce more images and spread their visual stories more effectively. Simultaneously, Talbot's calotype process introduced paper negatives, granting photographers greater artistic freedom. However, this also raised questions about how personal interpretation influences the meaning of photographs. The interplay between the photographer's intent and the viewer's perception became central to the understanding of photographic art.

Photography as an Art Form

As photography developed, it slowly started to achieve legitimacy as a fine art. The work of the pictorialists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries was crucial in this regard. They used soft focus and other manipulations to make

their statements about the nature of photography and about its ability to transcend documentary media into the realm of art. A number of celebrated photographers, for instance Alfred Stieglitz used The border of photographic art spread further with the idea of modernism. With accuracy and realism, Edward Weston and Paul Strand led artists to philosophical inquiries concerning the truths of representation. With photographic realism, the experiment called into question the representations of how images can reshape our perception of reality.
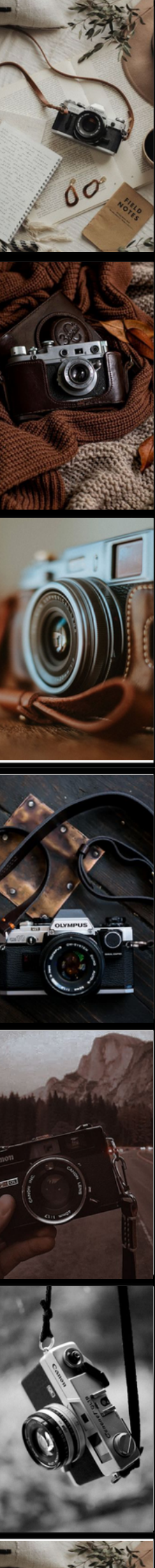
Photojournalism: Recording History

Photography emerged as a robust medium for social change in the early years of the 20th century, when photojournalism was still being established. Iconic images of the Great Depression and images of World War II and the Civil Rights Movement told human stories in an incredibly powerful way. Dorothea Lange and Robert Capa even contributed to storytelling some quite crucial struggles and resilience of humans in image-based narratives that touched people's hearts and minds. In photojournalism, photography went beyond mere artistic expression to being a tool for advocacy and historical record. That photography could speak to some very complex human experiences, drew attention to pressing issues in society, and that's how photography's impact on culture and history is profound.

The Digital Revolution: New Realities

The digital revolution ushered into photography, changing the face of photography completely in the late 20th century. Digital cameras and access to the internet made all this possible, allowing photographs to be taken and circulated by anybody. This new medium revolutionized the space of storytelling, creating a new platform for self-expression and collective narrative. But it also challenged assumptions held about authenticity and meaning in photography. Electronic editing of images in a matter of seconds raises for view credibility to suspect what he sees, and the relationship between reality and representation becomes complicated, forcing into public debate questions over the nature of the truth in visual media.

Conclusion: The Legacy of Photography

Photography is a reflection of humanity's eternal desire to know, represent, and assign meaning to the intricately complex world, from Niépce and Daguerre's first experiments to today's digital innovations. A function that photography has always served well is being at once a mirror and a lens for our experiences and understanding of existence. Finally, photography is an interesting and special way of coming to know and to speak of what it is to be human. It sparks pertinent discussion about our realities and our search for real answers about life. With a long history and dynamic course, photography is actually a current medium that keeps connecting us to our past, present, and future.

Intangible Cultural Heritage

–by Gayathri Krishnan XII A

> *"A nation's culture resides in the heart and in the soul of its people."*
>
> *–Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

This quote highlights the idea that culture may not only be limited to external symbols or artifacts but is also a complex, multifaceted aspect of society that is based on the traditions, values, and behaviours of its people. This quote underscores the significance of recognizing and valuing the intangible aspects of culture that are held within individuals and the role of people in preserving and enriching the cultural heritage of a nation.

Now, what is Intangible cultural heritage?

Heritage does not end at monuments or collections of objects. It also includes traditions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants (oral traditions, performing arts, religious festivals, and traditional crafts). This is what Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) refers to. It is broad enough to include diverse experiences and expressions across the globe, such as "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts, and cultural spaces associated therewith —that communities, groups, and, in some cases, individuals recognised as part of their cultural heritage." In fact, the term was eventually chosen after almost two decades of debates and usage of a variety of terminologies.
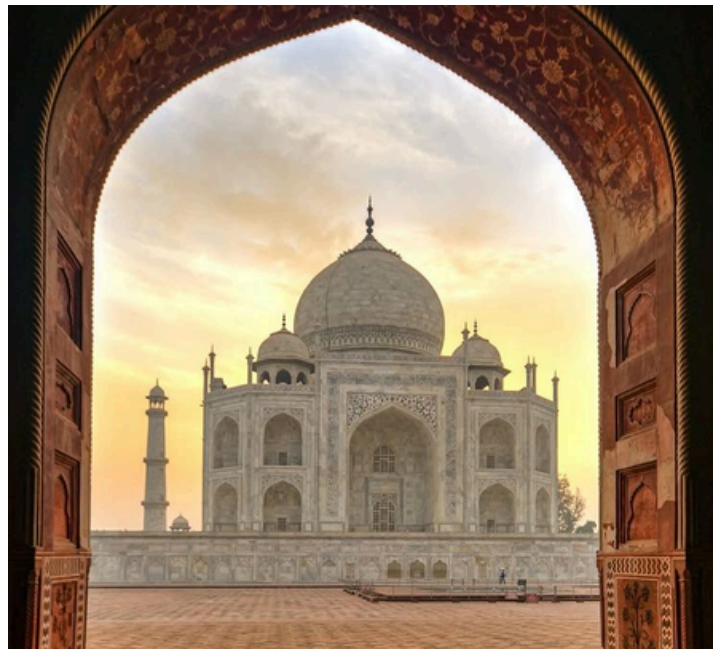
In 1989, there was a recommendation on the safeguarding of traditional folklore and culture. UNESCO used the term 'traditional and popular culture' to foster protection efforts of these cultural forms. However, the recommendation received little interest from state parties in its application for the reason that it 'gives neither a specific mandate to UNESCO nor any explanation of how it should be implemented. It was heavily criticized, and the idea was scrapped out.

Later, The term intangible cultural heritage was introduced only after several review programs by UNESCO in the early 1990s that evaluated the application of the recommendation and reviewed other terms, such as non-physical heritage, immaterial patrimony, etc. The evaluation by UNESCO also suggested either revision of the 1989 Recommendation or development of a new international instrument on the protection of living cultures.

By introducing five categories, known as the ICH domains, other than listing their forms as seen in the 1989 Recommendation, UNESCO's 2003 definition covers a more inclusive scope of living traditions:
(a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
(b) performing arts;
(c) social practices, rituals, and festive events;
(d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and
(e) traditional craftsmanship

Intangible cultural heritage can help strengthen social cohesion and inclusion. Social practices, rituals, and festive events structure the lives of communities and groups and can play a key role in strengthening their social fabric in an inclusive way. The importance of ICH is not the cultural manifestation itself, but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted from one generation to the next. The social and economic value of this transmission of knowledge is relevant for minority communities as well as mainstream society and is as important for developing states as for developed ones.

ICH is best defined as:

- Traditional, contemporary, and living at the same time, since it is a dynamic process;
- Inclusive since it contributes to social cohesion, encourages a sense of identity, and helps to preserve communities and community life;
- Representative since it prospers on oral skills passed on from generation to generation;
- Community-based since it can be defined as heritage only when it is recognised as such by the communities, groups, or individuals that create, maintain, and transmit it.

Now, Let's look at some of the Intangible cultures from different regions of India that have made it to the UNESCO list:

1.**Mudiyettu**: This is a traditional ritual theatre- folk dance and drama—that depicts a mythological battle between goddess Kali and demon Darika. It is found in the state of Kerala. This is performed in village temples after the harvesting season between February and May. Heavy makeup, facial painting, headgear, and royal attire are worn. Floral designs of goddess Kali are drawn and then worshipped.

2. **Kalbelia**: This art form is found in Rajasthan and is a dance resembling a serpent, performed by a tribe of the same name. The songs are based on mythology and involve composing lyrics spontaneously during a performance and improvising songs. The musical instruments include Poongi (a wind instrument played by snake charmers), Chang (similar to harp), and cymbals.

3. Chhau: This is an art form found in parts of Odisha, Jharkhand, and West Bengal. It is a tribal martial arts dance performance based on Hindu mythology. It is usually performed during the spring festival and lasts for 13 days where male dancers perform in an open space. The masks are worn by the dancers during the performance.

4. Ramman: This is an art form found in Uttarakhand. It is celebrated by the Hindu community in the Chamoli district. The villagers pay their offerings to the village deity, Bhumiyal Devta, in the courtyard of the village temple. An important aspect is the singing of the Jagar, a musical rendition of local legends.

India served as a member of the ICH committee member thrice : from 2006 to 2010 , from 2014 to 2018 and from 2022

The Ministry of Culture has appointed the Sangeet Natak Akademi, an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Culture, as the nodal office for matters relating to the intangible cultural heritage. This also involves the preparation of the nomination dossiers for the Representative List of UNESCO. The Ministry of Culture makes regular schemes, as well as organizations, make efforts toward the preservation, protection, and promotion of cultural heritage in the country.

Various autonomous bodies under the Ministry of Culture have comprehensive mandates in this regard, which are functioning in various spheres of preservation and are helping in promoting the diverse traditions of the country.

We have seen many different cultures and heritages being part of the UNESCO list. One thing that comes to mind and has influenced my childhood is our epics and the interpretations when you move from one region to another. Let me clarify this with the story of Ramayana taking center stage. There are numerous iterations of Lord Rama—from Vaishnavas in Kashmir to Ramnamis in Chhattisgarh, Ayodhya Foot soldiers to the Ram Van Gaman tourism trail—there is a whole lot to unload. In most recitations, Rama is defined and exemplified as the Maryada Purushottam. However, we also come across contradicting variations where regional factors influence the adaptation of the original epic. In some versions, it is believed that Sita is the daughter of Ravana.
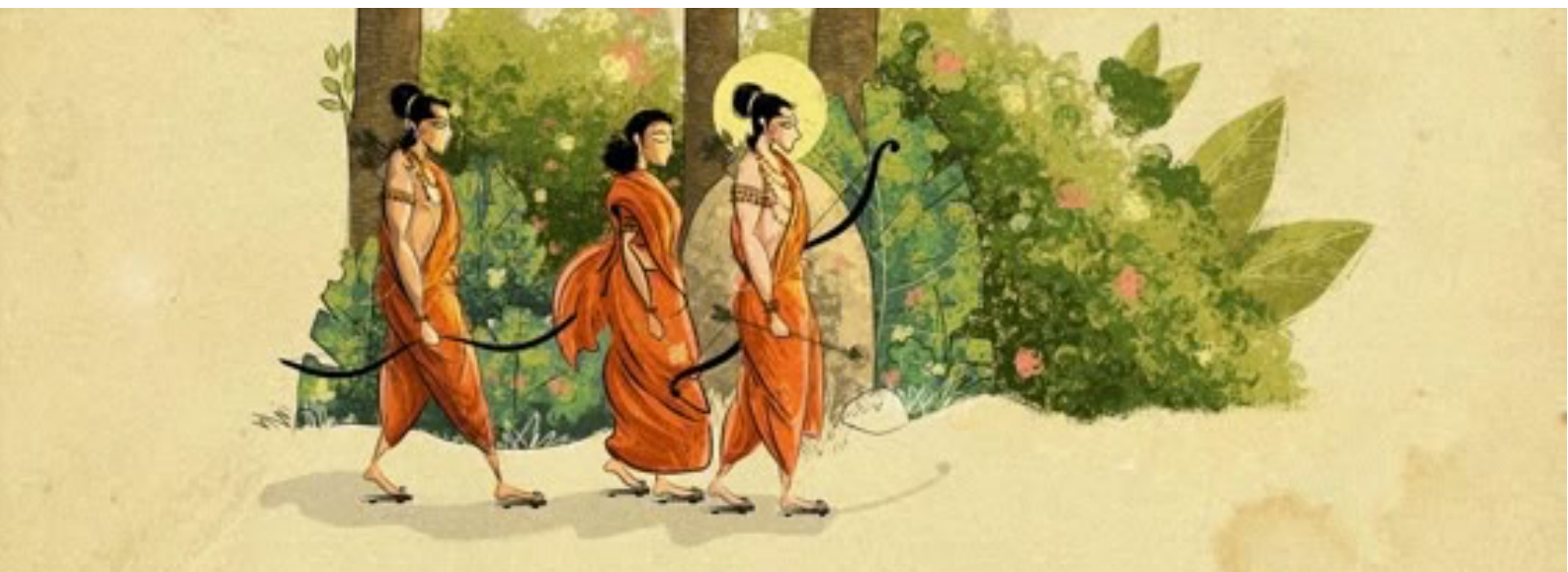
It is believed that Ravan is the epitome of evil, and by burning down Ravan effigies, we are symbolising the victory of the good over the bad. However, in many parts of Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, many residents refuse to do so as they believe that Ravan is their ancestor. In Mithila, more than being respected for being the ideal man, he was adorned with affection and love for being the paahun (son in law) of their dearest daughter, i.e., Sita. Besides, if you walk across the length and breadth of India, you will see hundreds of traditions and beliefs relating to episodes of the Ramayana—the medicinal plant named after Sita's hair, the rock named after Jatayu (the bird) who tried to save Sita, and many more. Many of these folklores have given rise to many artforms like Kootiyattam and Tholpavakoothu (shadow puppetry).

However, all of them have an underlying theme, and it is clear that different cultures coexist in harmony like beads tied by an invisible thread. As the Bhagavad Gita says, "Sutre Manigana Iva," i.e., there is a thread that binds different cultures.

# Evolution and the Influence of Social Media on Hip-Hop and Rap

-by Junaid Zaman XII A

Different styles and evolution of Hip-Hop:
Hip-Hop is a genre that incorporates different styles and elements of music.

- **Hip-Hop during late 1970s – early 1980s:**

Hip-hop's diverse range of genres and range of artistic mediums have allowed it to swiftly establish itself as a potent tool for community development, storytelling, and social justice activism. Its ascent is sometimes interpreted as a reaction to political indifference, economic woes, and the cultural vacuum created by urban deterioration; it gave voice to a generation and transformed struggle into creative energy. Hip-hop was a type of art that most vulnerable African American, Caribbean, and Latino communities followed and practiced. Often cited as the genre's pioneers include Afrika Bambaataa, DJ Kool Herc, and Grandmaster Flash. They innovated by using VHS and CDJs to remix disco, funk, and soul music into breakbeats.
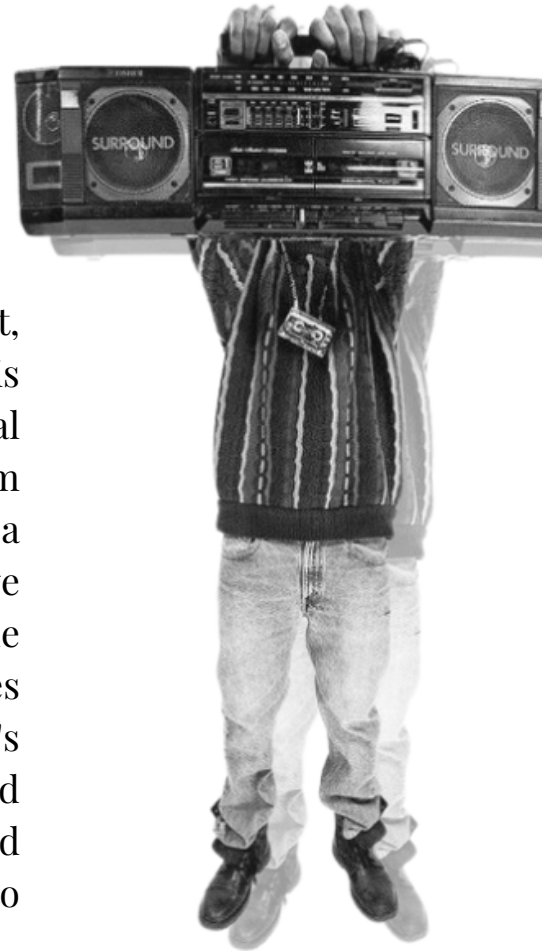
- **The Golden Age of Hip-Hop late 1980s – early 1990s:**

During this time, the complexity and inventiveness of hip-hop lyrics significantly increased. Hip-hop is said to have reached its peak of creativity and influence during this period, when artists started tackling a wide range of social themes, including poverty, racism, and other issues. Hip-hop was beginning to enter the mainstream culture, but it wasn't yet controlled by big record labels. The sound was different from early/old school hip-hop, including more complex lyrics and heavier beats. Hip-hop culture was centered on the East Coast (New York) and the West Coast (California).

The West Coast pioneered "gangsta rap," which told stories of gangsters and was an informal way of saying "gangsta," whereas the East Coast had a more boom-bap style with hard-hitting beats and lyricism.

- **Gangsta Rap' and 'G-Funk' Era (1990s)**

The rise in the popularity of the "West Coast" style of music paved way to the rise of 'gangsta rap', a form of music that is powered and based around storytelling or instances of street life, violence, and crime due to social issues such as poverty and vulnerability of different social groups. Artists like Tupac, Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, and Ice Cube were pioneers of such a style of hip-hop. Moreover, personal differences between each artist, along with additional media hype and the public romanticizing the idea of rivalry between artists, fuelled the sub-genre within hip-hop to be widely popularized and commercialized within hip-hop. The 1990s saw a popular rivalry between East Coast and West. West Coast hip-hop, originating from the feud between Tupac (West Coast Hip-Hop artist) and The Notorious B.I.G. (East Coast Hip-Hop artist). This rivalry tragically ended with the deaths of both rappers in the late 1990s.

- **Mainstream/Bling Era Late 1990s – Early 2000s**

The early 2000s solidified Hip-Hop as a mainstream genre of music, This Era is considered as the most popular era of Hip-Hop with rise in popular and recognized artists such as Kanye West, Jay-Z, Eminem, and many more. This era of Hip-Hop saw a shift in its lyricism from the primary focus on issues like poverty and societal backwardness to wealth and success often referred as "bling era". This era saw a huge variety in the production of music for example the difference of production in Jay-Z's 6th studio album The Blueprint and Kanye West's 3rd studio album Graduation, showing huge differences in the sounds, hip-hop expanded to include a variety of subgenres and influences. sounds like the heavy use of synthesizers being popularized by music producers like Mike Dean, catchy drum patterns and club music popularized by music producers like Timbaland had emerged bringing a futuristic sound to the genre of Hip-Hop, it showed off the versatility of HipHop as a genre in the early 2000s. To the point where Hip-Hop would play a major role in today's Fashion and Aesthetic.

- **The 'New Wave' Era 2010**

2010 saw the rise of streaming service platforms like Spotify, SoundCloud, Apple Music, and many more. This era is also known for its experimental nature in sounds and rapping style. This era unfortunately saw a noticeable decline of lyricism in songs. Multiple artists from this era had a commercial rise due to the nature of their music, an extension of the early 2000s style music that was completely modern-like and futuristic. The original styles of hip-hop weren't completely abandoned during this era; many albums were released during this era, putting focus on lyricism and production, for example, Kendrick Lamar's DAMN. Focusing on societal issues suffered by the African American community.

Many hip-hop artists began to follow the wave of 'Emo-Music' (Emo being an abbreviation of emotional); this style of music showed a vulnerable side of an artist's personal life. Trap music became the dominant sound in mainstream hip-hop; Travis Scott's "Astroworld" is a prime example of how trap evolved into the hip-hop genre, blending psychedelia, melody, and hard-hitting beats.

The Effect of Social Media on Hip-Hop:
The rise of social media platforms such as Instagram has changed how hip-hop is perceived among the masses. Viral challenges and short-form video content have a major influence on the success of songs created, leading to more upbeat, catchy, and short tracks. This social media trend of popularizing songs based on creating "viral trends" has led hip-hop artists to capitalize on any style of song popular now rather than making a completely different and unique artform that would be appreciated and enjoyed by the public.

However, social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and SoundCloud have allowed artists to bypass traditional gatekeepers like record labels and radio stations. Aspiring music artists can now directly upload their music, engage with fans, and build a following without needing a major deal micromanaging the artist's career. Hip-hop artists now use social media as an essential part of their branding. Social media allows artists to control their narrative, aesthetics, and personal brand in ways that were previously impossible and perceived negatively. all of which help bring attention around their music.

ভেসে যায় আদরের নৌকো
"Bheshe Jai Adorer Nouko"

Understanding the Rich History of Folk Music in West Bengal

- by Aashi Roy XII A

"দিশাহারা কেমন বোকা মনটা রে!"
"Disha hara Kemon Boka, Monta re!"
(This silly/mad heart of mine, has lost its direction)

'**Monta Re**', a contemporary Hindi-folk track, beautifully exemplifies how folk music has managed to permeate into the melodies of popular Hindi Bollywood tunes. While the folk elements of the song reflect the charming cultural roots of the region, the contemporary elements highlight the dynamic nature of the song and how it adapts to appeal to a wider audience.

Bengali bands such as **Bhoomi** and **Chandrabindu** have made folk music quite accessible by fusing traditional tunes and modern instruments and arrangements. Their songs generally deal with contemporary issues, yet at the same time, are well rooted in old folk music. Rabindranath Tagore, lovingly referred to as Robi Thakur, has proved to be an illustrious writer from West Bengal. Known for his sensitive and elegant poetry and songs, he has successfully left his mark in the world as a Nobel Prize winner and celebrated figure across the world and the Indian subcontinent. Tagore's evocative works, collectively referred to as Rabindra Sangeet, are sung by housewives, scholars, politicians, and illiterate villagers alike. While the 19th-century polymath was heavily influenced by Indian classical music, he was also inspired by traditional Bengali folk forms.

Growing up in a Bengali household where music has always been celebrated and cherished, it has been the heart of our home, which brought us all together. Be it at the dinner table or on long drives, music has always been loved, shared, and enjoyed with each other. Naturally, I found myself intrigued by the splendid musical heritage of Bengal. Bengali folk music is a rich labyrinth of melodies and culture that traces its roots to ancient times, reflecting the lives, emotions, and experiences of ordinary people. It has been a means of storytelling, religious worship, and social commentary. In the history of Bengali folk music, Baul, Kirtan, Shyama Sangeet, Bhatiali, and Bhawaiya songs have been revived and re-invented the most.

The Bauls are a spiritual community of wandering minstrels, renowned for their unconventional appearance, provocative songs, and liberal interpretation of love- that God is hidden within the heart of man and neither priest, prophet, nor organised religion will help one to find Him there. Baul music celebrates divine love, human connection, and the quest for truth, but in very simplistic forms. The origins of Baul music have not yet been determined, but no other folk tradition has had this much of an impact on Bengali culture. The Baul musical tradition constitutes elements of Sufism and Vaishnavism and explores the search for 'Moner Manush' (the man of the heart), a theme that also greatly inspired Tagore.
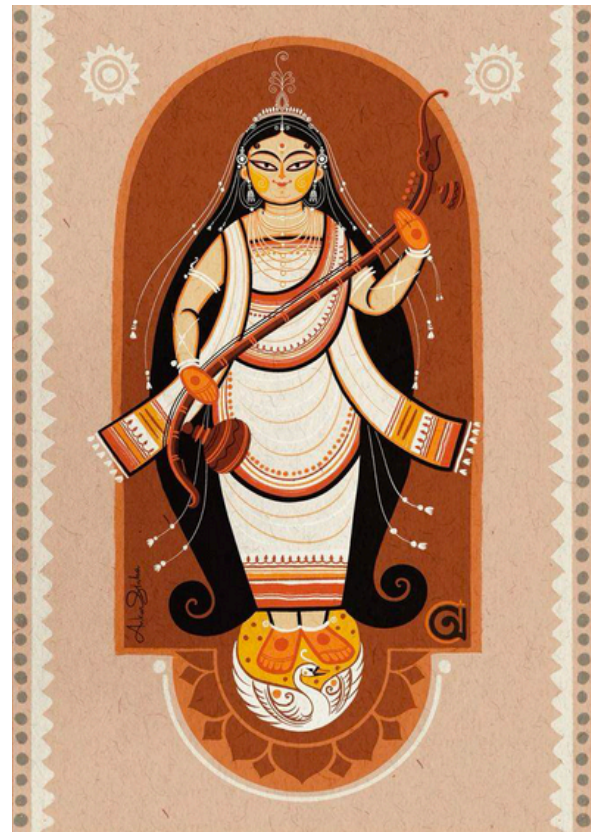
আদম কোথায় পা তারর, আমার মরনর মানুষ কে কর
"Ami kothai pabo tare, amar moner manush je re."
(Where shall I meet him, the Man of my Heart?)

Bhatiali music is the soul of Bengal's riverine culture. Traditionally sung by boatmen, these songs reflect the beauty and hardships of life on the rivers. The melodies are haunting and often melancholic, depicting themes of separation and longing. The word Bhatiali emerges from the word Bhati, and over the years, this particular form of folk has been revived numerous times in mainstream music.

Originating from the northern districts of West Bengal and parts of Bangladesh, Bhawaiya music captures the essence of rural life. The lyrics often revolve around love and the daily struggles of the people, with a distinct melodic structure that is plaintive, reminiscent, and melancholic.

Kirtan is a form of devotional music dedicated to praising deities, singing a holy name and verses that usually pay homage to Lord Krishna. It involves a lead singer and a chorus, with the music often building in intensity and tempo, creating a participatory and ecstatic atmosphere.

Shyama Sangeet is a genre of devotional music dedicated to Goddess Kali, a prominent deity in Bengal. These songs are intensely spiritual and emotional, expressing devotion, reverence, and the esoteric aspects of worship. Shyama Sangeet conceptualizes Maa Kali as a loving human mother, and the singer is longing for her love. This genre of music became more popular at the time of Sri Ramkrishna Paramahamsa, who was an ardent Kali bhakta/devotee.

Bengali folk music uses several centuries-old musical instruments, which add their own unique flavour to the melodies. The most famous instrument is the Ektara, a one-stringed 'plucked drum' made of bamboo and goatskin that provides a rhythmic drone accompaniment. Other folk instruments used include the Dotara, a fretless lute reminiscent of the sarod. Percussion instruments include the Duggi, Dhol, Khol, and Khamak, which are all used to give this genre of music its distinctive style and sound.

Folk music continues to thrive in Bengal's cultural landscape and in the rural areas. Despite the influence of modern music and digital media, folk has adapted and integrated into the urban cityscape, finding a place at music festivals and even in the Bollywood music industry, with several songs using folk instruments and its unique style of singing. Several artists have managed to seamlessly blend traditional folk elements with modern genres, keeping the essence of the genre alive whilst appealing to younger audiences.

Saito Musashibo Benkei
| 西塔武蔵坊弁慶 |

–by Reyansh Balan XII A

'The Samurai that died standing'

Benkei was a Sohei or Japanese warrior monk who lived in the latter years of the Heian period. He led a varied life, starting as a monk, then becoming a Yamabushi, or mountain hermit, and then a Ronin, or rogue warrior.

A story about Benkei's birth tells us that he was the offspring of a temple god, and many gave him the attributes of a demon. Benkei may have been called an Oniwaka or demon child, and there are many famous Ukiyo-e works on Oniwakamaru and his adventures. Due to his life as a warrior monk, he was trained in the art of the half-moon spear, or naginata. At the age of seventeen, Benkei stood at a towering 6 feet and 6 inches in height, fully living up to his Oniwaka name. He would arm himself with seven weapons, which he would carry on his back. In addition to his sword and naginata, he carried a broad axe, a rake, a wooden mallet, a sickle, a saw, and an iron staff.

Upon going rogue, he would wander the streets of Kyoto every night to take 1000 swords from Samurai warriors, whom he believed arrogant and unworthy, as a personal quest. After collecting 999 swords through duels, he met a man playing the flute at Gojotenjin Shrine in Kyoto. The much smaller man carried a gilded sword on his waist. The two duelled at Gojo Bridge, where Benkei lost to the man, who happened to be Minamoto no Yoshitsune, a son of the head of the Minamoto clan. Frustrated, Benkei challenged him to another duel at the Buddhist temple of Kiyomizu, where he lost again. Henceforth, Benkei became Yoshitsune's retainer and fought with him in the Genpei war against the Taira clan.

After fighting alongside each other for 4 years, Benkei and his master Yoshitsune were encircled in the castle of Koromogawa no Tate. Seeing as there was no escape, Yoshitsune had only one request: to buy enough time for him to commit honorable suicide, or seppuku. Benkei agreed and stood guard outside in front of the main gate to protect Yoshitsune.

The enemy soldiers were afraid to cross the bridge, and those who did met a swift death at the hands of the monster that was Benkei, who in the process had killed more than 300 trained soldiers. Realising that close combat meant suicide, the enemy proceeded to shoot and kill Benkei with arrows instead. Long after the battle should have been over, the soldiers noticed that the arrow-riddled, wound-covered Benkei was still standing. When the soldiers dared to cross the bridge and take a closer look, the heroic warrior fell to the ground, having died standing upright.

This was known as the **"Standing Death of Benkei,"** who died at the age of 34. A statue was built in Benkei's honour, called Benkei-do, which stood 6 feet 2 inches in height in the posture he stood in when he died at Koromogawa.

Saragarhi: 21 VS 10,000

-by Reyansh Balan XII A

"Sawa lakh se ek ladawa"

Saragarhi was a small village located between two forts, Fort Gulistan and Fort Lockhart, and acted as a means of communication for the two forts via Morse code. Originally built by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the forts played a critical role for the British to monitor Afghan activities in the North West Frontier Provinces. If Saragarhi fell, the gates to Punjab lay wide open.

In 1897, the Mulla of Hadda called for a Jihad, inspiring 10,000 tribesmen to fight against the 21 Sikh soldiers stationed at Saragarhi. On the morning of September 12, 10,000 Afghan raiders attacked Saragarhi with full force. Within minutes of spotting the army, Sepoy Gurmukh Singh sent a message via Morse code to Lt. Col. Houghton, which stated, "ENEMY APPROACHING MAIN GATE, NEEDS REINFORCEMENT." Unfortunately, the Pashtuns had cut the supply route between Fort Lockhart and Saragarhi. Houghton radioed back, "UNABLE TO BREAKTHROUGH. HOLD POSITION." Gurmukh Singh conveyed this message to platoon commander Havildar Ishar Singh. Fully aware of the consequences, he responded with a stoic "understood."

Captain Jay Singh-Sohal says, "The soldiers were not only outnumbered; they also had limited ammunition with around 400 rounds per man, one reason why Lt Col Haughton urged them to use their firepower carefully."

Gurmukh Singh was also short of hands. The heliograph communication system, which uses sunlight and mirrors to flash messages via Morse code, was usually operated by three men. While one sent the messages, the others would read the incoming message through binoculars, and the third would pen them down. On that day, Gurmukh did all three. As the battle raged on and his comrades fell one by one, Gurmukh kept sending updates from the frontlines. With a heavy heart and unyielding resolve, he sent one last message: "Permission to join the battle, sir." The affirmative response came swiftly.

The battle began at 9 AM and ended a little after 3:30 PM with the death of Sepoy Gurmukh Singh, the signalman. Saragarhi fell into Afghan hands.

The 21 Sikhs fought with valour and made a valiant last stand, and the enemy paid a steep price for their victory. Approximately 180 attackers were killed, with another 400 dying on the ridge. The brave resistance allowed British forces to receive reinforcements at the two forts, which helped in recapturing Saragarhi within two days.

Storms make Trees take Deeper Roots
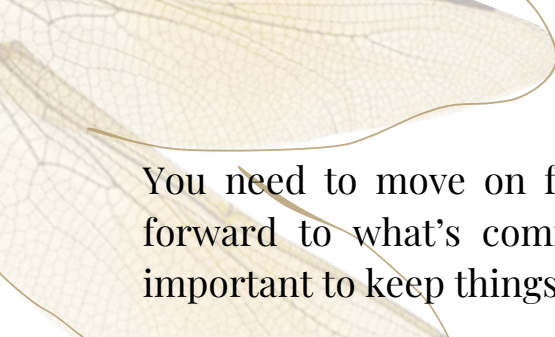
-by Gayathri Krishnan XII A

I would like to start my article with a story. Yohan Blake was a star athlete who was unable to train for 2 years due to a separated hamstring incident. However, he persevered, and he made his way to 4th place in the 2016 Olympics. As I was reading more and more about this incident, this quote resonated with me: "Storms make trees take deeper roots." The more adversity the tree encounters, the deeper the roots take, and the stronger the tree grows. Those who are able to conquer the storm thrown in their direction can usually come out on top because their roots are so deep and strong.

Ever heard of the famous saying 'Dig Deep'? This could mean different things to different people. According to me, 'digging deep' refers to unraveling a level of skill that is beyond what just training can achieve. I believe that the ability to dig deep is the true key to success, and only you can see the power of your own roots. The obstacles and hardships you face are what make your roots deeper. The root represents your blood, sweat, and tears (not quite literally), but more importantly, it is the passion and excitement to be able to do what you love after the storm passes.

Every situation in our lives has a lesson to teach us. You need to remember you are not alone. Everyone has problems—losing sleep over an upcoming test, worried about falling out with a close friend, apprehensive about an upcoming change, and much more. None of this means you are abnormal or weird. It just means you are human and need a little time to understand your emotions.

You need to move on from the past, appreciate what you have, and look forward to what's coming next. Even when times are tough, it's always important to keep things in perspective.

In a way, life's tribulations and hardships are what make us stronger for the journey ahead. A person who has never experienced any kind of difficult situation, would never be able to work his/her way out in life. On the other hand, a person who has navigated through the ups and downs of life would not consider negotiating another hardship as a daunting prospect. The confidence they get from overcoming one challenge holds them in good stead for the forthcoming ones. Difficult situations also test our relationships. While they could cause relationships to come to an end, on the positive side they can also leave the relationship stronger than ever. It has been statistically proven that families/couples that have stuck together through punishing times have grown closer as compared to those who haven't experienced anything.

If you are complaining about hardships, don't. Every person who is "successful" has gone through a series of hardships to become what they are today. Hardships may refer to adversities, misfortunes, troubles, hard times, problems, or something that cause suffering. They accompany us from birth to death and can also appear in many forms. Depending on how you look at it, hardships could also be the road to your character development. They can yank you out from your comfort zone and can lead you to make some much needed changes in your life. They can make you suffer, and in turn you are graced with strength. Hardships are also an enabler that can help you in understanding other people's lives better. What defines our humanity is our ability to feel another person's pain. It is therefore from hardships that we learn the gift of inter-connectedness and the realization that "we are in this together". Invisible scars stem from hardships that you have endured and overcome, making you a resilient person.

There is not a single person who does not lose someone they love , someone they need or something they thought was meant to be. However, it is these losses and sufferings that make us stronger and also what helps us understand that we should not take things for granted. We also need to understand that emotional rage is not the answer. We need to remember that tragedies are not as bad as they seems and they can be better coped with guidance. The ups and downs that we face act as an opportunity to determine our values and goals. These obstacles act as stepping stones to build the life we want.
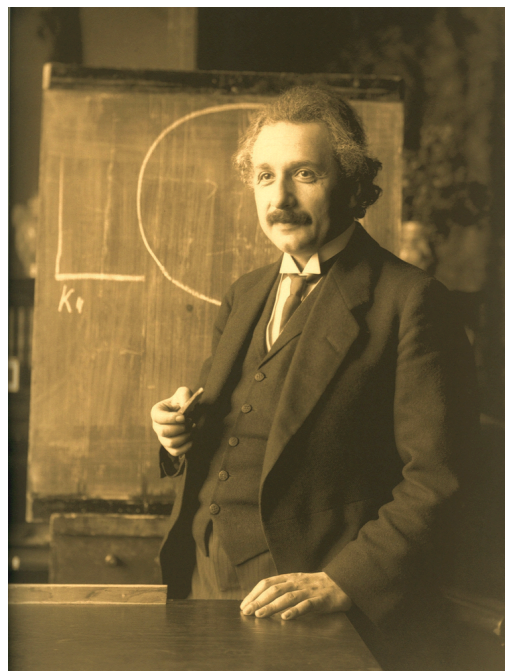
We can be inspired by learning about some of the hardships faced by successful people. Take the case of Albert Einstein . He could not speak until he was 4 and couldn't write until he was 7. Many believed that he was developmentally behind. However, he persevered and by the age of 12, he showed remarkable mathematical ability and had learnt algebra and geometry all by himself. Although he was considered to be a slow learner, he played a pivotal role in changing modern physics and is believed to be one of the smartest individuals that existed in the 20th century.

Why is that when we face trials we try to find an easy way out. If you can't physically change something, then the right approach is to look at it in a different way. You can think of a crisis as a way to learn new things or an enlightening opportunity to shake your inner world. It is my personal opinion, that the hardships we face are more of a blessing in disguise as compared to a curse. What doesn't kill you only makes you stronger. Life throws all types of twists and turns. We have no right to ask "Why does this only happen to me?", unless we ask the same question when something good happens in our life.

> *Always remember, when life gives you a thousand reasons to cry, we should always find a reason to smile. We are brought into deep waters not to be drowned but rather to be tested.*

Finally, remember that life is like a two – sided coin. We cannot feel pleasure without pain or confidence without fear or even joy without sorrow. Failure is not falling down. Failure is staying down when you are given a fair chance to move up. Often, good things fall apart for better things to fall in place. We learn a lot from the bad choices that we make and have the ability to be wiser for the next hurdle that we will face.

We all know that Edison failed about 10,000 times before he successfully invented the electric bulb. When one of the journalists asked Edison about his failures he replied, "I have not failed 10,000 times—I've successfully found 10,000 ways that will not work." The Bhagavad Gita tells us about the helplessness faced by Arjuna but metaphorically appeals to the mankind. We are taught by the Gita not to hold onto negative emotions, as this exhibits self defeating determination. We need to realise that failure is not the enemy of success, rather it is the entry towards success as long as self determination is strong. I would like to conclude by saying that today's humanity is a sum total of all the hardships or storms that the previous and present generations have faced.

PRESENTING
The team behind the Humanities Publication

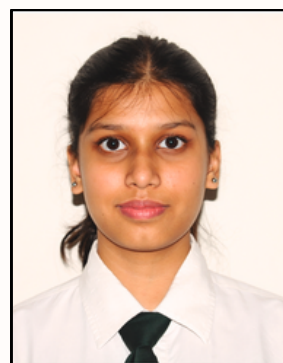Front row from left to right- Mr. T Chandrashekar (Head of Department),
Mrs. Nandita Gupta, Mrs. Sweta Sinha, Mrs. Trinita Das (Faculty)
Second row from left to right- Shreya Miglani (12-B), Aashi Roy (12-A),
Aara Chaudhuri (12-A)
Back row from left to right- Divyanshu Panda (12-A), Pejavar Vinaya (11-B), Nandini
Guleria (12-B), Ananya Shetty (11-A)

The Editorial and Design Team

Aara Chaudhuri
Head of Design

Aashi Roy
Head Editor

Design team: Shreya Miglani, Nandini Guleria, Ananya Shetty, Pejavar Vinaya
Editorial team: Divyanshu Panda