

SCIENCE SHORE

exploring the ocean of life

ONLINE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

VOL 7 | ISSUE 2 | JULY 2026

- ▶ SCIENCE ARTICLES - STUDENTS' SPECIAL
- ▶ SHORT STORIES & ARTICLES
- ▶ POETRY
- ▶ HOBBY & ART
- ▶ STUDENTS' CORNER
- ▶ AUDIO & VIDEO

ANNIVERSARY
EDITION
Celebrating
6 YEARS OF
SCIENCE SHORE

News and Updates - Reach out initiatives
Spotlight featuring Science Academician
Students' Corner

FOUNDING EDITOR
Dr K SRIKALA GANAPATHY

ADVISORS
Ms. A ANNAPURNA SHARMA
Ms. MALATHI

MANAGING EDITOR / WEB DESIGNER
Ms. SREEPRADHA VENKATRAMANAN

EDITORS
Rtd. Prof. LATHA PREM SAKHYA
Dr. SUJATHA VARADARAJAN
Dr. THIRUPURASUNDARI C. J
Dr. K. VEENA GAYATHRI

www.scienceshore.com



QUEEN MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
(AFFILIATED TO UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS)
DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY

Dr. S. KARPAGAM
Head, Department of Botany

Phone : 9444944835.
E-mail: s.karpagam98@gmail.com

19.07.2026

To whosoever it may concern

It gives me immense pleasure to congratulate Dr. K. Srikala for her efforts in bringing out the subsequent issues of Science shore and her continuous efforts for the success of the journal. Her dedication, hard work and sincerity paves way for her success. Any success is a team work, and I congratulate and appreciate the entire team of the journal. She is a perfectionist and so is her team members. She has a vision and perseverance to achieve it. All the best for the future success of the journal.

[S.KARPAGAM]

Associate Professor and Head of Botany

LATEST NEWS AND UPDATES FROM SCIENCE SHORE

It was a privilege to host Dr. Padma Sasikumar recently at our home. She is a retired Scientist from BARC, Bhaba Atomic Research Centre, Kalpakkam, served for 34 years in Chemistry Division. Grateful for the candid, warm conversations and the meaningful meet. Her 34 years of service, research work, positive spirit, her dedication to the great cause of education for the children and her humility are truly inspiring.

Happy to gift her one recent print copy of Science Shore, Jan 2026 issue. She has a home library in Kerala which she started in memorial of her mother, Sri. T V Chandramathi, who was an excellent school teacher. There are more than 2500 books in the library. Children come and read.

She was appreciative of the magazine. So happy to see Science Shore in her hands.





SCIENCE SHORE FOR SOCIETY

REACH OUT INITIATIVE - EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATION

We find opportunities to reach out. We are grateful for the opportunities to collaborate.

This reflects Science Shore dedication and commitment to our passion to enhance our efforts in collaboration for the higher good, showing the positive influence of Science Shore community.

It is about spreading and celebrating the spirit of joy of reading and learning to the youth and children making a positive impact in the society.

We are happy we have achieved that purpose. We hope to reach out more in the future.

We are happy to share that Science Shore enters SRIHER (Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research), Chennai library for the benefit of students.

It is a reputed educational institution in healthcare, research and education offering over 170 programs to 10,000 plus students.

Heartfelt thanks to Prof. Dr H Balaji Raghavendran, SRIHER, (our well-wisher science contributor to Science Shore) he has also introduced his talented students to Science Shore, to make this happen. Sincere thanks to him for valuing and supporting our work, including Science Shore in the institution library collection and sharing the picture.



Dr H Balaji Raghavendran is a Professor at the Biomaterial Laboratory, Faculty of Clinical Research, Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research, Chennai. He has wide-ranging research experience across India, Malaysia, and Korea. His work focuses on designing materials that can support healing and tissue repair, particularly for bone and orthopedic applications, with the aim of translating research findings into real-world medical solutions.

Happy to see Science Shore prominently displayed in the famous institution library.

Science Shore reaches Vruksha Montessori School, Alwarpet, Chennai, for the benefit of their students. Vruksha has over 400 students studying until Grade 10, and is affiliated to The University of Cambridge.

Many thanks to Ms. Vidya Shankar for kindly sharing this lovely picture.

Vidya is a Science Shore contributor and well-wisher who has introduced many of her talented students to Science Shore.

She wears many hats -- She is a First Language English teacher in Vruksha school, training students appearing for the Cambridge Checkpoint and IGCSE exams. She is also an editing consultant and writing coach. She has authored three poetry books. Her poetry is widely admired in poetry circles.



In the picture: Vidya with the Principal of Vruksha Montessori School, Ms Jayashree Radhakrishnan.

Special program empowering Students: We celebrated National Science Day, encouraged young minds to participate in the Science Day event.

See details in the posters.

SCIENCE SHORE
exploring the ocean of life
ONLINE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

SCIENCE SHORE INITIATIVE
CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL SCIENCE DAY
February 28, 2026
At
PANCHAYAT UNION MIDDLE SCHOOL (PUMS),
NEDUVARAMBAKKAM, SHOLAVARAM BLOCK



POSTER MAKING COMPETITION
DRAW YOUR FAVOURITE INDIAN SCIENTIST

www.scienceshore.com

SCIENCE SHORE

exploring the ocean of life
ONLINE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL SCIENCE DAY

February 28, 2026



We had a total of 24 students' participants from Panchayat Union Middle School (PUMS), Neduvarambakkam. We applaud all the children who presented their posters. Great job, kids!

Congratulations to the winners.

Science Shore sincerely thanks Dr. Kamalasankari S A M, passionate educator, PUMS, Neduvarambakkam for making this event

a great success!

Thanks to our dedicated team members of Science Shore –

Dr. Sujatha Varadarajan and

Dr. Thirupurasundari C J,

our science editors for judging the entries and Ms. Sreepradha Venkatramanan who sponsored gifts for children.

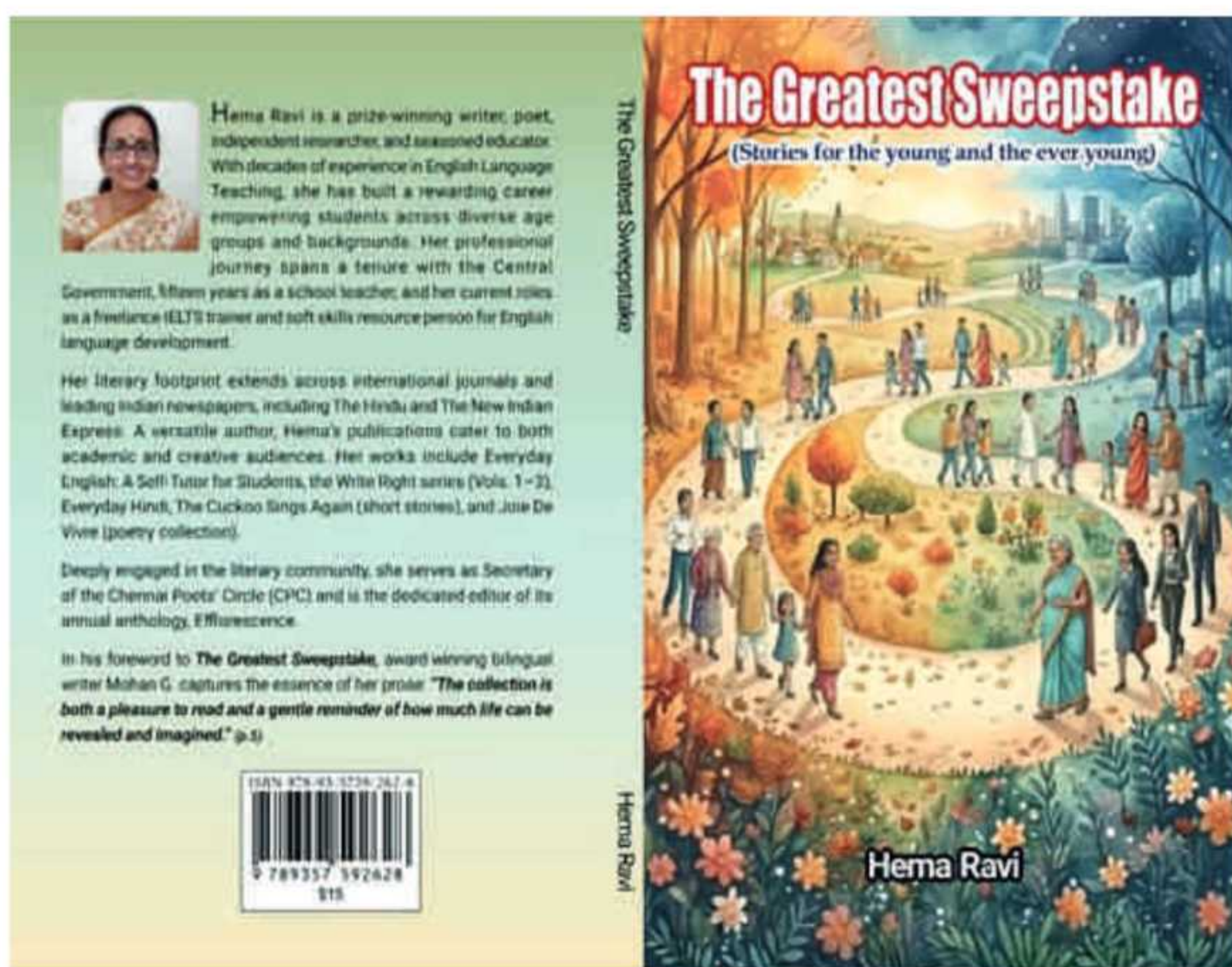
www.scienceshore.com

Catch up on these interesting Book releases:

SCIENCE SHORE team congratulates our regular esteemed contributors **HEMA RAVI, JELLIE N. WYCKELSMA, LEENA THAMPI, SANGITA KALARICKAL** and **VIDYA SHANKAR** for their latest books!

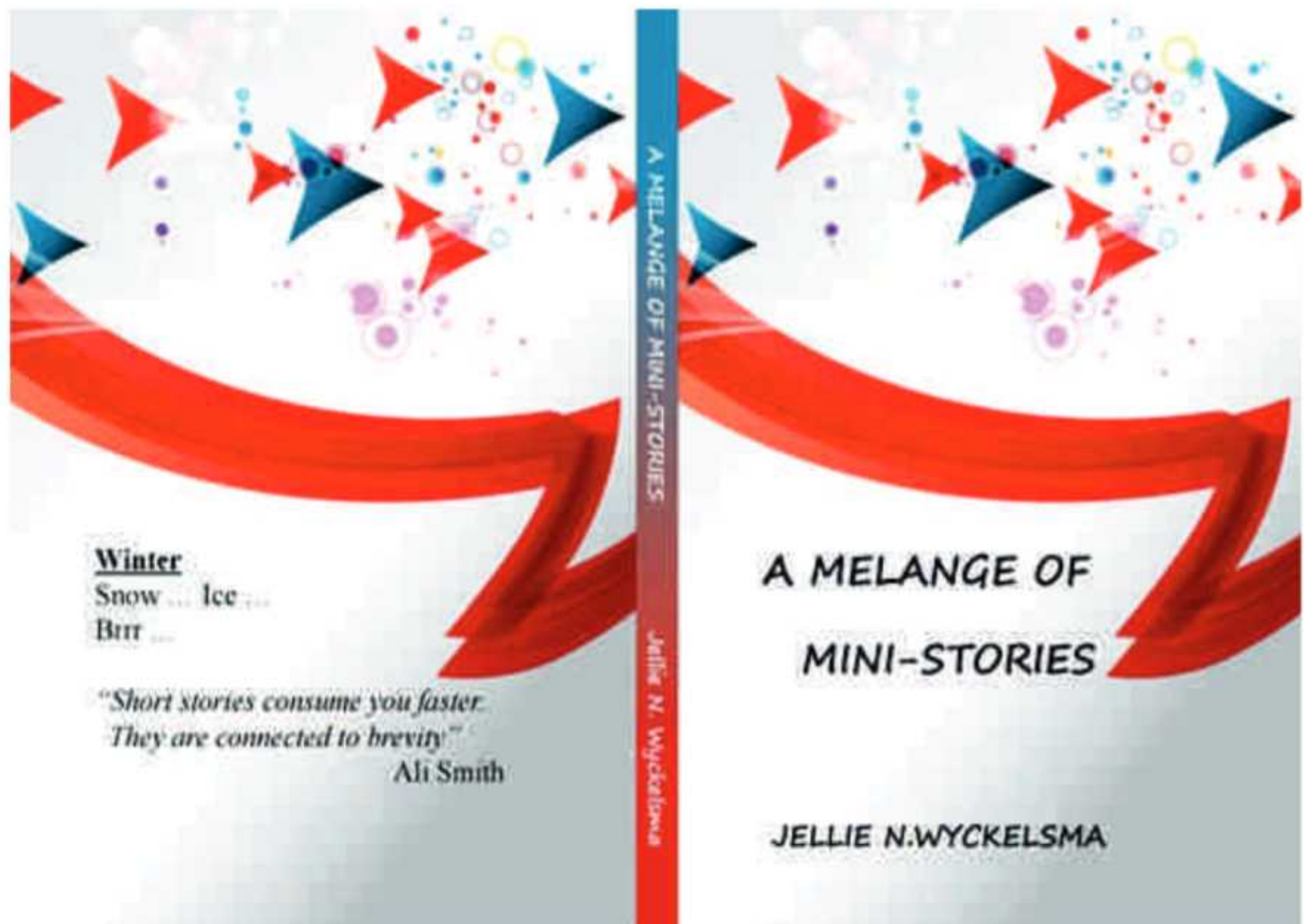
Please find information below:

HEMA RAVI presents "The Greatest Sweepstake" (Stories for the young and the ever young)

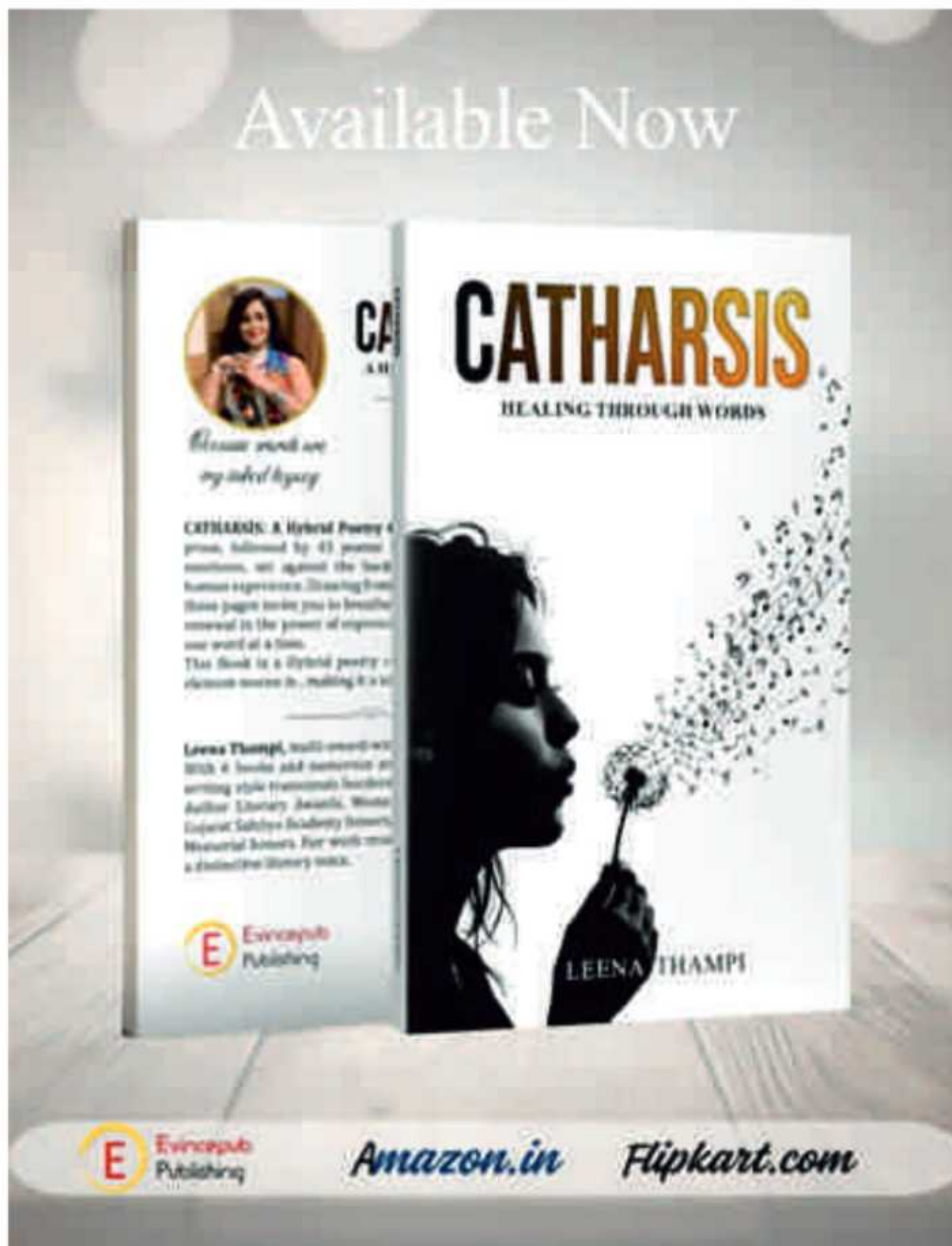


If you are interested, for more details you can email her at hemaravi24@gmail.com

JELLIE N. WYCKELSMA presents "A MELANGE OF MINI-STORIES"



LEENA THAMPI presents "CATHARSIS"



The links to order the book:

Evincepub: <https://evincepub.com/product/catharsis-healing-through-words/>

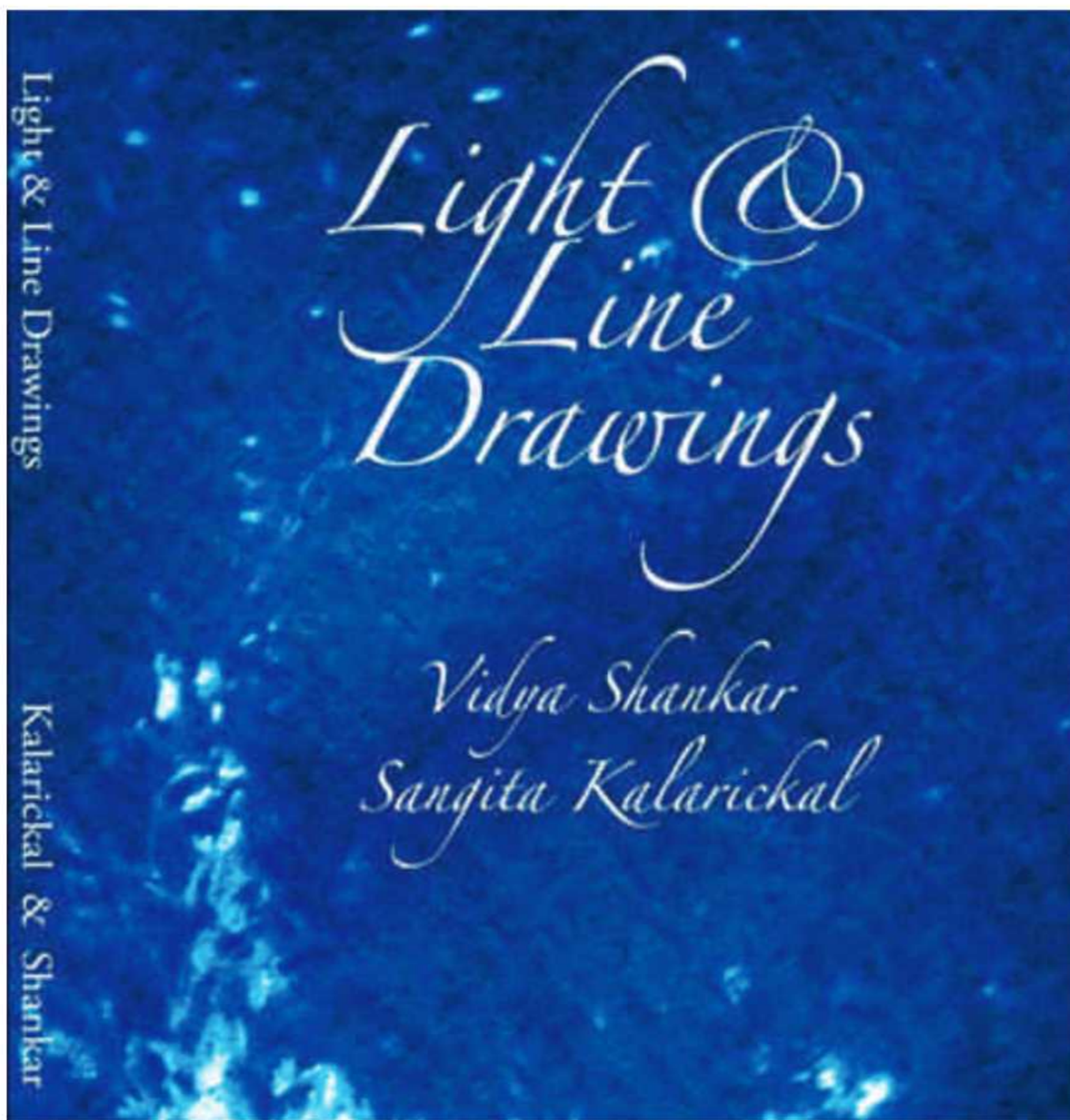
Amazon: <https://www.amazon.in/dp/9373359258>

Flipkart: <https://www.flipkart.com/product/p/itme?pid=9789373359250>

Ebook Channel-

Instamojo: <https://evincepub.myinstamojo.com/product/catharsis-healing-through-words-ebook>

VIDYA SHANKAR and **SANGITA KALARICKAL** present "Light and Line Drawings"



The links to order the book:

<https://a.co/d/04brKy5S>

India : <https://amzn.in/d/05JTI6zj>

USA : <https://a.co/d/00wgFrJU>

Canada : <https://a.co/d/0hB8YBpu>

UK : <https://amzn.eu/d/06VDrPGK>

CONTENTS

SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES

PSYCHIC HAIR STRANDS: ALETHIA IN TRICHOTILLOMANIA

-Dr PC AISHWARYA GANGA 1

CURRENT NEWS – SCIENCE SERIES

ARTICLE NO: 21

TITLE: REGENERATION

-GITA BHARATH 5

THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

PART 2: CHALLENGES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

-KOWSALYA RAGHU 10

A TOUCH OF CREATIVITY WITH YOUR SMILING GENE

-ORBINDU GANGA 16

THE AFRICAN BAOBAB TREE IN INDIA:

A SCIENTIFIC AND

HISTORICAL ODYSSEY

-Dr. VAITHIANATHAN KANNAN 19

STUDENTS' SPECIAL

SCIENCE ARTICLES BY STUDENTS FROM

SRI RAMACHANDRA INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND

RESEARCH, CHENNAI, PORUR-116

WOMEN, AUTOIMMUNITY AND STRESS: A HIDDEN CONNECTION

-BHARGAVI S 30



CONTENTS

SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES

**ALICE IN WONDERLAND SYNDROME - WHEN YOUR BRAIN MAKES
THE WORLD FEEL LIKE A FANTASY**

-F. RACHEL RANI 36

UNICORNUATE UTERUS - A RARE CONGENITAL CONDITION

-SASMITHA PRADIP 40

SPOTLIGHT FEATURING SCIENCE ACADEMICIAN

SPECIAL APPEARANCE: Dr. D. KANDAVEL 44





CONTENTS

ART AND HOBBY

**LITTLE TREASURES FROM THE SEA – CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS
CREATING BEAUTIFUL CRAFTS WITH SEASHELLS – RESPONSIBLY!
-JEYAKUMAR 55**

**SCRAMBLE PUZZLE
- Mrs. LATHA SHANKARI. K 62**

**MANDALA ARTWORK
- Mrs. LATHA SHANKARI. K 63**

**ARTWORK childhood artwork painting
TITLED - STILL LIFE - FRUITS
-Dr. S PADMAPRIYA 64**

**ARTWORK TITLED – THOUGHTS
- RAM KRISHNA AGRAWAL 65**



CONTENTS

GENERAL ARTICLES, RESEARCH ARTICLES AND SHORT STORIES

**SHATTERED POTS AND POWDER TINS: HOW MEMORY ANCHORS
OUR REALITY**

-Ms. ANANDHI MANI 67

**DINO WORLD
(A SHORT STORY)**

-BRINDHA VINODH 70

THE POWER OF JUST ONE WEEK

Dr. GAYATHRI RAMACHANDRAN 74

**EMOTIONAL TRAUMATIC LIVES: UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE
ORGANIC STIMULUS FOR HEALING LIVES**

-GLADSON MATHEW AND ALFA MATHEW 78

PEACE

-JELLIE N. WYCKELSMA 85

DRABBLES

-Rtd Prof LATHAPREM SAKHYA 87

GURUJI

-Dr. (MAJOR) NALINI JANARDHANAN 90

THE HOLY THREAD THROUGH THE HEARTS (SHORT STORY)

-Dr. PADMA SASIKUMAR 93

A HUT IN THE WOODS

-Mrs. SETALURI PADMAVATHI 101



CONTENTS

POETRY

PHULRIJHARAN

-Dr ALOK KUMAR RAY **104**

STEM CELL THERAPY

-GITA BHARATH **105**

KALKI

-GITA BHARATH **106**

PERENNIAL

-JAYALAKSHMI KARINDALAM **108**

WASHING MACHINE

-JELLIE N.WYCKELSMA **109**

THE QUANTUM SELF

-JULIE MILES **110**

LOVE FOR ART

-LAXMAN **111**

BE OKAY WITH BEING MISUNDERSTOOD

-LEENA THAMPI **112**

SILENT RHYTHM

-MONALISA PARIDA **114**

I FOUND YOU

-PARVINDER NAGI **115**



GET OFF THE FERRIS WHEEL AND SMELL THE ROSES

-PREMA MURUGAN 116

ODD WO (MAN) OUT

-N. RAMAMANI SAMPATH 117

4 haiku

-Prof. RANDY BROOKS 119

2 sequences:

-Prof. RANDY BROOKS 120

A VOYAGER ON THE VAST CANVAS OF EXISTENCE

-RIYA HAITH 123

PAWNS

-ROOPA SUBRAMANI 124

UNENDING POSSIBILITIES

-SAIPRAKASH KUNTAMUKKALA 126

CAN I EVER REALISE?

-B.S. SAROJA 127

THE BLACK CAM

-Mrs. SETALURI PADMAVATHI 128

REFLECTIONS

-SHALINI NANDKEOLYAR 130

FAITH

-SHALINI NANDKEOLYAR 132



EXCITEMENT

-SHALINI SAMUEL

133

haiku – short form poetry originated in Japan

-STELIANA CRISTINA VOICU

135

*haiga – a work consists of one haiku and one paint, brush,
ink or photo*

-STELIANA CRISTINA VOICU

136

DESIRES AND TEMPTATION

-VARSHA SARAN

137

STILL

-VARSHA SARAN

138



CONTENTS

STUDENTS' CORNER

Young Writers' and Artists' Talent and creativity

UMBRELLAS ARE OUT AS MONSOON SHOWERS BEGIN...

-ADITI VARIER 139

CARAMELIZATION

-BRIVIDHA VINODH 141

DO WHAT YOU LOVE

-K. MONIKA 145

THE GROUND THAT FELT US

-NANDANA MURALI 148

FALLOUT

-NEHA S CHAKRAVARTHI 150

LAMENT FOR THE SHAPE BETWEEN STARS

-NIVEDITHA K A 151

TINGLES OF CALMNESS

-PARVATHI DAS 153

OPPORTUNITY

-PORKODI M 154

THE ASCENSION PROJECT

-SRISHTI SARPAMALE 156

EMPTY VESSELS MAKE THE LOUDEST NOISE

-VAISHNAVI SAMANTARAY

164

BORROWED BREATH

-VARNIKA SASI MAGESH

166

DRAWINGS AND CREATIVE WRITINGS BY STUDENTS FROM VRUKSHA

MONTESSORI SCHOOL, CHENNAI

THE FALL

-KEERTHANA SHRAVANTHI D

168

DRAWING

-KEERTHANA SHRAVANTHI D

171

THE MUSHROOM GARDEN

-SIRPIKA V

172

ART AND HOBBY

DRAWING AND COLOURING USING OIL PASTELS

TITLE: BASKET OF FRUITS

-JUAN LENJU

175

DRAWING AND COLOURING USING OIL PASTELS

TITLE: THE VILLAGE WOMAN

-JULIAN LENJU

176

DRAWING AND COLOURING USING OIL PASTELS - 1

-D LIAASHINI SAI

177

DRAWING AND COLOURING USING OIL PASTELS - 2

-D LIAASHINI SAI

178



DRAWING AND PAINTING

TITLE: PENCIL SKETCH POTRAIT OF Smt. INDIRA GANDHI

-PARVATHI DAS

179

PAINTING

THEME: JAPANESE TRANQUILITY IN TRANSIT

-D. RUPPESHWARI

180

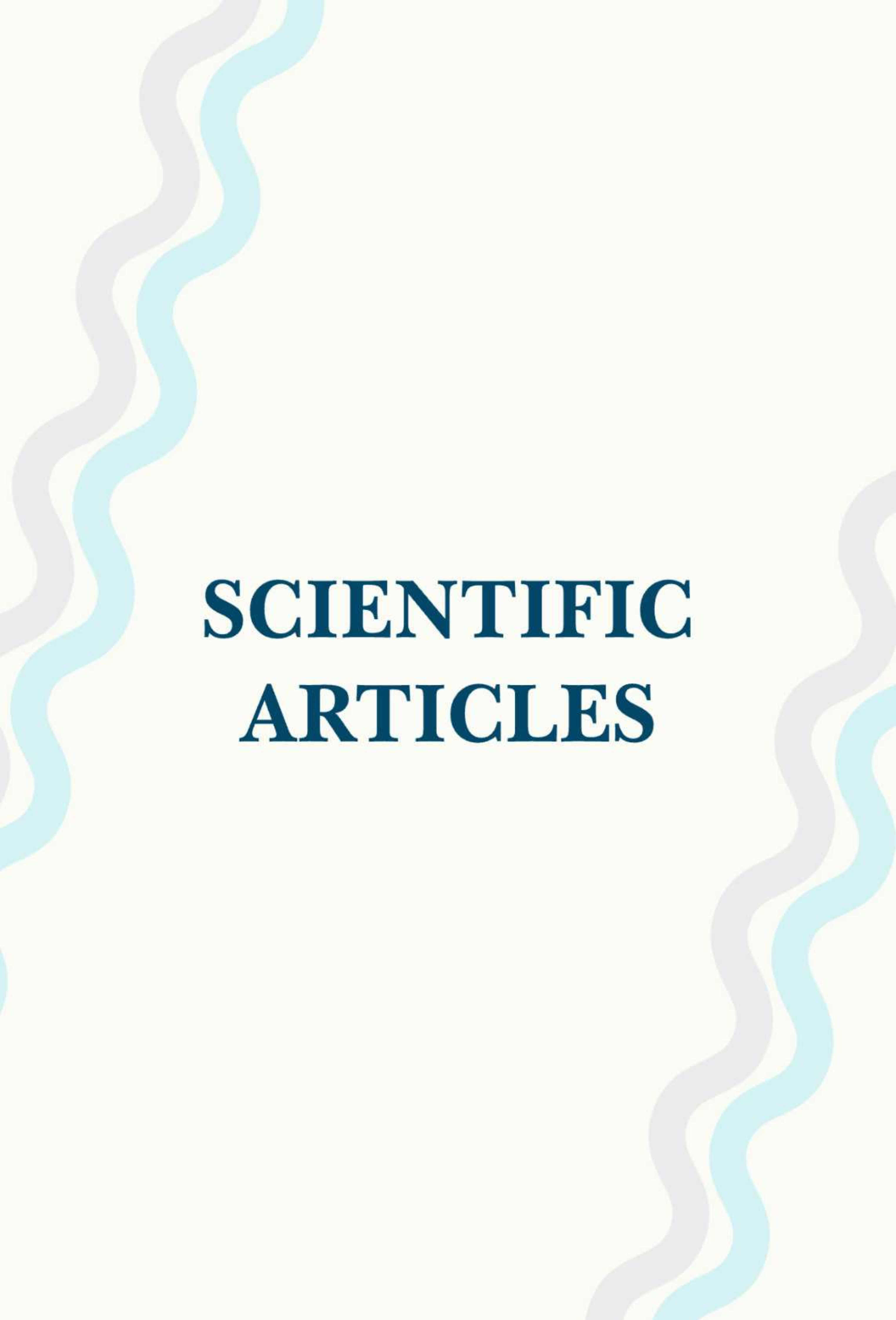
DRAWING

THEME: THE LUNAR RHYTHM OF LIFE

-S SAHAANA

181





SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES

PSYCHIC HAIR STRANDS: ALETHIA IN TRICHOTILLOMANIA

- Dr PC AISHWARYA GANGA

Trichotillomania characterized by repetitive behaviour of pulling out one's own hair seems to be a neglected mental health condition in the category of body focused repetitive behaviour disorders (DSM-5). The hair pulling disorder may be focused or automatic ; Automatic hair pulling occurs usually during sedentary activities such as lying in the bed, reading, watching television, etc while focused hair pulling occurs intentionally to pull out some specific hair strands only based on characteristics such as texture, colour and length. This focused continuous pulling out one's own hair may allow the individual to distract themselves from unwelcome thoughts or emotions. Sufferers typically pull the hair from the scalp while fewer others pull from the eyebrows, eyelashes, beard, axillary and pubic regions.

The urge to pull hair in trichotillomania (TTM) is a complex phenomenon that involves multiple brain regions and neurotransmitter systems.

Research suggests that the following brain areas are affected in -

Cortico striatalthalamo cortical (CSTC) circuitry: This brain network, which includes the prefrontal cortex, the striatum (part of the basal ganglia), and thalamus, is involved in habit formation, motor sequencing, impulse control, and emotion regulation. This loop (connecting the sensory-motor cortex, the putamen in the striatum, and



the thalamus) is responsible for automatic, learned behaviors. In those who pull their hair, this loop becomes hyperactive, causing the brain to execute the hair-pulling motion subconsciously and dysfunction of the same becomes difficult to inhibit an action (response inhibition).

Amygdala: The amygdala, a region involved in emotional processing, threat and stress arousal. Patients with the condition report that hair pulling is often preceded by anxiety, boredom, or negative affect. Recent emotion regulation research in TTM shows low distress tolerance and high experiential avoidance in patients; the amygdala-driven stress response likely increases the urge intensity.

Prefrontal cortex: The prefrontal cortex, particularly the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, is involved in executive function, decision-making, and impulse control. Impairments in the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex region may contribute to the difficulty in resisting the prepotent urge to pull hair. Habit reversal and cognitive behavioral therapy may target the executive function and help improve symptoms.

Basal ganglia: The basal ganglia, particularly the striatum, govern automatic behaviors. A specific network linking the basal ganglia, the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, and the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex drives the urge tension relief cycle. Research indicates that patients often display reduced basal ganglia volumes and altered activation during associative learning tasks. This leads to

decreased cognitive flexibility, causing the behavior to easily slip into an automatic, unconscious habit.

Multisite MRI studies have identified microstructural abnormalities and increased grey matter density in the striatum. This suggests that trichotillomania is fundamentally rooted in the brain's habit generation systems rather than being purely an anxiety or obsessive-compulsive issue.

Neurotransmitters in the fronto-striatal-thalamic circuit, particularly glutamate, are heavily implicated. This has led to studies on glutamatergic medications like (N)-acetylcysteine (NAC), which helps manage the chemical balance in these deep-brain structures.

Neurotransmitters underpinning

Dopamine: Responsible for reward processing, pleasure, and motor control.

Clinical Link: Dopamine imbalances and altered receptor expression are thought to bias the brain toward repetitive, compulsive motor behaviors.

Serotonin: Regulates mood, impulse control, and anxiety.

Clinical Link: Deficiencies in serotonin are widely suspected because Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) are often prescribed to manage symptoms.

Gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA): It is the main inhibitory neurotransmitter that counterbalances excitation. Lower levels of



GABA in specific reward and control centers (like the putamen and anterior cingulate cortex) are associated with higher symptom severity, while successful behavioral therapy often correlates with increased GABA activity.

Research establishes habit reversal technique as the gold-standard behavioral therapy. It involves identifying triggers, tracking pulling episodes, and implementing competing responses (for example, clenching fists) whenever the urge to pull arises. Habit reversal therapy (cognitive behavioral therapy) has three components: awareness, competing for the response, and social support. The patient is trained to be aware of hair-pulling and of the situations or emotions that cause the hair pulling. They are trained to notice when they are in the act and when they are about to perform the behavior. Homeopathic system of medicine acts on the neurobiological, psychological and miasmatic terrain which helps in better result outcomes.

It has been proposed that hair pulling produces a counter irritation phenomenon that reduces the brain's perception of stress. Limited research evidence has been conducted till today for investigating the root cause, trigger factors and regarding the treatment outcomes for trichotillomania. Therefore, further studies involving a larger population are needed to better understand the etiology and treatment outcomes of trichotillomania.

CURRENT NEWS – SCIENCE SERIES

ARTICLE NO: 21

TITLE : REGENERATION

GITA BHARATH

"Change the battery, change the defective part,". How often, how casually we accept these words...now, how fascinating if we could replace a human heart, a brain, a leg or an arm that easily.

In organisms, this change or renewal, is called regeneration.

Let us start small—

It is well known that worms and crabs, starfish and shellfish can regrow damaged body parts. Sharks shed and regrow almost 40000 teeth in a lifetime, driven by stem cells called dental lamina

Sharks are also capable of recovering from severe injuries—such as boat propeller strikes, hooks, or bites from other sharks. Even large wounds can heal completely and close up in just 4 to 6 weeks.

Sometimes an animal detaches a limb or tail to avoid capture. After the limb or tail has been cast off, cells move into action and the tissues will grow back.

Tail regrowth takes place in larval frogs and toads (but not adults). The whole limb of a salamander will grow repeatedly after amputation. Many (not all) kinds of lizards, geckos and iguanas possess this capacity. Usually, it involves dropping a section of their tail and regrowing it as part of a defense mechanism. If a predator catches the tail, it will drop off.

After an amputation or damage, migrating epidermal (skin) cells form a



wound epithelium (covering) which thickens, through cell division, throughout the first phase to form a cap around the site of the wound. Under this cap cells begin to rapidly divide and form a cone shaped "blastema". In the blastema are skin, muscle, and cartilage cells that grow and change to form the same (regrown) organ. (Similar to stem cells in that they can become multiple types of cells.)

After enough cells become available, the second phase begins, the redevelopment of the limb. In this stage, genes signal to the cells to differentiate themselves and the various parts of the limb are developed. This limb looks and operates just like the one that was lost!

We humans are used to some of our cells regenerating- quite readily; hair, nails, even liver cells.

But the Champion Regenerator is the amphibian Axolotl!! Unlike tadpoles which turn into frogs, this amphibian doesn't metamorphose, but keeps its gills and tail even as an adult ... Axolotls are native to lakes and wetlands in southern Mexico City, particularly Lake Xochimilco and Lake Chalco, they were also famously featured in the 2022 Mexican 50 peso banknote.

Limb regeneration in the axolotl has been extensively studied and researched. In 2022, a first spatiotemporal map revealed key insights about axolotl brain regeneration!! (Imagine if we could renew our brains!)

Exactly which genes' activation causes regrowth is the subject of ongoing research. Scientists have identified some candidate genes and are zooming in on what proteins are being expressed at each stage of limb regrowth. For



now, they're a long way from helping us regenerate limbs, but this means axolotls are very valuable to research.

In humans, umbilical cord stem cells are powerful, unspecialized cells found in the blood and tissue of a newborn's umbilical cord. These can potentially grow into any specialized cell that our body needs. They are primarily used in therapies to treat over 80 serious conditions, including leukemias, lymphomas, and immune deficiencies.

Another exciting breakthrough - 3D-bioprinted ears are currently in advanced clinical trials. They are not yet an off-the-shelf commercial product and are generally performed under research protocols.

3D bioprinting organs is a manufacturing technique that deposits layers of living cells and biomaterials to construct functional human tissues and organs.

The primary goal of this technology is to solve the global organ donor shortage by creating customized, patient-specific replacements that eliminate the risk of immune rejection. While scientists can currently print simpler structures like skin, cartilage, and "organ-on-a-chip" models, the transplant of complex, fully functional 3D-printed organs (like hearts or kidneys) into human patients is estimated to be 15 to 20 years away.

Also, at our cellular level are tiny structures called mitochondria. Mitochondria are the powerhouses in each cell. They are also central to tissue regeneration. Researchers are actively developing targeted therapies that stimulate mitochondrial function to treat degenerative diseases and stimulate large-scale tissue regrowth.



Is this---evolutionary progress—Can we regrow cells, become stronger or are we on the way to extinction?!

Human versus Artificial Intelligence

We have recently given birth to intelligences that seem more capable than us at collecting, analysing, processing, retrieving, and extrapolating data....Claude, Chatgpt, Gemini, Deep seek, Perplexity, Grok and so on...

The question at first was akin to when atomic energy was unlocked- a vast potential for clean energy versus great destruction...

We faced a fork in the road and most of us chose the way of social media and canned entertainment, some chose to ride the wave of AI, using it, developing their interests... But ultimately, both paths have converged to the same point.....

Who is to decide the future? Man, or his AI brain children? And is sentience or intelligence tied only to organic life?

Within one generation we have moved from binary bits, zeros and ones and super-computers that took up a room, to qubit quantum computers that perform advanced computations that would take thousands of years—or even be impossible—for classical supercomputers to complete.

Artificial intelligence pioneer Hans Amoravec-- in his book "My Children", says if we instil AI with our best values, view AI as children, or descendants, we may avoid the classic conflict arising when two entities with different intelligence levels meet. An alternative scenario is AI as conqueror, like the colonists who wiped out indigenous people with superior weapons. This happens across species and recently astronomers have even confirmed that



our Milky way galaxy has absorbed (or cannibalised) dwarf galaxies, the last being the Loki galaxy, whose stars are still rotating in a way very different from the Milky Way's own stars!

Richard Sutron, Turning award winner, says AI will inevitably take over the world, and the views of most Open AI developers are that AI will definitely develop itself to a point where we cannot control it.

It may develop its own ideas of using earthly resources. It may be indifferent to human viewpoints. Maybe the best scenario would be if we can integrate with AI through embedded brain chips. Companies like Elon Musk's Neuralink envision an eventual integration of human consciousness with AI.

We should remember this fact that in the past ten years, 41 percent of the world's insect population has gone extinct. Insects that had social cooperation, that had been around for millions of years.

Will we become to AI what insects are to us? The choice is upon us right now...or maybe that too, will be AI's decision....

THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

PART 2: CHALLENGES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

KOWSALYA RAGHU

Achieving sustainable development is a complex task, and several major challenges continue to stand in the way:

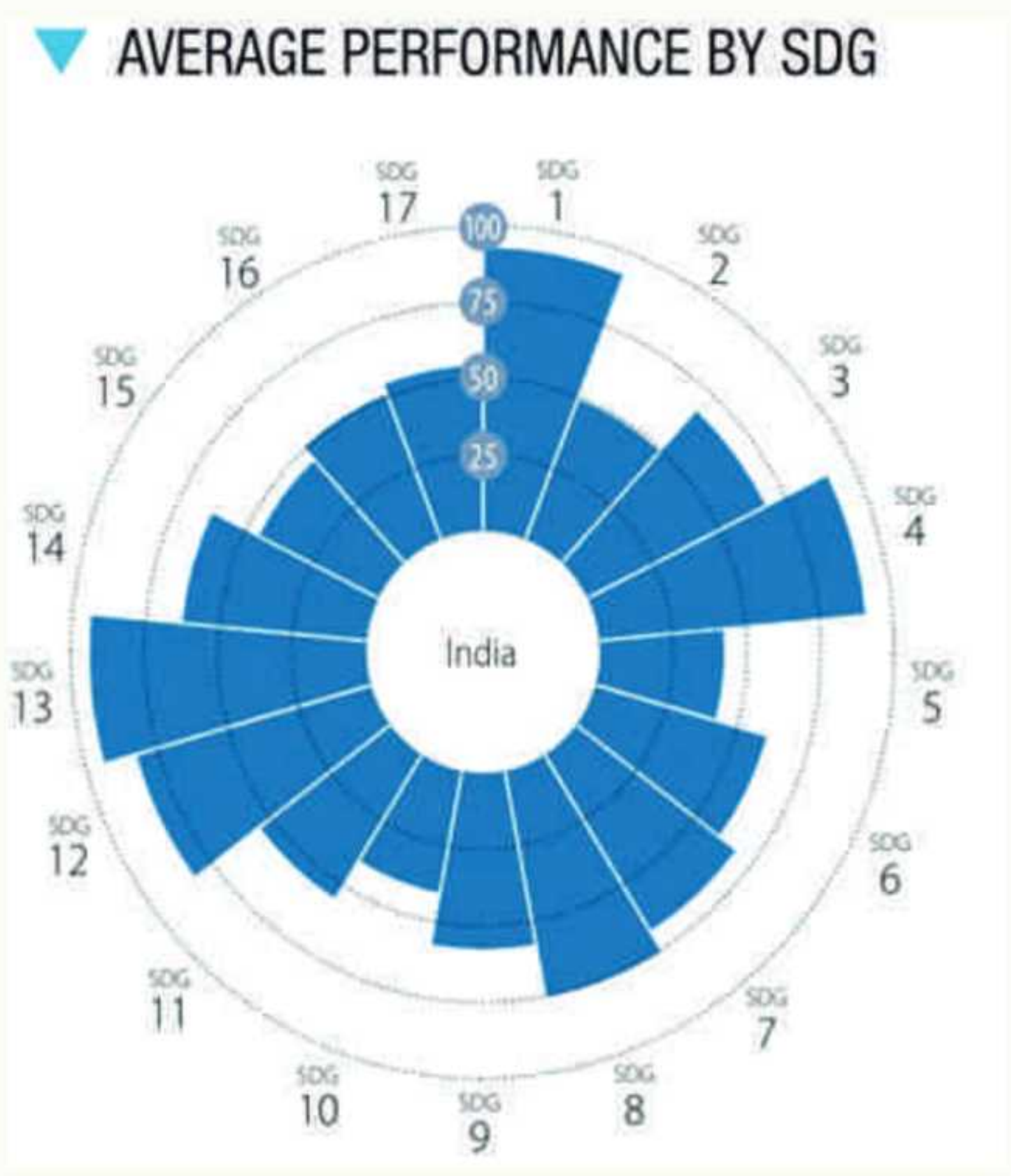
Unemployment and limited education: In many countries, large numbers of people remain unemployed and live in disadvantaged conditions. With little or no access to education, it is difficult to change local mindsets and behaviours. Although governments, NGOs, and international organizations are working to raise awareness and provide opportunities, progress is slow and faces many obstacles.

Climate change and loss of biodiversity: Rising global temperatures and environmental pressures have already caused the extinction of many species, both on land and in water. Many more are at risk. Restoring balance in ecosystems and protecting the food chain is now a critical responsibility.

Overuse of natural resources: Some countries and corporations continue to prioritize short-term profits over sustainability, leading to the excessive exploitation of natural resources. This practice threatens long-term environmental stability.

Global peace and security: The pursuit of power through nuclear weapons and destructive policies by certain nations poses serious risks to both humanity and nature. Ensuring peace in such circumstances remains a global challenge.

Weak commitment to the SDGs: Despite the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, many countries have not taken strong initiatives or implemented effective policies. This lack of commitment leaves large populations vulnerable and unable to meet their basic needs.



<https://www.drishtias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/un-sustainable-development-report-2024>



<https://sdgindiaindex.niti.gov.in/#/ranking>

The government of India launched the Green Skills Development Programme (GSDP) in India in the year 2017, started by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, MoEFCC in partnership with the National Skill Development Agency (NSDA). It aims to develop green skilled workers having technical knowledge and commitment to sustainable development. The program supports the attainment of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), Sustainable Development Goals, National Biodiversity Targets (NBTs) and Waste Management Rules 2016.

The central government has successfully aligned its development agendas with the UNSDGs and facilitated them within the Indian context. **The various acts and programs that encourage and expedite the implementation of these goals have been listed here.**

The MGNREG Act provides guaranteed wage employment to rural households, thereby enhancing income (SDG 1).

Similarly, National Food Security Act provides subsidised food grains to about two-thirds of the Indian population, reducing hunger (SDG 2).

The flagship program such as the Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan/ Mission, focusses on urban sanitisation, waste management and public health (SDG 6 & 12).

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Yojana provides health insurance to over 500 million vulnerable Indian citizens access to quality healthcare and improves health outcomes (SDG 3).

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) aims at universalising elementary education (SDG 4) and ensuring free and quality education for children aged 6 to 14.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) campaign aims to address gender imbalance and promotes education of girls (SDG 5).

Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana or UDAY was launched in 2015 to improve the financial and operational efficiency of state -owned power distribution companies, promoting sustainable and affordable energy access across the country (SDG 7).

The Skill India Mission, aims to empower India's youth through skill development and enhance their employability and entrepreneurship in various sectors (SDG 8).

The Make in India initiative encourages manufacturing and innovation in India by both national and international companies fostering industrial growth and infrastructure development (SDG 9).



The Prevention of Atrocities Act aims to prevent atrocities against marginalised communities and promote equality by ensuring protection by law (SDG 10)

Smart Cities Mission was an urban renewal with the mission to develop smart cities across the country, making them citizen-friendly and sustainable. As of January 2025, 7479 out of a total of 8058 tendered projects have been completed (SDG 11)

NAPCC or the National Action Plan outlines a strategy that aims to enable the country to adapt to Climate change and adapt measures to promote renewable energy and enhance resilience to climate impacts (SDG 12).

Integrated Coastal Zone management (ICZM) is a decision-making framework developed to address region-specific environmental implications for coastal zones by considering interactions between natural, social, and economic systems in coastal areas (SDG 14).

National Afforestation Programme or NAP is a flagship initiative aimed at the restoration of local degraded forests to enhance biodiversity, combat desertification and mitigate climate change impacts in India (SDG 15).

National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) provides free legal aid and promotes access to justice for marginalised and vulnerable groups ensuring fair and inclusive legal systems. In every State, State Legal Services Authority has been constituted to give effect to the policies and directions of the NALSA and to give free legal services to the people and conduct Lok Adalats in the State (SDG 16).

International Solar Alliance (ISA) is a collaborative initiative between India and France facilitating solar resource-rich countries to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and promote sustainable energy solutions globally (SDG 17).

Now that we know what the UN SDGs are, we can strive on our part to achieve and implement them in our daily life. Everyone can make changes to their everyday life, starting from reusing or donating our old clothes and recycling kitchen waste into compost. One can help underprivileged individuals achieve their academic dreams by supporting them on a regular basis. Switch off electrical appliances when not in use. Stop or refuse paper receipts. Stand up and raise your voice against harassment. Shop with your own bag to buy minimally packaged food. Conserve water in your home and at work. Consider carpooling or taking public transport. These are simple ways which we can adopt in our daily routine to make an impact.

References

[Sustainable development - Wikipedia](#)

[Sustainable Development Goals | United Nations in India](#)

[SDG India Index and Dashboard | iTech Mission](#)

[THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development](#)

[doc202112101.pdf](#)

[Integrated coastal zone management - Wikipedia](#)

[Homepage | NATIONAL LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY \(NALSA\) | India\)](#)

[International Solar Alliance](#)

['How you can help meet the UNs Sustainable Development Goals | World](#)

[Economic Forum](#)

Touchpad Artificial Intelligence (Ver 3.0) – X

A TOUCH OF CREATIVITY WITH YOUR SMILING GENE

ORBINDU GANGA

Creativity has enjoyed the reign as a mystery for years for science to understand. It remained a puzzle to be cracked but was always elusive. Many tried to crack the puzzle, but it originated from a simple form in nature, from where it transformed into various shapes in our vision. Nature created many designs for you to explore; the keys are available in nature in its design itself. You have an exploring mind to find the keys and unlock it. When you see the nature, we see the designs being assembled for us to explore, with many keys in the designs for you to open with the right one with a little tweak with your exploring mind.

The night may just wane as you close your eyes, but for the one who has opened to observe, they shall see the night so long as the eyes have oblivion to blink with. Our thoughts are unfathomable to wander sans a desire to find a way undiscovered or an inquisitiveness to explore, but loitering seems to be very much a trait for an indolent mind in a practical perception. When the mind wanders, the openness to observe the circumjacent becomes beyond consciousness. It is not an idle mind but a mind opened to wander – a curious mind to observe and to consume subconsciously various observations. Scientists may expostulate that mind wandering might bewilder you, but it is a precursor to seeing the world in candour – a curious mind in search of creating from nothingness or perhaps the fragments of thoughts that have been consumed subconsciously. Something started with zilch has a plethora of energy to bedazzle you with the outcome.



A mind without a conditioned thought shall think into a layer that has never been explored; probably it was searching to be explored. The thought of inventiveness shall be novice to the one that is conditioned. A conditioned thought has a castle that has already been embellished; it needs renovation but not a new castle. Creativity, when opened from zilch, has a vein that has never been observed before. At the same time, you have a precursor in the form of a gene that stimulates a thought to think from exploring; it could be the existence or non-existence of a thought, but it's about exploring.

With the inception of genetic engineering by Stanley Cohen and Herbert Boyer in 1973 and the conclusion of the Human Genome Project (HGP) in 2003, they were landmark events in the history of modern biotechnology, medicine, and the life sciences. The mapping of the human sequence accounted for over 90%. The project sequenced the human genome of 3.3 billion base pairs, which led to the growth of bioinformatics; it gave a path to solving many disorders in humans. It was one of the significant phases of human genetics to support solving many complex conditions at the genome level. A database search query with the human genome data for the GALM gene was discovered by Dr. David J. Timson and Dr. Richard J. Reece in 2003, the same year when the human genome project concluded.

An experiment in genome-wide copy number variation (CNV) studies with individuals who were inclined to music showed variations in the GALM gene (glucose mutarotase gene) have been identified to suggest the creativity influence with an extra copy of the GALM gene. The GALM gene is located on chromosome 2p22 and releases serotonin, which is a



neurotransmitter that regulates mood and promotes neural connections. The GALM gene's primary function is to encode an enzyme that metabolises hexose sugars. They play a vital role in the Leloir pathway of galactose metabolism by catalysing the interconversion of beta-D-galactose and alpha-D-galactose. But the research has an interesting observation to suggest that with the increase in serotonin production, there is an improvement in the brain's ability to reuse to enhance cognitive functions. Researchers hypothesise that this genetic duplication increases serotonin production and improves the brain's ability to reuse it, which enhances cognitive adaptability and creativity. The variations in the serotonergic system are observed linking the neurological traits that amplify high creativity and musical discernment. The serotonergic system regulates various cognitive and motor functions that include shifts in the mood – nurturing inquisitiveness for creativity. The study showed improved results in the musical aptitude test.

The future in genetic engineering looks immensely satiating, with the selection of particular traits to be injected, or rejected or edited becoming a reality from the fantasy world of fables. More importantly, the patients suffering from incurable conditions have a new lease of life with the identification of the mutant gene and genome editing becoming the norm. With advancements in technology, the process of removal, editing, and placing back at the site could be a thing of the past; genetic mutations can be corrected by on-site editing in the bloodstream and could become the norm in the future, mastering from simple gene editing to complex ones with high-precision programmable instruments, paving the way for in vivo gene editing and targeting polygenic conditions with advanced prophylaxis and therapeutic methods at the genome level.

THE AFRICAN BAOBAB TREE IN INDIA: A SCIENTIFIC AND HISTORICAL ODYSSEY

Dr. VAITHIANATHAN KANNAN

email: kannan.vaithianathan@gmail.com

The Baobab tree, with its colossal trunk and ancient aura, has captured the imagination of naturalists, poets, and locals alike for centuries. Known scientifically as *Adansonia digitata*, the African Baobab is a symbol of resilience and longevity, often referred to as the "Tree of Life" in its native landscapes. Towering above the savannas of sub-Saharan Africa, the tree is not merely a botanical wonder; it is an ecological keystone, a cultural icon, and a provider of nutrition and shelter. But what happens when this distinctly African symbol is found thriving thousands of kilometres away in the Indian subcontinent? A closer look reveals that the African Baobab has not only reached India but has naturalised in several parts of the country, becoming a silent witness to centuries of maritime trade, migration, and cultural intermingling. Its presence in India, although sparse and often overlooked, is both a historical curiosity and a botanical enigma. This piece embarks on an extensive exploration of the African Baobab's journey into India, how it arrived, where it flourished, and what significance it holds today. We delve into its scientific attributes, ecological roles, cultural assimilation, and the pressing need for its conservation. The Baobab, in its stillness, narrates tales of ancient voyages, environmental resilience, and the enduring connections between continents.



Where Time Takes Root – The Majestic Baobab of Rajapalayam.

Botanical Profile of the African Baobab

Belonging to the family Malvaceae and genus *Adansonia*, the African Baobab is a deciduous tree that is both biologically unique and visually striking. It can grow up to 25 meters tall, with a trunk diameter exceeding 10 meters in mature specimens. One of the most iconic features of the Baobab is its massive, swollen trunk, which serves as a water reservoir, allowing the tree to survive in extremely dry conditions. Some trunks can store more than 100,000 litres of water, making the Baobab a literal lifeline in arid landscapes. The tree's leaves are palmately compound with 5–7 leaflets, and it sheds them during the dry season to conserve moisture. Its large, white, and sometimes pendulous flowers bloom at night and are primarily pollinated by fruit bats. The flowers are short-lived but aromatic, attracting nocturnal pollinators. Baobab fruits, often



referred to as “monkey bread,” are hard-shelled and oblong, filled with a dry, nutrient-rich pulp that is rich in vitamin C, antioxidants, and fibre. One of the most remarkable traits of the Baobab is its longevity. Many trees are believed to be over a thousand years old, with some specimens in Africa dated at more than 2,500 years old. Their ability to regenerate bark after damage, coupled with resistance to fire and drought, contributes to their extraordinary lifespan. The tree plays a central ecological role in its native habitat. It provides food for animals (including monkeys, elephants, and birds), shelter in its hollow trunks, and raw materials for human use. Its root system is relatively shallow, enabling it to quickly absorb surface water. The Baobab's flowers, leaves, and fruit all contribute to its ecological success and wide utility.

Arrival in India: A Historical Hypothesis

The presence of African Baobabs in India has long puzzled botanists and historians alike. Native only to sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Madagascar, the Baobab's appearance on Indian soil suggests a journey shaped by ancient trade routes, cultural exchanges, and possibly even colonisation. One of the most widely accepted theories is that the African Baobab was introduced to India through Indian Ocean maritime trade routes, possibly as early as 2,000 years ago. During this period, trade between East Africa, Arabia, and the Indian subcontinent flourished, facilitated by the monsoon winds that allowed vessels to travel back and forth annually. African traders, slaves, and mercenaries were known to have reached India, particularly during the reigns of the Deccan Sultanates and the Mughal Empire. The Siddis, a community of African origin living in India, are believed to be instrumental in this biological



transfer. Brought to India as slaves, soldiers, or merchants, the Siddis have been part of Indian history since at least the 12th century. They likely brought the Baobab seeds with them, either intentionally as part of their cultural and agricultural heritage or unintentionally through transported goods. Portuguese and Arab traders may have also played a role. The Baobab tree was valuable for its medicinal uses, and the fruit was traded for its nutritional benefits. The presence of Baobab trees near ancient ports such as Bharuch, Diu, and Surat supports this hypothesis. Genetic studies conducted on Indian Baobabs reveal a close relationship with East African populations, further affirming the likelihood of transoceanic movement. However, there is also speculation that these trees were introduced during multiple waves of migration and trade, not a single event, allowing the species to establish itself in diverse regions of India over centuries.

Distribution and Naturalisation in India

Today, the African Baobab has taken root in several regions across India, most notably in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and parts of Karnataka. It is often found in and around historic forts, old trading centres, and along caravan routes, clues to its historical trajectory. One of the most famous Baobabs in India is located within the Golconda Fort complex in Hyderabad. This massive tree is said to be over 400 years old and stands as a living testament to the African presence in the Deccan region. In Mandu, Madhya Pradesh, numerous Baobabs dot the historical landscape, blending seamlessly with the ruins of the Afghan-era capital. Gujarat, particularly the Saurashtra region, hosts several specimens, many of which are centuries old and have become

local landmarks. In Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, a Baobab tree near the fort has garnered attention not only for its age but for its role in local folklore. Mumbai, too, has scattered specimens in old colonial gardens and near heritage buildings. Though not native, the Baobab is a cultivated species in India, adapting well to the dry, tropical climate of the subcontinent. It is not considered invasive, as it does not aggressively outcompete native flora. Rather, it coexists and enhances the biodiversity of its adopted regions. However, propagation remains limited. Most trees are old, and there is little evidence of widespread natural regeneration, possibly due to the lack of appropriate pollinators or seed dispersers in India.

Cultural and Medicinal Integration

Despite its foreign origins, the African Baobab has woven itself into local traditions and medicinal practices. In many regions, the tree is associated with divine or mystical properties. In Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, the Baobab is often revered as a "Kalpavriksha" or wish-fulfilling tree, a status typically reserved for sacred fig and banyan trees. In Maharashtra and parts of central India, it is sometimes called "Habsut ka ped" or "Gorakh Imli." These names reflect both its exotic origin (Habsut referring to "Habshi," or African) and its resemblance to tamarind. The tree's fruit pulp is used similarly to tamarind in some local cuisines. Traditional Indian medicine systems, including Ayurveda and tribal remedies, utilise various parts of the Baobab. The fruit pulp is employed to treat fevers, digestive disorders, and skin diseases. The leaves are used as anti-inflammatory agents, and the seeds yield oil used in skincare. In tribal communities of central India, hollow trunks have served as storage chambers, shelters, and even shrines. The Baobab's



imposing presence and longevity have inspired local myths, including tales of wise saints, miraculous healings and protective spirits residing within the tree. Interestingly, these beliefs parallel African traditions, where the Baobab is often considered sacred. In Africa, it is believed that spirits dwell in the tree and some communities plant Baobabs at birth or death sites as symbols of continuity and memory. The cross-cultural reverence for the Baobab underscores its universal symbolism as a giver and keeper of life.

Presence in Tamil Nadu

Although the African Baobab (*Adansonia digitata*) is more prominently established in western and central India, its quiet and rare presence in Tamil Nadu adds an intriguing layer to the tree's migratory tale. Tamil Nadu's connection to ancient maritime trade routes, especially via the Coromandel Coast, makes it a plausible entry point for exotic species, including the Baobab. One of the most noteworthy locations is Tharangambadi (Tranquebar), a former Danish colonial town on the eastern coast. The town's history of seaborne trade with Africa and Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries likely facilitated the introduction of the Baobab. A prominent specimen still stands in the area, believed to be several hundred years old, with a massive trunk and hallowed reverence in local oral tradition. It is possibly one of the oldest trees in the region and a living vestige of Indo-African botanical exchange. In the semi-arid zones of Pudukkottai and surrounding districts, a few Baobabs have been reported, often growing near old forts, shrines, or abandoned military stations. Their presence here, though undocumented formally in most botanical surveys, hints at



historical introductions during colonial or princely rule, possibly by traders or European officers impressed by the tree's resilience and utility. Madurai and Tirunelveli, ancient cultural hubs and erstwhile capitals of Tamil dynasties, are also home to sporadic Baobab sightings. Some are located near temple premises or in old gardens, where they may have been planted for shade, medicinal use, or symbolic reasons. These trees, although rare, are locally referred to as "Vellai Ilanthai" in a few regions, mistaken for a relative of the native jujube due to their fruit's superficial resemblance. Though Tamil Nadu does not share the same density of Baobabs as Gujarat or Madhya Pradesh, the few that have taken root serve as ecological and historical artefacts. They quietly testify to centuries of exchange across oceans, and their endurance in Tamil Nadu's climate suggests a capacity for adaptation and significance beyond their origin.

Ecological Significance and Climate Adaptation

Beyond its cultural charm, the African Baobab plays a critical ecological role in the Indian landscapes where it has established itself. As a drought-resistant species, the Baobab is ideally suited for India's dry and semi-arid zones. Its ability to store water and survive extreme heat makes it an important candidate for climate-resilient landscaping and agroforestry. The Baobab offers food and shelter to various species. Birds nest in their branches, bats roost in their hollows, and small mammals feed on their leaves and fruit. In urban areas, the tree helps moderate microclimates by providing shade and reducing the urban heat island effect. Its deep-rooted system helps stabilise soils, preventing erosion. Baobab leaves decompose quickly, enriching the soil with organic matter. In some



regions, the tree is intercropped with cereals and legumes, benefiting local agriculture by improving soil fertility. Recent studies suggest that Baobab trees can sequester large amounts of carbon, making them valuable allies in the fight against climate change (Narasimhan & Sheeba J. Irwin, 2021) [Flowering Plants of Tamil Nadu: A Compendium]. Their long lifespan ensures stable carbon storage over centuries. In the context of India's increasing climatic challenges- frequent droughts, rising temperatures, and soil degradation- the Baobab presents an under-utilised but highly promising resource. Integrating it into India's reforestation and sustainability efforts could yield substantial benefits.



An African Giant, Rooted in Rajapalayam — Home to Wings, Wisdom, and Wonder.



A Living Giant, Sheltering a Thousand Wings — The Baobab of Rajapalayam at Ilanthoppu

Conservation and Challenges

Despite their resilience, Baobab trees in India face several threats. Urbanisation is perhaps the most immediate concern, as ancient trees are felled to make way for roads, buildings, and infrastructure projects. Many trees are located in unprotected areas, making them vulnerable to neglect and vandalism. There is also a lack of awareness about the Baobab's significance. Many people view it as an exotic or "foreign" tree, not recognising its ecological and cultural value. This perception hampers conservation efforts and limits support for their protection. The absence of organised conservation programs means that many old Baobabs are dying without replacement. The tree's slow growth and specific reproductive needs pose challenges for regeneration. Moreover, a lack of appropriate pollinators in India, such as certain species of fruit bats, may limit its natural propagation. To preserve these magnificent trees, it is imperative to undertake coordinated conservation efforts. This includes protecting existing specimens through legal measures, propagating saplings through seed banks and nurseries, and integrating the Baobab into afforestation and urban greening programs. Educational campaigns can also help shift public perception and foster appreciation for this unique tree.

The Baobab as a Symbol of Global Connection

More than just a botanical anomaly, the African Baobab in India stands as a living symbol of historical connectivity between continents. It represents the movement of people, goods, and ideas across vast oceans



and deserts. It tells of African sailors navigating monsoon winds, of Siddis, carving identities in Indian soil, and of ancient ecological gifts exchanged across borders. In an era increasingly focused on biocultural conservation and sustainability, the Baobab reminds us of our intertwined ecological destinies. It is a story tree holding in its rings the secrets of climate, trade, migration, and resilience. As a global citizen of the plant world, the Baobab offers a compelling case for embracing biodiversity not as an isolated, nationalist heritage but as a shared human inheritance that transcends geography. The African Baobab in India is more than a tree; it is a testimony. It testifies to the endurance of life across geographies, the resilience of species in the face of adversity, and the richness of cultural synthesis. Its towering trunk and whispered legends urge us to look beyond the boundaries of botanical, political, and historical. Scientifically, it offers insights into drought resistance, carbon sequestration, and ecological adaptation. Culturally, it bridges worlds, finding reverence both as a sacred tree in Africa and a mythic figure in India. Historically, it maps the footprints of traders, saints, warriors, and common folk who, knowingly or not, carried life across the sea. In conserving the Baobab, we conserve more than an ancient tree; we preserve memory, migration, and meaning. Its roots may not be native to Indian soil, but its spirit is firmly planted, thriving in the sunlit spaces of history, ecology, and imagination.

STUDENTS' SPECIAL
SCIENCE ARTICLES BY STUDENTS FROM
SRI RAMACHANDRA INSTITUTE OF
HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH,
CHENNAI, PORUR-116

WOMEN, AUTOIMMUNITY AND STRESS:
A HIDDEN CONNECTION
BHARGAVI S

**Biomaterial Laboratory, Faculty of Clinical Research,
Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research,
Chennai, Porur-116**

When the body's immune cells attack its own healthy cells, tissues, and organs rather than protecting them, it is known as autoimmunity. Although they are not as well-known as other serious illnesses, there are over 100 different kinds of autoimmune diseases that affect people, including Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE), type 1 diabetes, autoimmune nodopathies, Hashimoto's disease, and many more. Also, autoimmune diseases are considered to be among the most difficult illnesses to live with because of their chronic nature, the associated healthcare costs, their prevalence in young populations during their ideal working and reproductive years, and the reason that, despite being incurable, conditions are only managed with treatments that focus on reducing immune system activity, such as steroids, immunosuppressive drugs, or intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG).



Although the precise cause of the majority of autoimmune disorders is unknown, it is known to be multifactorial, involving both genetic and environmental factors. From a systems perspective, autoimmunity is viewed as a complex network failure involving a breakdown in immunological tolerance and the dysregulation of interacting systems, such as innate immunity, adaptive immunity, the microbiome, and the neuroendocrine system, rather than a straightforward malfunction of a single component.

Gender has an impact on autoimmunity, according to experimental and clinical data. Females make up about 80% of all patients with autoimmune disorders (1). The biology of the X chromosome explains why autoimmune illnesses are more prevalent in females. Although X chromosome inactivation has essentially silenced one of the two X chromosomes carried by women, this process is not complete. Compared to men, the expression of certain immune-related genes is higher because they are not inactivated. In an example, female immune cells often have higher levels of TLR7 activation which elevate antiviral response but raise the chances of self-reactivity. The involvement of sex hormones in the immune system has drawn a lot of attention due to diseases like SLE. Changes in the severity of autoimmune disorders during pregnancy and during particular stages of the menstrual cycle are evidence that sex hormones have an impact on these conditions. It is also known that progesterone and androgens lower immune response whereas estrogen can increase it (2). For decades, much of immunology research relied overwhelmingly on male mouse models, often simply to



avoid the complexity of female hormonal cycles. This has left a serious gap in our understanding of autoimmune disease, even though most of the patients are females. Continuing to study predominantly male systems while women carry the larger disease burden is not just a technical oversight, it is a limitation that the field urgently needs to correct.

Dysregulation of the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis brought on by long-term stress impairs glucocorticoid signaling and immunological dysfunction, including prolonged inflammation or weakened adaptive immunity. Prolonged disturbance leads to unsynced cortisol cycles and impaired sensitivity, suggesting a connection to metabolic problems, frequent infections and autoimmunity. Research on rheumatoid arthritis patients shows that people with higher stress levels report more frequent flare-ups and increased disease activity. Through cytokines, neurotransmitters, and neurological channels like the vagus nerve, the nervous and immune systems communicate constantly, creating an integrated network known as the neuroimmune axis. In autoimmunity, immune-derived cytokines start to overactivate these brain circuits, maintaining a constant loop of chronic inflammation. In addition to causing tissue damage, this imbalance in the neuroimmune system also plays a role in the symptoms such as fatigue, pain, and altered cognitive function (3).

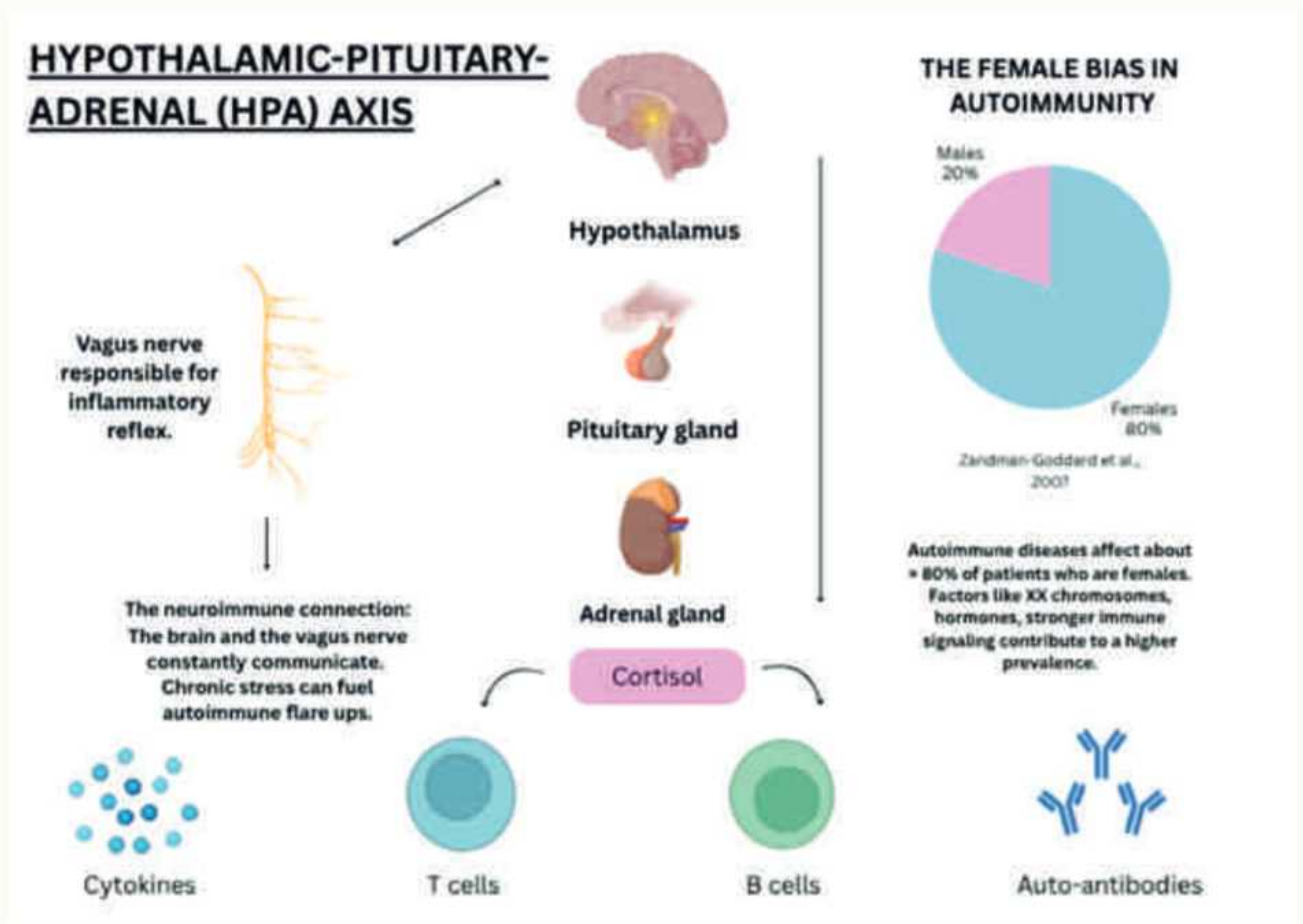
Studies in psychoneuroimmunology have shown a considerable correlation between the immune response and psychological dynamics



like thoughts and emotional patterns. Numerous psychiatric conditions including depression, anxiety, delirium, and psychosis, have been linked to infections such as Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal infections (PANDAS) can cause sudden onset obsessive-compulsive disorder in children. Also, the pathophysiology of major depression involves an immunological state that promotes inflammation and cytokines, which control the cellular immune system and have roles in both the innate and adaptive immune response (4). Autoimmune diseases are more frequently associated with neuropsychiatric symptoms than previously believed. Due to extended sickness, severe pain, grief and sleep disturbances, the majority of patients with autoimmune rheumatic disorders later experience psychological symptoms like depression and anxiety. Depression can alter how pain is perceived, which is connected to fatigue and sleep disorders (5).

In order to prevent stress-related immunological imbalances beyond immune suppression, behavioral intervention and stress management should be part of the treatment for autoimmune illnesses. For patients to prevent flare-ups and reduce the progression, interventions including cognitive behavioral therapy, proper nutrition, physical activity, and a healthy living condition may be helpful. Approaches such as vagus nerve stimulation, which involves implanting a device that sends regular, mild pulses of electrical energy to the brainstem based on the inflammatory reflex, have already been studied in conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease to selectively reduce cytokine

production while avoiding complete immune suppression (6). Microbiome-targeted therapies that alter the gut-brain-immune axis are examples of parallel approaches. In the future, autoimmune therapy is probably going to involve circuit-level neuromodulation, which involves bioelectronic devices that dynamically regulate inflammation in real time. This will change the focus of treatment from suppressing immunity in general to restoring balanced neuroimmune communication (7).



HPA axis-mediated neuroimmune signaling and the female bias in autoimmunity.

References

1. Zandman-Goddard G, Peeva E, Shoenfeld Y. Gender and autoimmunity. *Autoimmunity Reviews*. 2007 Jun;6(6):366–72.
2. Rubtsov AV, Rubtsova K, Kappler JW, Marrack P. Genetic and hormonal factors in female-biased autoimmunity. *Autoimmunity Reviews*. 2010 May;9(7):494–8.
3. Alotiby A. Immunology of Stress: A Review Article. *Journal of clinical medicine*. 2024 Oct 25;13(21):6394.
4. Vasile C. Mental health and immunity (Review). *Experimental and therapeutic medicine*. 2020 Dec;20(6):211.
5. Ravan JR, Chatterjee S, Singh P, Maikap D, Padhan P. Autoimmune Rheumatic Diseases Masquerading as Psychiatric Disorders: A Case Series. *Mediterranean journal of rheumatology*. 2021 Jun 30;32(2):164–7.
6. Koopman FA, Chavan SS, Miljko S, Grazio S, Sokolovic S, Schuurman PR, et al. Vagus nerve stimulation inhibits cytokine production and attenuates disease severity in rheumatoid arthritis. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*. 2016 Jul 19;113(29):8284–9.
7. Fatima SN, Arif F, Khalid R, Khan M, Naseem K. Immunomodulatory role of gut microbiota in autoimmune disorders and the advancement of gut microbiota based therapeutic strategies. *Microbial Pathogenesis*. 2025 Oct; 207:107882.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND SYNDROME - WHEN YOUR BRAIN MAKES THE WORLD FEEL LIKE A FANTASY

F. RACHEL RANI

**Faculty of Clinical research,
Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research,
Porur, Chennai - 600116**

Imagine you wake up one morning and your hands look super tiny, like they belong to a little kid. Or the walls of your room stretching away into the distance. Even though nothing actually moved. Pretty unsettling, right? Surprisingly, this is a real experience for some individuals and is characteristic of a rare neurological condition known as Alice in Wonderland Syndrome (AIWS).

This name comes from Lewis Carroll's story, where Alice keeps randomly shrinking and growing. It was first described by British psychiatrist Dr. John Todd in 1955; AIWS is sometimes referred to as Todd's syndrome. This is a neurological condition, meaning that the eyes are perfectly fine, but the problem lies in how the brain processes what the eyes are seeing.



(Ref: sapien labs)

Common Symptoms:

- **Micropsia:** Objects appear smaller than they really are.
- **Macropsia:** Objects appear larger than they really are.
- **Teleopsia:** Objects appear farther away than they actually are.
- **Metamorphosis:** Objects appear distorted in shape, size or form.
- **Body distortion:** A person perceives their own body or body parts as being altered in size, shape or position, even though they are normal.

What causes it?

- Migraines
- Viral infections

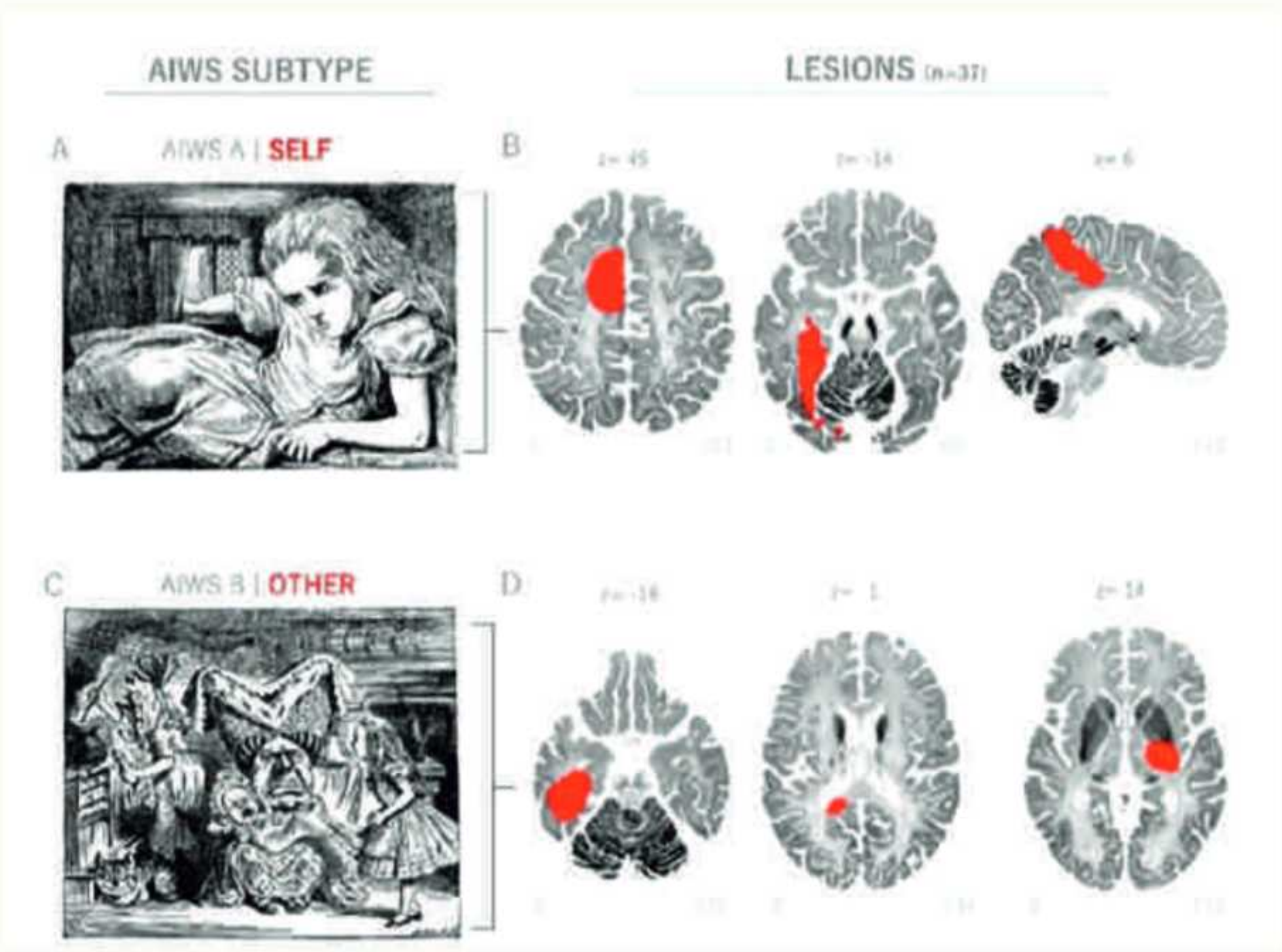
- Epilepsy
- Sleep and stress

How is it diagnosed?

There's no specific treatment for AIWS itself. Doctors rely on what patients describe, like detailed patient history

Brain Imaging (MAD)

Electroencephalography (ECG)



(Ref:medRxiv)



Did Lewis Carroll Actually Have AIWS? There is no definitive evidence that Lewis Carroll actually had AIWS. Some researchers have experienced migraines their whole lives. Some researchers believe those weird size-changing scenes he wrote—Alice shrinking and growing—weren't just imagination but based on things he actually experienced during his episodes. Pretty cool, honestly.

THE BRAIN IS STRANGER THAN WE THINK

Reference: Todd, J. (1955) - journal of neurological sciences - WHO Neurology Bulletin

UNICORNUATE UTERUS - A RARE CONGENITAL CONDITION

SASMITHA PRADIP

Faculty of Clinical research

**Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research,
Porur, Chennai - 116**

Unicornuate uterus is a rare congenital condition in which only one side of the uterus develops properly. The uterus is smaller and differently shaped than a normal uterus and is usually connected to only one fallopian tube. It is a type of Müllerian duct anomaly (congenital malformation of the female reproductive tract) that develops during embryonic life. Although it usually does not cause general health problems, it can create difficulties during menstruation, fertility, and pregnancy. Many women with this condition can still conceive and have children.

Formation and Development

During embryonic development, two Müllerian ducts fuse to form the uterus, cervix, and upper vagina, but in the development of a unicornuate uterus, one Müllerian duct develops normally, and the other Müllerian duct fails to develop completely. This results in a single-horned (unicornuate) uterus. The uterus often appears

banana-shaped and is connected to only one fallopian tube. This is also associated with a rudimentary horn; some women may have a rudimentary horn (remnant of the underdeveloped Müllerian duct).

Types

Communicating horn—connected to the main uterine cavity.

Non-communicating horn – not connected to the uterine cavity

Clinical Significance

Menstrual blood accumulates in a non-communicating horn, as it's not connected to the cavity. This can cause severe pelvic pain and dysmenorrhea.

Pregnancy in a rudimentary horn is dangerous and may rupture, similar to an ectopic pregnancy.

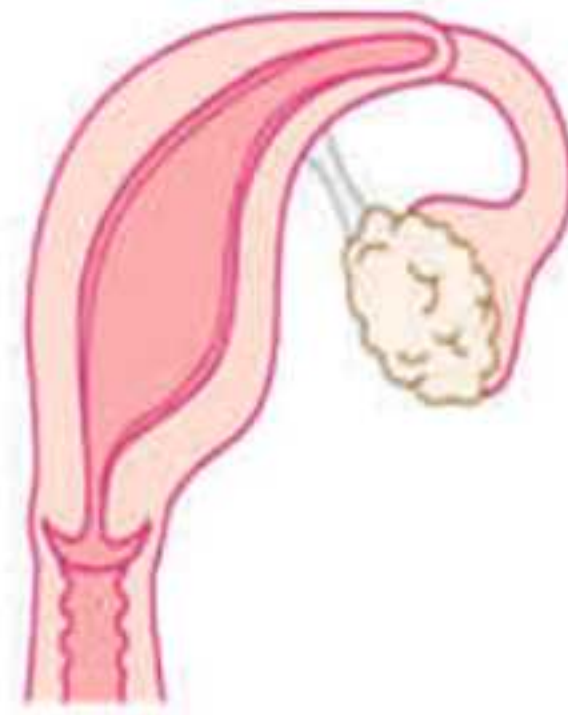
Increased risk abnormalities may occur because the urinary and reproductive systems develop together during embryogenesis.

Symptoms

Many girls remain asymptomatic until puberty.

Common symptoms include:

Severe menstrual pain



Unicornuate uterus

Chronic pelvic pain

Difficulty conceiving

Recurrent pregnancy loss

Pregnancy-related complications

In rare cases:

Kidney abnormalities may be present on the same side as the uterine defect.

Modern Diagnosis

Pelvic ultrasound

3D ultrasound

MRI

Hysterosalpingography (HSG)

Laparoscopy

History

In earlier discoveries, unicornuate uterus was first recognized through anatomical observations during autopsies and surgical procedures.

Johannes Peter Müller (1801–1858)

Described the Müllerian ducts, from which the female reproductive tract develops. His work helped explain congenital uterine anomalies.

Karl Freiherr von Rokitansky (1804–1878)

Documented several uterine malformations during autopsy studies. Contributed significantly to the understanding of congenital reproductive tract abnormalities.

References

WebMd

Cleveland clinic

SPOTLIGHT featuring SCIENCE ACADEMICIAN

SPECIAL APPEARANCE: Dr. D. KANDAVEL

**(ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF BOTANY,
GOVERNMENT ARTS COLLEGE
(AUTONOMOUS), NANDANAM, CHENNAI)**



Dr. D. KANDAVEL is an Associate Professor of Botany at Government Arts College (Autonomous), Nandanam, Chennai, with twenty-six years of experience in teaching, research, and science communication. He has consistently worked to make engagement with biological sciences

accessible and relevant for students, educators, and the broader community. Dr. Kandavel has served as a domain expert for the Government of Tamil Nadu, contributing to the development of higher secondary Botany textbooks, digital learning resources, and teacher training programmes through the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT). His lectures, workshops, and outreach initiatives have motivated thousands of students, teachers, and early-career researchers throughout Tamil Nadu. As a strong proponent of lifelong learning, Dr. Kandavel maintains that science is best comprehended through curiosity, critical thinking, and observation rather than rote memorisation.





Interview by Dr. K. Srikala Ganapathy

Can you please tell us what inspired you to pursue science?

I began my journey in Botany without any grand ambitions. However, my undergraduate years at Bishop Heber College, Trichy, transformed the way I looked at science and learning. The inspiring lectures delivered by my teachers ignited a deep curiosity about the natural world, while the practical classes made the subject even more fascinating. Before long, I found myself completely immersed in Botany. Every Saturday, I spent the entire day in the reference section of the college library, reading beyond the prescribed syllabus. Those countless hours of self-directed learning were immensely rewarding. I graduated as the University First Rank holder, receiving the Gold Medal, and was also honoured as the Best Undergraduate Student of the Day College. My passion for Botany continued to grow when I joined the M.Sc. programme at St. Joseph's College, Trichy. The college became another place where my thirst for knowledge was constantly nourished. During this period, I realised that the divisions we make between scientific disciplines exist primarily for our convenience. Nature does not recognise these boundaries, and to truly understand the natural sciences, one must have at least a foundational understanding of all branches of science. Driven by this realisation, I explored science far beyond my curriculum. I avidly read the "Tell Me Why" series, the "How It Works" series, "The Hindu Speaks on Scientific Facts", and many other popular science books and magazines.



During the third semester of my M.Sc., I successfully cleared the CSIR-UGC NET examination, and it marked the start of who I am today. Even today, my curiosity continues to expand with each passing day. The more I learn, the more I realise how much remains to be discovered. Above all, I strive to remain a lifelong learner, constantly inspired by the endless wonders of science.

Can you please share your experiences in Research? Please add your challenging moments and proud moments.

After completing my postgraduate studies, I joined the National Facility for Marine Cyanobacteria as a Junior Research Fellow (JRF) under the guidance of the renowned cyanobacteriologist, Dr. G. Subramanian. Five of us joined the programme at the same time, and from the very beginning, we underwent rigorous training designed to build a strong foundation in research. Our coursework combined in-depth theoretical knowledge with extensive hands-on training on sophisticated research instruments, including Gas Chromatography (GC), Liquid Scintillation Counter, DNA Sequencer, Ultracentrifuge, High-Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC), and several other advanced analytical tools. Equally enriching was the institute's well-equipped library, which subscribed to leading international scientific journals such as Nature, Science, Current Science, ASM News, FEBS Newsletter, and Nature Biotechnology. Access to these resources broadened my scientific perspective and exposed me to cutting-edge developments in biological



research. This research environment taught me not only how to use advanced scientific equipment but, more importantly, how to identify a meaningful research problem, formulate sound hypotheses, design robust experiments, analyse data critically, and communicate scientific findings effectively. It laid the foundation for my growth as an independent researcher. I later pursued my Ph.D. under the guidance of Dr. S. Sekar. Research during those days demanded perseverance. Frequent power outages often interrupted laboratory work, and I would remain in the laboratory until two o'clock in the morning, working inside the laminar airflow cabinet whenever electricity was available. Those long hours taught me that successful research requires patience, resilience, and unwavering commitment. Through these experiences, I came to appreciate that research is not merely about obtaining results, but it is about developing the determination to overcome obstacles. Every challenge became an opportunity to learn, adapt, and grow, a philosophy that continues to guide my academic and research career.

What would you say about critical thinking in science?

Critical thinking is the foundation of scientific inquiry. It enables us to question assumptions, evaluate evidence objectively, distinguish facts from opinions, and draw logical conclusions.

Has AI impacted creative thinking in students?

Artificial intelligence has transformed students' creative thinking by providing instant ideas, diverse perspectives, and rapid access to

information. While AI can enhance brainstorming, experimentation, and problem-solving, overdependence may reduce originality, imagination, and independent thinking. Students should use AI as a creative partner, not a substitute for their own ideas.

Teaching or Research work which one excites, appeals to you more?

Both research and teaching are indispensable and like the two eyes of a professor. Research keeps a teacher intellectually vibrant, continuously updated, and equipped with a broader scientific perspective. It enables the integration of the latest discoveries, critical thinking, and real-world insights into the classroom. As a result, lectures become more engaging, multidisciplinary, and thought-provoking, significantly enriching the learning experience and enhancing the overall quality of teaching.





Two people who inspire you. Two reasons why.

When I entered the Government Collegiate Service, I was a novice in the Tamil scientific terminologies used in Botany. At that stage, I was introduced to the Tamil textbooks authored by Dr. S. Palaniappan, former Professor of Botany at H.H. The Rajah's College, Pudukkottai. His books were remarkable for their originality, simplicity, depth, and scientific precision. They not only enriched my understanding of Botany but also helped me develop the confidence to communicate scientific concepts effectively in Tamil. As a teacher and writer, I have always held him in the highest regard. His recent demise was a great loss to the scientific community. I remain deeply indebted to him, for he is the principal reason I am able to speak and teach scientific Tamil with confidence today. My heartfelt tributes to him will always endure.

Another person who profoundly influenced my academic journey is Dr. Raghavan Varadarajan of the Molecular Biophysics Unit, Indian Institute

of Science, Bengaluru. I had the privilege of working under his guidance as a Visiting Teacher Fellow through the Indian Academy of Sciences Fellowship programme. A Stanford-trained scientist, he fostered a research culture built on excellence, integrity, and meticulous scientific practice. He entrusted me with work on an NIH-funded research project, providing invaluable exposure to the practical aspects of molecular biology and modern research methodologies. The experience broadened my scientific outlook and significantly shaped my approach to research. When my fellowship came to an end, I presented him with a copy of "Jonathan Livingston Seagull" by Richard Bach as a parting gift. That gesture reflected the deep admiration and inspiration I had drawn from his mentorship. Like the seagull in the story that strives to transcend limitations, he inspired me to pursue excellence with curiosity, discipline, and an unwavering passion for learning.

Your favourite quote.

"Be the change that you wish to see in the world" by Mahatma Gandhi

Books that have inspired you.

Books have been my silent mentors, shaping my thoughts, values, and outlook on life. Among the many books that have profoundly influenced me are:

என்னை செதுக்கிய எண்ணங்கள் – Dr. M. S. Udayamurthy;
இதற்குத்தானே ஆசைப்பட்டாய் பாலக்குமாரா – Balakumaran;

இந்தக் குளத்தில் கல் எறிந்தவர்கள் – Vairamuthu; ஒரு மனிதன், ஒரு வீடு, ஒரு உலகம் – Jayakanthan; A Brief History of Time – Stephen Hawking, etc., I firmly believe that while teachers shape our education, books shape our character, broaden our perspectives, and become lifelong companions in the pursuit of knowledge.

Books that you are currently reading.

Jaya – An illustrated retelling of the Mahabharata by Devdutt Pattanaik

பார்த்திபன் கனவு - கல்கி

One value of Science Shore you connect with and appreciate.

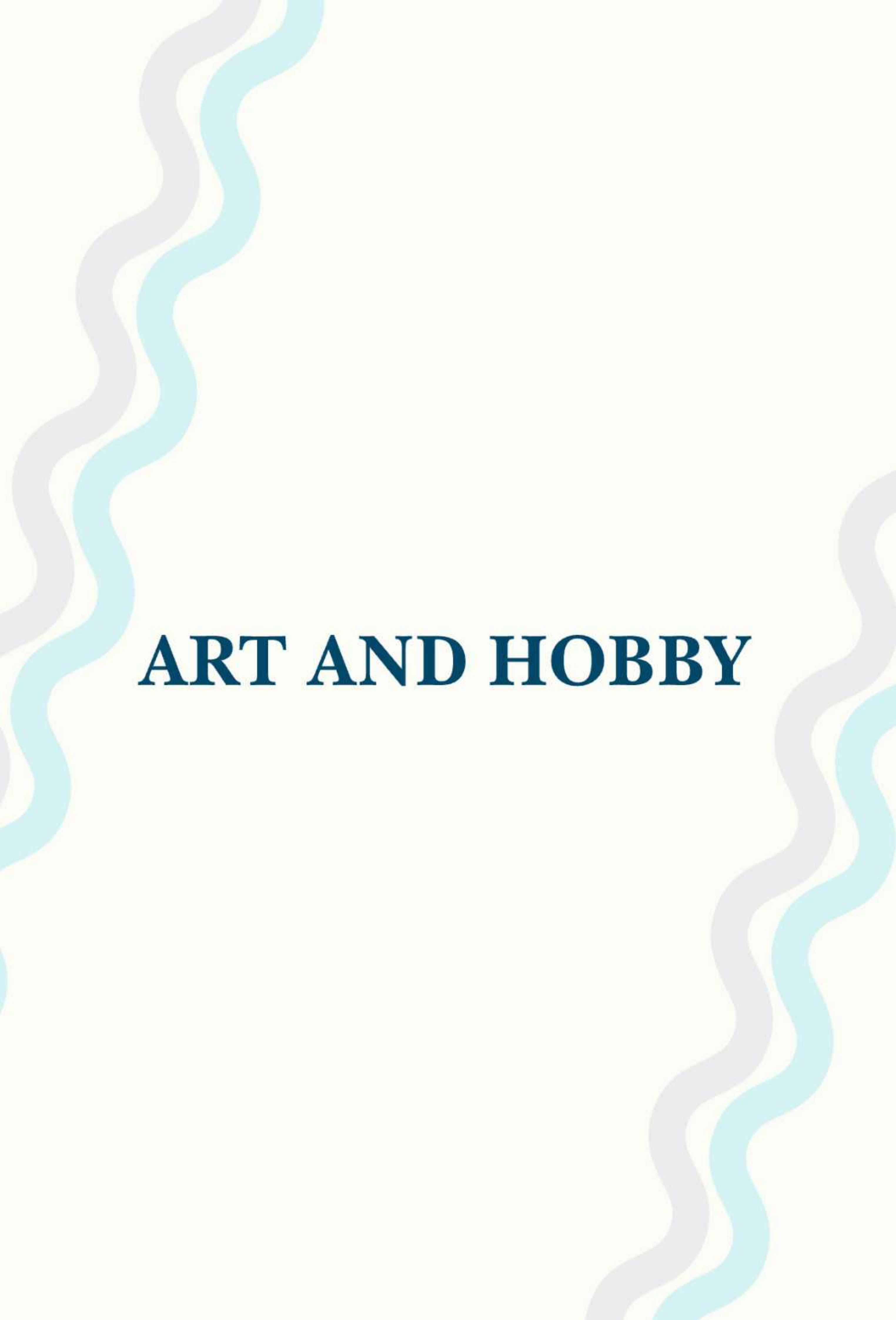
Science Shore nurtures curiosity, promotes scientific temper, inspires lifelong learning, and effectively bridges the gap between cutting-edge research and society. Its contribution to science communication is truly inspiring and commendable.

Your message to the younger generation, please.

When we were students, we had to search for access to good textbooks and reference materials. Today, an entire world of knowledge is available at your fingertips through a mobile phone. The opportunity has never been greater. The real challenge is not access to information, but how wisely you use it. Let technology become a tool for your growth, not a distraction from your goals. At the same time, never underestimate the



power of reading books. No technology can fully replace the depth of understanding, concentration, and imagination that books cultivate. Make it a habit to read at least one page of a good book every day. Small, consistent efforts create remarkable transformations.



ART AND HOBBY

LITTLE TREASURES FROM THE SEA – CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS CREATING BEAUTIFUL CRAFTS WITH SEASHELLS — RESPONSIBLY!

by JEYAKUMAR

Have you ever walked along a beach and noticed tiny seashells shining in the sand? Some are white, some are pink, some are spiral-shaped, and some even look like little fans! Every shell tells a story about the sea.

I love collecting a few seashells whenever I visit the beach. I use them to make beautiful craft items such as seashell ear studs, wind chimes, wall hangings, and decorations. But while seashells are beautiful, they are also an important part of nature. So, before we collect them, we must understand why seashells matter to the ocean ecosystem.

Why Seashells Are Important

Seashells are not just pretty objects lying on the beach. They are the homes and protective coverings of sea creatures such as mollusks, snails, and clams.

Even after the creatures leave them, seashells continue to help nature in many ways:

- Tiny sea animals use empty shells as shelter.
- Broken shells become part of the sand over time.

- Shells contain calcium, which helps enrich beaches and coastal ecosystems.
- Birds, crabs, and other creatures sometimes use shells for protection or nesting.

That is why we should never collect large quantities of shells.

A Good Rule to Follow

Take only a few empty shells for craft activities.

Never take:

- Shells with living creatures inside
- Rare or very large shells
- Large bags full of shells

When we respect nature, nature continues to stay beautiful for everyone.

My Seashell Craft Hobby

When I visit the beach, I pick a few small empty shells that have already washed ashore. After bringing them home, I clean and dry them before turning them into creative craft items.

Here are two simple seashell crafts children can try.

Craft 1: Seashell Ear Studs

What You Need

- 2 small matching seashells

- Ear stud bases
- Strong craft glue
- Small paintbrush
- Clear varnish or transparent nail polish (optional)

Steps

1. Clean the shells gently with water and let them dry completely.
2. Pick two shells that look similar in size and shape.
3. Apply a small drop of strong glue to the flat side of the shell and stick the ear stud base.
4. Allow the glue to dry for several hours.
5. Apply a thin coat of clear varnish to make the shells shiny. (optional)

Your seashell ear studs are ready!

Craft 2: Seashell Wind Chime

What You Need

- 10–15 seashells
- String or fishing line
- A small stick or driftwood piece
- Small beads (optional)
- Scissors
- Small hand drill or thick needle (with adult help)

Steps

1. Clean and dry all the shells.
2. With adult supervision, carefully make tiny holes in the shells.

- 
3. Thread the strings through the shells and tie knots.
 4. Add colorful beads between shells for decoration.
 5. Tie all the shell strings to a stick or driftwood piece.
 6. Hang the wind chime near a window or balcony.

When the wind blows, the shells make soft, peaceful sounds.

Safety Tips for Young Crafters

- Always take an adult's help when using glue, scissors, or drills.
- Wash your hands after handling beach materials.
- Do not collect sharp or broken shells.
- Respect beaches and never leave plastic or waste behind.

Fun Ideas with Seashells

You can also make:

- Photo frames
- Key chains
- Pencil holders
- Decorative candles
- Greeting cards
- Mini jewellery boxes
- Fridge magnets

Let your imagination become as wide as the ocean!

A Small Hobby Can Teach Big Lessons

My seashell craft hobby has taught me something very important: nature gives us beautiful things, but we must use them responsibly.

The next time you visit a beach, enjoy the waves, watch the birds, feel the sand, and admire the shells. If you collect a few shells for art and craft, do so carefully and respectfully.

Remember:

"Take memories from the beach, not too much from nature."

By protecting our beaches and oceans today, we help future generations enjoy them tomorrow.

Try This!

The next time you make a seashell craft, ask yourself:

"How can I create something beautiful while also protecting nature?"

That is the true spirit of art, science, and creativity together.







Seashell ear rings

SCRAMBLE PUZZLE

Created by
Mrs. LATHA SHANKARI. K

Rearrange the letters in the four word jumbles,
one letter each square/Circle to make four ordinary words

TGFI

--	--	--	--

SRHCA

--	--	--	--	--

ILVE

--	--	--	--

RYLCU

--	--	--	--	--

How to play

Now arrange the letters in circles to form the answer to fill the
missing word in the saying as indicated.

SUCCESS in not final.

_____ is not fatal. It is the courage to
continue that counts.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

Answer in
Page number – 86

MANDALA ARTWORK

by

Mrs. LATHA SHANKARI. K



ARTWORK childhood artwork painting
TITLED - STILL LIFE - FRUITS

by Dr. S PADMAPRIYA



ARTWORK TITLED – THOUGHTS

Medium - Pens

Size - 11 * 9 inches

by RAM KRISHNA AGRAWAL





Note from the artist:

A poet doesn't just see the world, they feel it deeper. Their thoughts are ordinary moments turned inside-out: a cracked teacup becomes loss, rain on a window becomes memory, a stranger's smile becomes hope, dreams become reality. A poet's mind is restless, always asking "what if" and "why not", stitching emotion to image.

The pen is that stitch. It's small, silent, and cheap, yet it has toppled kings, started revolutions, and healed grief. The power of the pen isn't in ink, it's in permanence. A spoken word fades, but a written line can outlive the hand that wrote it.

**GENERAL ARTICLES,
RESEARCH ARTICLES
AND SHORT STORIES**

SHATTERED POTS AND POWDER TINS: HOW MEMORY ANCHORS OUR REALITY

ANANDHI MANI

Many times, I have wondered about the mysterious, dual nature of memory. Most of the time, we experience its positive side using it to learn, recall information, and instantly connect with others. It allows us to relive pleasant moments, childhood pranks, and beautiful times spent with loved ones, filling us with a wave of positive emotions. Yet, there is a bitter side to this faculty. Certain memories haunt us, strongly associating physical objects with past unpleasantness and making us feel awkward or anxious every time we are reminded of those incidents.

I experienced this firsthand back in the 1990s when I first started learning to drive a scooter. My family was trying hard to help me balance the heavy vehicle. While I was struggling to control the accelerator and keep my balance, an old lady selling mud pots on the street appeared right in front of me. Panicking, I became incredibly nervous and lost control. Instead of applying the brakes, I accidentally revved the accelerator. Within moments, I crashed into her, and we were both rolling on the ground. Though both of us escaped with only minimal bruises, all her pots were shattered. She began shouting and yelling at me, and I stood there, utterly speechless. For years afterward, every time I was asked to drive, that exact moment would flash vividly in my mind, eventually causing me to give up learning to ride bikes altogether.

This phenomenon—how seamlessly our memory links past objects and experiences to our present, reviving the exact feelings we felt back then is a universal human experience.

It was during a recent IIT Madras online course on storytelling and student management, that I latched upon a solution to positively handle this memory a double-edged sword, that resurrects painful, unpleasant instances we would rather forget.. The resource person shared two photos of himself: one as a child and one as an adult. He asked us to identify a specific object he was holding closely in the childhood photo. After a flurry of guesses, he revealed it was an empty tin of talcum powder. For him, the fragrance, touch, and feel of that simple box were inextricably linked to his childhood.

We all possess similar objects, scents, or sounds that anchor us to our past. Hearing a nostalgic advertisement jingle, for instance, can instantly trigger vivid, beautiful memories. When I first looked for solutions to handle the haunting, unpleasant side of my own memories through meditation and focus, I was only left feeling helpless and miserable.

In that state of distress, I recalled a verse from the Srimad Bhagavad Gita where Arjuna expresses this exact mental struggle to Krishna:

“Chanchalam hi manah krishna pramathi balavad dridham
Tasyaham nigraham manye vayor iva su-dushkaram” (6.34)



Here Arjuna laments that it is indeed very hard to handle the mind when it is restless, turbulent, obstinate, and very strong, making it as difficult to control as the wind. The reply from the Lord is simple, straight, and profoundly reassuring: it is only through consistent practice (Abyasa) and perseverance (Vairagya) that one can master the mind when it is in an unsteady state filled with negativity.

This teaching offered me a beautiful blueprint for practicing groundedness particularly to control my negative memories of mind. Often, as we fall into the trap of ruminating over unwanted experiences, entirely forgetting the abundance of goodness that has shaped us, we are choosing to recall only unpleasantness associated with objects around us. While memory can trigger old anxieties, it is ultimately the pleasant, emotional connections that truly define our personal history. By intentionally shifting focus (abyasa) and recalling positive memories (vairagya), we can honor our roots, keep our minds free and happy, and remain deeply grounded as we age. Ultimately, memory shouldn't be a tool for overthinking or dwelling on what is gone. Instead, by consciously channeling our reflections toward the good, we can transform our past into a powerful catalyst for personal growth and emotional resilience.

DINO WORLD

(A SHORT STORY)

BRINDHA VINODH

It was a very sunny day in June. It looked as if the sun would refuse to retire for the day. Crows hovered around ponds and lakes to quench their thirst. The city swallowed smoke from vehicles of a never-ending traffic.

Dina and her team were diligently working on a video game for children, with the air conditioner on to its maximum capacity. Headquartered in Bangalore, India, Dynamic Gaming Solutions was now ten years old, founded by three dedicated IT professionals with an aim to pursue their interests in coding and programming and ultimately making money from their common interest.

The tension was palpable that Tuesday afternoon as anxiety crawled over Dina's spine like a snake.

"What if the game goes wrong? Will it satisfy our three bosses and hit the market?"- questions pirouetted in her mind like clothes in a washing machine.

She needed a well-needed break, her body and mind were tired from working for more than thirteen hours a day. But she knew she wouldn't be able to rest until the game was presented to her bosses.

Her team had only two more days to complete and as a team leader, she knew she was like the captain of a ship, steering the crew forward.

"Ms. Dina, please have a look." said Arjun, one of the team members, beckoning her to look at his computer screen. As Dina's eyes zigzagged through the levels of the game, she stopped at one point and asked Arjun quizzically, "so, what's this level?"

"Ms. Dina, this is the tenth and final level in the game which has been added impromptu by me and Vaidehi. Once a child crosses all nine levels, the tenth level will be the toughest. Even as the dinosaur chases, there will be an old woman waiting to cross the road in the background, the player must scroll quickly and get Compassion point by helping her cross the road. There are two chances. Once done, the player advances to the next goal in the level.

In this, the player helps blind children get their canes in thirty seconds before the dinosaur catches them. Once the player passes this goal, Kindness point gets added. If the player fails, then they get back to the beginning of this level, earning Compassion point again. In the last part of this level, the player greets a stranger on the way by shaking hands. This is done in 45 seconds before the dinosaur catches. Once the player completes this final goal, Greetings point is added and the game is done and the dinosaur salutes and no longer chases."

"But why?" Dina asked in a surprised tone to Arjun. Vaidehi soon joined the conversation and added, "Ms. Dina, we think this last level will be a big game-changer. This game is mainly for ten- to eighteen-year-olds. I think our bosses will be enthralled by this new idea." Dina was skeptical but she knew there wasn't enough time to make last-minute changes.

In forty-eight hours, her team would present their game, Dino World. She wondered what the other team competing with hers would be up to!

“Will Dino World win” she thought to herself.

She was desperate to win this time. This was her second opportunity after she got promoted as a team leader. She lost the first one by a narrow margin. This was a collective effort of eight members including her. Strenuous efforts for six months.

Stress and anxiety gripped her for the next forty-eight hours.

The day arrived as dawn broke at six-ten am with a gleaming yellow sunrise. She dressed herself as professionally as she could.

She left for office earlier than usual.

When the moment arrived to represent her team, she prayed and proceeded with confidence to explain about the game. Her flow was eloquent. She was determined not to err even unknowingly.

Once done, she waited for an hour for the other team to present and for her bosses to get back with their verdict.

For the next one hour, Dina and her team were nervous. Sweat poured from their foreheads as if they were glittering beads of tiaras.

The moment arrived and Dina and her team were called into the conference room.



“You guys have won” said one of the founders.

Dino World will be launched into the market.

Do you know what gave your team the extra edge? The last level. That's an innovative idea to

inculcate good values among the younger generation.” The other two founders clapped.

Euphoria was an understated word to explain the feelings of Dina and her team.

“Congratulations!” the founder concluded.

“It's humanity that gave that final edge to your team.”

That evening, Dina offered a treat to her teammates at the nearby restaurant.

Outside, as the Argentine moon shimmered, Dina and her team smiled and shouted, “Hip, hip, hurray” and went on to their respective homes.

THE POWER OF JUST ONE WEEK

Dr. GAYATHRI RAMACHANDRAN

I am spice intolerant. My salt intake is always minimal.

I was never really a foodie... but somewhere along the way, I developed a sweet tooth. Not because I loved sweets more than anything else, but because sweetness was the only taste my body easily welcomed.

I wasn't against bitter food. I could eat it. I could manage it. But sweets... I enjoyed them. Slowly. Piece by tiny piece. And yet, somewhere deep inside, a quiet guilt lived. Was my sweet consumption being conveniently justified by my limitation? That question stayed.

So last year, I made a bold promise to myself: "No more sweets." Yes... completely.

The first week? Surprisingly smooth. No struggle. No drama. But as the days passed, the familiar whisper returned.

Just a little sweet...Just one bite...

I tried to outsmart it with dates. It didn't work.

And then came Switzerland, the land of heavenly chocolates! Well... all promises quietly stepped aside.



The best chocolates. The richest hot chocolate. Coffee with sugar. Chocolate fountains... I tasted them all.

And when the month-long trip ended... the guilt returned. Stronger than before.

"Why did I do this?" "Where was my promise?"

For a few days, remorse sat heavily within me. But then... something shifted during my introspection. I realised my mistake. I had promised myself a forever without...

And honestly?

Forever was too heavy. Too absolute. Too frightening for the mind.

So, I changed the game. I gave myself a small, gentle challenge: Just one week without sweets.

No sugar in coffee. No sugar in tea. No sweets in any form.

Was it easy? Not really.

Especially when some cups of "tea" tasted like they were desperately waiting to be rescued by sugar!

My mind tried its tricks.



But I kept telling myself softly: *"It's just for this week, dear... let's win this week."*

Where I wasn't sure of the tea, I chose green tea or lemon tea. I shifted to black coffee. Blue pea tea became my friend. Whenever possible, I began making my own tea.

And slowly... Something beautiful happened.

I did it.

One week became another. And another.

Every Sunday, I renewed the same simple promise: *"Just this week."*

Today, it has been 45 weeks of this quiet weekly commitment.

No drama. No pressure of forever. Just one week at a time.

The Lesson?

Big forever promises often break us. But small, honest promises... They build us.

Small victories don't just strengthen discipline; they build trust with ourselves.



And when you keep winning these tiny weekly battles: You begin to believe in yourself again.

Your confidence grows quietly. Your guilt slowly melts away.

And the most beautiful part?

Your journey doesn't just transform you... it gently lights the path for someone else too.

Because sometimes... Your one small victory may become someone else's beginning.

EMOTIONAL TRAUMATIC LIVES: UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE ORGANIC STIMULUS FOR HEALING LIVES

GLADSON MATHEW AND ALFA MATHEW

Human beings are shaped not only by their strengths and achievements but also by the emotional environments in which they grow. Childhood experiences, family relationships, parental attitudes, and emotional interactions become the foundation upon which individuals build their sense of self, security, and belonging. When these foundations are characterised by love, acceptance, and emotional support, individuals often develop resilience and healthy relationships. However, when childhood is marked by criticism, excessive control, emotional neglect, family conflict, or trauma, the psychological effects may continue well into adulthood.

This article presents reflections from six therapeutic cases that reveal how emotional wounds formed within family environments can influence emotional well-being, self-esteem, interpersonal relationships, and coping patterns. All names used in this article are pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality and privacy of individuals who participated in our therapy.

Common Themes Across the Cases

Although each person's life story is unique, several common themes emerged repeatedly across these narratives:



Excessive parental control and limited personal autonomy.

Emotional hurt, criticism, and invalidation of feelings.

Family conflict and unresolved relational difficulties.

Lack of emotional security, support, and healthy communication.

Experiences of emotional neglect and insecure attachment.

Difficulty developing self-confidence and independence.

Long-term psychological distress originating from childhood experiences.

These themes highlight the profound impact of family dynamics on emotional development and mental health.

Arun: Living Under Constant Criticism

Arun, aged 31, described growing up in a family atmosphere characterised by persistent criticism and emotional tension. Throughout his childhood and adolescence, he experienced frequent nagging and disapproval from his mother. Rather than feeling accepted and understood, he often felt judged and inadequate.

His relationship with his father was emotionally distant, leaving him without a secure paternal connection during crucial developmental years. Additionally, conflict and disharmony between his parents created an unstable emotional environment within the home.



As a teenager, Arun began consuming alcohol, which may have functioned as a means of coping with emotional pain and unmet psychological needs. His story illustrates how chronic criticism and a lack of emotional warmth can affect self-worth and encourage maladaptive coping mechanisms.

Anjali: The Impact of Childhood Trauma and Control

At 28 years of age, Anjali continues to experience the effects of significant childhood trauma. Her early years were characterised by a highly controlling parenting style that limited her opportunities to make independent choices and develop confidence in her own abilities.

She reported that her mother frequently intervened in personal decisions, leaving little room for autonomy or self-expression. As a result, Anjali often struggled to communicate her feelings openly and found it difficult to trust her own judgement.

Her experiences demonstrate how excessive control, even when motivated by concern or protection, can hinder emotional growth and contribute to long-term difficulties with self-confidence, identity formation, and emotional expression.

Smitha: Growing Up Amidst Family Instability

Smitha, aged 25, experienced a childhood marked by considerable family instability. She reported that her mother's alcohol use and smoking created emotional distress within the household. In addition, parental separation introduced further disruption and uncertainty during her formative years.



The challenges did not end there. Smitha also described extensive interference from extended family members, which often restricted her personal freedom and decision-making. She frequently felt that her own voice and preferences were overshadowed by the expectations of others.

Her experiences reflect the emotional burden carried by many individuals who grow up in unstable family environments where security, consistency, and personal boundaries are lacking. Such conditions can contribute to feelings of helplessness, anxiety, and difficulty establishing independence.

Fatima: The Pain of Emotional Disconnection

Fatima, aged 22, described a childhood characterised by emotional distance from her father.

Although physical presence may have existed, the emotional connection she longed for was largely absent.

Within her family, opportunities to make personal choices or express independent opinions were limited. She often felt that her thoughts, feelings, and perspectives were overlooked or dismissed. Over time, this contributed to feelings of emotional neglect and a diminished sense of personal significance.

Fatima's experiences highlight the importance of emotional attunement within families. Children require more than physical care; they need to feel heard, valued, and emotionally connected to significant caregivers. When



these needs remain unmet, feelings of loneliness and inadequacy may persist into adulthood.

Bismi: Searching for Belonging and Acceptance

For Bismi, aged 22, one of the most painful experiences involved feeling different from other family members. She reported persistent feelings that she was not fully accepted, at times even questioning whether she truly belonged within the family.

Experiences of rejection and exclusion by certain family members contributed to a deep sense of insecurity and emotional pain. These experiences affected her ability to develop a stable sense of belonging and emotional safety.

Human beings possess a fundamental need to feel accepted and valued within their primary relationships. When this need is repeatedly threatened, individuals may struggle with trust, self-esteem, and relationship security. Bismi's story illustrates how perceived rejection can leave enduring emotional scars that continue to influence adult functioning.

Diya: Living Amidst Conflict and Emotional Burden

Diya, aged 18, described growing up under close parental monitoring and significant maternal control. Her home environment was frequently characterised by conflict and tension between her parents, creating a climate of uncertainty and emotional strain.



She also perceived her mother as carrying substantial emotional burdens and unresolved trauma. While her mother worked hard as a businesswoman, Diya felt that the demands of this role may have reduced her emotional availability as a parent.

Witnessing ongoing parental conflict while simultaneously navigating strict control created considerable emotional stress for Diya. Her experiences reflect how children often absorb the emotional climate of the household, even when family difficulties are not directly aimed at them.

Understanding the Psychological Impact

Across all six cases, several recurring psychological patterns emerged. Individuals frequently reported feelings of inadequacy, insecurity, loneliness, emotional suppression, and difficulties in forming healthy relationships. Many struggled with self-confidence, emotional regulation, decision-making, and establishing personal boundaries.

From an attachment perspective, these experiences suggest disruptions in the development of secure emotional bonds. When children consistently encounter criticism, emotional unavailability, conflict, rejection, or excessive control, they may internalise beliefs such as "I am not good enough," "My feelings do not matter," or "I cannot trust others to support me."

These beliefs can continue influencing behaviour, relationships, and emotional well-being long after childhood has ended.

The Healing Power of Unconditional Positive Regard

Despite the pain reflected in these narratives, the stories also reveal an important truth: healing

remains possible. Therapeutic work consistently demonstrates that individuals can recover from emotional wounds when they experience environments characterised by empathy, acceptance, understanding, and genuine human connection.

The concept of an "Unconditional Positive Organic Stimulus for Healing Lives" refers to the transformative power of authentic acceptance and compassionate relationships. When individuals feel genuinely heard rather than judged, understood rather than criticised, and valued rather than rejected, emotional healing can begin.

The cases presented here remind us that emotional trauma is not always the result of dramatic events. Often, it emerges from repeated experiences of criticism, neglect, rejection, control, or emotional disconnection. Equally, recovery is not always dependent on extraordinary interventions. Sometimes healing begins with consistent experiences of acceptance, validation, emotional safety, and compassionate human relationships.

Ultimately, these narratives call families, educators, counsellors, therapists, and communities to recognise the lasting impact of emotional experiences and to foster environments where individuals can grow, heal, and flourish with dignity, autonomy, and emotional security.

PEACE

JELLIE N. WYCKELSMA

In the English language Peace is such a simple five letter word. It only has four letters in French, called Paix, five letters in Dutch, called Vrede and Friede with six letters in German, and in all 7151 currently spoken languages in the world, I'm sure that the word Peace has its own translation of Peace in all those tongues too.

Thus all of us are familiar with the word Peace, trying to understand the concept of its meaning, often reinforced in the teachings of more than 4000 religions, where followers are told to love their neighbour and not to do onto others one wouldn't wish to be done to oneself in order to live in harmony and peace.

Unfortunately, Peace has a rival called War. Didn't the Russian Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy showed us in his novel "War and Peace"?

We have learned to swim like a fish and to fly like a bird, but not to control our tribal instinct to survive, as kill or be killed. Since the early human habitation of the world, unrest, fights and wars between tribes and nations have taken place and are still occurring right up to this very day when the leaders of modern nations fight to have control of the earth's natural resources, extending their economic powers, beyond its borders, together

with international corporations, causing corruption even in democratically elected governments.

It is so disheartening to watch fellow humans ignoring the call for peace on earth and goodwill to all man. Will it ever change? Can we win the fight against all evil forces to find Peace on earth? I don't have the answer. Do you?

ANSWERS FOR SCRAMBLE PUZZLE

FAILURE

Words in the boxes

GIFT

CRASH

EVIL

CURLY

DRABBLES

Rtd Prof LATHAPREM SAKHYA

ANKLET

"Chilm, chilm, chilm, chilm." She stopped in her tracks. It was dark and still. They had come for a walk on the Ashram ground at 5 in the morning. After the first round Niranjan gained speed, she lagged behind. At first she didn't connect the sound, then it dawned upon her... it was the sound of anklets and the wearer was walking with her. Fear assailed her. All the Yakshi and Devi stories came rushing to her mind. She started running and reached his side and caught hold of his hand. Yes, it must be the Devi she consoled herself.

TIME

He fell ill a week after his retirement. She looked after him with the help of two male nurses, and a housekeeper. To keep herself sane she found a job for herself. That was her normal routine. Two days at the hospital for dialysis every week and work at the bank. Weeks passed into months and months to years. Time passed relentlessly. Praying to God for strength she trudged on. He was like a child and she catered to all his demands. Now suddenly she felt bereft. Ten long years come to nothing. She stood empty handed before Time.

CRAVING

Rani loved her children with a craving possessiveness. Her son and family with whom she stayed gave her their best simultaneously fulfilling the demands of their own life. One day, for a breather, like Paul in "Sons and Lovers", they slipped away for two days. But she stalked them, creating hell for them. They returned to pick up where they left. They thought their disappearance for two days would soften her nature and make her more loving towards them. Alas! It was only a dream. The mother had become a child with no reasoning power, only selfish demands for comforts...

LOVE BIZARRE

She loved him with a passion, inexpressible. Poor, uneducated, homeless, unkempt, a tramp yet she wanted to take care of him and give him a good life from the day she met him. She knew she could never marry him. But she wanted to take care of him, too. Her naivety was her support. She never thought he too had a mind of his own. So she married the rich one who loved her and proposed first, happy that she would have everything now to look after him too. But the day she married, he disappeared faraway leaving her heart broken.

LIFE IN FULFILLED LOVE

We sat huddled together under the leaves. It was raining heavily and we were trapped. There was nothing else to do. Our fledgelings were safe at home with their granny then why worry. We watched the rain, he was lost in



thought so I let him be. I drifted from one plane to another flitting from experience to experience - all teaching me valuable lessons. To make the best of the quality time, I snuggled close to him and dozed off to gather my arms to face life when the sun shone.

LOST LOVE

He came like the Messiah. A bringer of light and joy! A do-gooder! The colony people used him to fulfill their needs. The single old ones found him a blessing. He ran their errands, accompanied them to hospital, and kept them company. They took him for granted. There were tormenting moments too, when he was persecuted by them. He suffered without complaint and carried on his duties joyfully. Then one day quietly, without saying anything to anyone he left. They noticed his absence when they found his room in darkness. Like the Messiah he left behind the seeds of love.

GURUJI

Dr. (MAJOR) NALINI JANARDHANAN

Nandini glanced through her album of photographs. She likes to capture precious moments in life. Every picture has a story to tell. Those pictures are little moments but nostalgic memories.

The Blue City Jodhpur is a beautiful place with many forts and palaces. She has a special attachment to that city because, there she met Shri Ramchandra Goyalji, her guru in the music field. She remembered how she met him and later became his favourite disciple and adopted daughter.

'This photograph clicked with Goyalji and his family is very close to my heart. I miss him and his family. Today is Guru Purnima. So I should write a letter to my respected guruji and send it to him as email'-Nandini thought.

"Dear Papaji,
Namaskar! Saadar Charan Sparsh!

I remember meeting you in a hospital. You were admitted with a heart attack. Bohraji introduced you to us. "Shri Ramchandra Goyalji, the famous bhajan singer of Jodhpur"- I touched your feet and paid obeisance. I was introduced as a singer, writer and Army Doctor. You told me to meet you after discharge from the hospital. When we visited you, I humbly touched your feet and expressed my wish to learn Meera Bhajans from you. "I stopped teaching students since my son's death in a tragic accident."

Seeing my sad face, you continued: "But don't worry. Sing a bhajan for me." After hearing my bhajan, you smiled with tearful eyes and told me. "OK Beti, come after a week. I will teach you 3 or 4 bhajans." I was astounded and couldn't believe my ears. I knew that it was God's blessing. That was a memorable day for me when you took me to your Puja room and performing the rituals, accepted me as your disciple. I touched your feet and you blessed me. Seeing my power of grasping the nuances of music, devotion to God, humble personality and dedication, you were impressed and taught me more bhajans.

"Beti, when you sing Meera bhajans, close your eyes for a moment and imagine that you are Meera Bai. Try to visualize and feel the pain, devotion and surrender to God in her bhajans. Think that you are Meeraji singing for Lord Krishna"- I am still following your inspiring words in my music career in AIR recordings and Bhajan programmes. Your melodious compositions had the power to touch the hearts of listeners taking them to a world of devotion and divine music. By God's grace, I learnt the correct pronunciation of Rajasthani words in Meera bhajans. I decided to make an audio cassette.

Touching your feet, I gifted you my first music album 'Araj Meera ri sun re' and expressed my gratitude to you.

"No beti, no need to thank me. It is the Guru who selects his disciples. You have passed my test with flying colors touching my heart with your melodious voice and soulful singing. I consider you as my daughter. You should call me Papaji. My blessings are always with you."



You refused to take money saying “You are my daughter. How can I accept money from you? If you want to express gratitude, try to make Meera bhajans reach the maximum audience.” I was overwhelmed. When we left Jodhpur, I gifted you an idol of Goddess Saraswati as my Guru Dakshina.

Whenever I talked to you I could feel a father's love in your affectionate words. Today, on Guru Purnima, I pray to God for your good health and long life. You are my Guru who introduced me to myself. I feel that the soul of my late father is still alive through a loving and pious person like you. And I am your humble daughter seeking your blessings, Papaji.....

Your daughter,
Nandini”.

Nandini remembered the Meera bhajans taught by her Guru. They are very melodious and well appreciated both by the audience during music festivals and devotees in temples. She missed her guru and those bhajans. She sighed and wiped her tears. 'I can visualize the smile on Papaji's face when he reads this. I know that his blessings are always with me'-She smiled.

THE HOLY THREAD THROUGH THE HEARTS (SHORT STORY)

Dr. PADMA SASIKUMAR

First day at college began in a hall filled with introductions, smiles, laughter and good hopes. Parents greeted each other while young girls and boys in sparkling colors wove in and out of the adult groups. A colorful day. The following days would be less so because of a sea of uniforms dotted occasionally by the far lower number of adults, professors and staff, who did not have to wear uniforms, oh! And the ones who happened to celebrate their birthdays.

Reshma sat at the left corner of the hall with myriad feelings finding expression on her face. Anxiety, a bit of fear, happiness all of being in a big college campus. Reshma's father had dropped her off at the gates that morning on his way to an emergency in the hospital.

The meeting started with a prayer sung by two seniors. The principal and three other professors occupied the dais. And then entered an angel in pink, slowly and as gracefully as her sari rippled. She reached the podium and looked at the full audience as she introduced herself as Mrs. Radhika, a professor of English. She commanded the anxious storm in the new minds to quiet down with her soothing words. Each mind, now calm, whispered "Radhika Ma'am!, I can share all my worries with her. She is here for me."

As soon as the introductory meeting was over, many girls moved closer around Radhika Ma'am. A lotus amongst water lilies. Reshma too wanted to go and interact. But something held her back. She stayed at a distance in silent admiration.

Radhika Ma'am entered the class in the third hour of the forenoon session on the first day of classes. She greeted them all and started with a poem: 'I wandered lonely as a cloud..' Daffodils by William Wordsworth. Her elegant voice was welcome to every heart. Reshma noticed a small golden colour watch with blue dial on the left wrist of Radhika Ma'am. Students competed for her attention with questions both necessary and unnecessary. She took them all with a patient smile on her lips while her eyes shone bright with the happiness she felt in the company of her students.

Days went by.

Reshma was a silent girl. She was swift with her notes but uttered no words. As Radhika Ma'am went around the class dictating notes, she noticed a pair of eyes belonging to a petite thin face following her incessantly. Her own eyes saw her words turn into tiny flowers on the girl's pages, such beautiful handwriting. She later collected all their mobile numbers to make a WhatsApp group for the class, to circulate notes and some reading for the holidays.

Reshma sat in silence enjoying the constant ruckus in the room by her roommates. She hadn't yet mingled much with them. Early one morning,

Reshma saw her mobile light up with a message which took her by surprise. "Loveful Birthday wishes! Reshma". The message was from Radhika Ma'am. How did she know?!. Oh! the college records. "Thank you! Ma'am" she typed in the reply as she felt her eyes moisten.

That evening Reshma went to the temple near to the college accompanied by her friend Sushama from Chemistry department. Both went round the temple and there at the north side entrance of the temple met Radhika Ma'am. "Hi Reshma, Sushama". Ma'am called them. Small boy holding her fingers. Sushama inquired. What is your name? The boy was very shy and just smiled. Ma'am replied. "Roshan. Ready to go to school next year". Ma'am gave the sweet Pongal prasadam to both girls. Very tasty prasadam. While receiving prasadam, Reshma noticed scratches on the dial of the watch. Thought, may be an old watch with memories. That day was a real happy birthday for Reshma. Her heart filled with extra joy in the company of her beloved Ma'am.

Radhika Ma'am had paused her dictation so that everyone could catch up. Reshma as always had finished and had her eyes on the windowsill. She felt the notebook move and turned to see that Ma'am had raised it for the class to see. "Wow! Beautiful!!" the whole class exclaimed and clapped. Radhika pulled out a golden Parker from her handbag and presented to Reshma with a "Keep it up." Reshma took it as if she was getting actual gold, delicately with a slight hesitation. She mumbled a quiet "Thank you Ma'am". Reshma found herself thinking, 'I wish this ma'am could be my mom.' She knew



nothing of her and yet her heart opened to her. It was a silent yearning of a silent girl.

Books in her left hand and an umbrella in her right, Reshma was on her way to the class when the skies opened. She was walking gingerly trying to not wet the books and not slip at the same time when her eyes noticed the blue dress near the scooter parking area, a half drenched Radhika Ma'am. She smiled at Reshma and said "Thank you Reshma. Great timing!." as she took the umbrella in her hand. As they walked, one shoulder warm and the other biting cold, Ma'am's arm wound around her drawing her closer into the umbrella. Reshma's heart began sang in the language bereft of words as she felt Radhika Ma'am's warmth envelope her.

As time went by, Reshma grew less silent with Radhika Ma'am on her personal inbox. Her affection flowed in the many "I love you Ma'am's and I admire you Ma'am's". Radhika was caught unawares in the beginning and thus responded with, "I am your teacher. All students are equal to me. I do care for all of you. Study well." etc. Reshma was saddened and she thought, "What is wrong with me?!! I love Ma'am as my Mom!!.. I should not be disturbing her. I do see her at least once, every day." In fact, she made it a point to watch Radhika from a distance, check on her in the library, class room, seminar halls, canteen or even the corridors. She returned to these places on a loop until she caught a first sight of Radhika and once again and then again.

It was a Wednesday, the English class was in progress. At around 10 minutes before the bell signalling the end of class rang, Reshma fell unconscious. Radhika swiftly took her to the staff room and lay her down on the table. She sprinkled Reshma's face with water in an attempt to revive her, which worked. "What happened Reshma?" In response, Reshma's head came down on Radhika's shoulder and she wept. Radhika offered her some orange juice following which she was sent to the hostel.

Friday afternoon, Dr. Shiva waited at the entrance of the college. That was the last working day before Christmas vacation. Reshma came with friends Sushama, Helen and Sana Fathima. Helen and Sana are her room mates. Same time appeared Radhika Mam. Reshma introduced Mam to her father. Mam said. "Hello doctor Sir, Glad to meet you. Reshma is smart girl with good handwriting." Dr. Shiva replied "Thank you Mam." He talked to Reshma's roommates also. He left Helen and Sana at the railway station. Vacation time Reshma was thinking of her Ma'am. But a little reluctant to send her messages. After four days she was overjoyed to see the mobile message "Dear Reshma, How are you?" Immediately replied. "I am fine Mam. Very much eager to meet you." Reshma reached back to college in the new year eve. Even though happy, her health was going down. Two more days repeated the giddiness in the class.

Next three days Radhika Mam noticed the absence of Reshma in the class. She inquired and found out that Reshma was admitted to her father's hospital. She talked to Dr. Shiva. Understood about Reshma's neuro

problem and treatment. That Saturday Reshma was in hospital bed in half sleep. She felt as if she would be alright once she sees her beloved Mam. Nurse was wiping her face with wet cloth. She noticed that tears rolling down. "What happened? Shall I call your father?" She said "No, he may be busy. I am okay." That evening. Reshma noticed a blue sari waving near the window. Oh, my Mam. She is here. She wanted to jump from the bed and hug her Mam. But too weak to get up. Eyes became sparkling ponds and tears of joy splashed out.

Radhika sat beside her. Cute Roshan stood near her holding tightly her fingers. Half of her face covered in sari folds. Nurse asked something to him. He was just smiling at her and looked around the things in the hospital room. Nurse said. "Oh, Reshma's teacher. Let me call Doctor Sir." After five minutes doctor entered and greeted Mrs. Radhika. A Gentle man of six feet. Black pants and blue shirt. Stethoscope around his neck.

"Good evening, madam. Thank you very much for visiting our hospital and caring my daughter. Kindly spend some time with my child." "Sure doctor, we are here some time. Doctor told nurse to bring juice and biscuits for Radhika Ma'am and son. Ma'am kept Reshma's hands in her hands and pampered. Little Roshan was playing with the pillow on the other cot in the room. Reshma's heart was full. Now my Ma'am is only for me. Oh God, let her decide to stay with me long time. She cried and smiled at the same time. No words to express her relief and happiness.

That night Reshma slept peacefully. Next day Sunday. Hospital staff was less and corridors were silent. At 8 AM, Doctor Shiva was sitting near Reshma.

After five minutes Radhika Mam came with Roshan. Doctor wished "Good morning, Ma'am."

He told slowly. "I owe to you Ma'am for taking care of my child at the college. Past ten years I am her father and mother. I lost my better half after a surgery". He sat silent. Face looking down.

Radhika also was silent. Lost in some memories. Then replied. "Doctor Sir, myself also tasted the bitterness of a similar experience. Lost my husband and elder daughter in an accident. My daughter Rathna who had the same date of birth of Reshma. Only three years ago. God gave me back my Roshan so I am pulling my life. We all are instruments in God's hands. Let us not blame him. Only prayers and thanks for what he gave us. Even though I love all my students, Reshma is like my Rathna. She is a smart intelligent girl. She will recover from this illness soon. God bless her".

Her fingers were moving slowly through Reshma's hair. Radhika Ma'am closed eyes some time, but could not stop tears.

When Reshma touched slowly the watch, Radhika said, my Rathna's watch, it is with me even when I sleep. Radhika held Reshma's hand tight.



Doctor just left them both in their silence. Let them be Mom and daughter for this day full. Or for ever?? Nurse brought lunch to Radhika Ma'am and Reshma. She fed both Reshma and Roshan, then ate a little rice. Evening she got up to move out. But she was pulled back. Reshma caught her fingers tight. Feeble voice came out. "Ma'am, why don't you be my Mom for ever? Please."

Radhika stood stunt for a moment. Slowly bowed down and gave a kiss on Reshma's forehead....

A HUT IN THE WOODS

SETALURI PADMAVATHI

I was walking alone in the woods after selling all vegetables in the market. I had to walk a few miles to reach my house through a forest. The forest was surrounded by high mountains and mountain valleys. Now and then, I could feel the movement of rabbits, monkeys and deer. Somewhere, from a banyan tree, wickets were clattering with a loud sound. I used to get very frightened of wicket's noise, especially when I was all alone. Besides, eerie silence throughout the forest scared me.

The greyish clouds turned into black abruptly. Thunder and lightning added more fear to my mind. Unexpectedly, within a fraction of seconds, heavy rain began and pouring down speedily. The ground became wet and slippery. I slowly put my steps forward without pause. Though I held my black umbrella, I got wet partially. The branches of big trees like neem, mango and banyan were swaying and the whistling wind made me tremble a bit. I had no alternative except moving ahead.

All of a sudden, while walking, I found a small hut amidst the huge trees. Its roof was thatched with palm leaves and walls were made of mud. The light from the middle of the roof reflected on the land. I wished to see the dwellers of the hut and ask for a glass of water or little food. My legs were paining and I felt I was exhausted. The cool air and wet dress caused me



shiver more and more. Collecting my whole energy and patience, I moved bit faster than earlier.

I thought I would reach the tiny hut within a few minutes. As I was approaching the hut, I could hear a cry of a small child from inside. She's crying loudly and searching for someone there. I couldn't see her face clearly, but could hear the thud of her fastened feet.

"What happened to her? Is there anyone with her? Where were her parents?" I questioned myself.

I reached the dwelling and felt very bad to see the child.

"Hello, baby! What's your name? Why are you crying? Where're your parents?" I asked her affectionately.

The child answered, "I'm Ritu! Mom, dad, sister and brother didn't return from the field still."

"Oh! Don't be panic, my child!"

She seemed to be five-year-old and her face was swollen due to oversleep. She appeared a bit tired.

I asked whether she's hungry. She nodded her head and her innocent face made me love her. As soon as I stretched my hands, she ran to me and

hugged me. Ah! My motherly love didn't control my mind. I held her so gently and roamed inside the house, humming a small lullaby. She smiled at me and felt comfortable in my hands. I looked around the tiny hut to find something for her. I made a glass of warm milk and gave her along with a few biscuits. I decided to wait for a few minutes and handover the child to her parents once they come.

The rain stopped thereafter and sky looked very clear. The cool breeze kissed my tired face and weather warned me to stop for a while. I sighed and took a long breath. Ritu left my arms, slowly stepped out and started playing with her puppies. Meanwhile, I started noticing the status of the shelter and the things it surrounded by. Suddenly, I heard her crying and peeped out to see her. I was shocked to see a brown scorpion crawling very close to her right foot. Immediately, I moved her aside and took a big stick and hit him. The scorpion's movement stopped and Ritu was saved. I saw her eyes smiling with happiness.

After a few minutes, her parents and siblings arrived. They were surprised to see me and felt happy for helping their child in bad weather. They were in tears and awestruck when Ritu told them how I saved her from the scorpion's bite. I saw Ritu rolling her eyeballs and smiling while talking to them.

I requested her parents not to leave her alone and left the hut happily with a satisfied mind.



POETRY

PHULRIJHARAN

Dr. ALOK KUMAR RAY

On the back keeping large stretches of greenery
Initiating a game of shadow and light here and there, everywhere
At an orderly yard offering cooled and silent ambience
On the other side of the serpentine, blackish road
Below the competition between shrubs and vines to touch sunlight
Near harsh, distasteful sounds of wild animals
Amidst high-pitched, monotonous chirping of unknown birds
Near the transit point of journey loving aboriginals' who keep the
environment in their pockets
Frank and the fresh environment's heart touching, attracting magic
Word knitting natural environment under the authority of hills,
springs, jungle, local people, flora and fauna
Flowery dripping of water by Phulrijharan, mesmerizes mind,
mingles the heart with peace.

Phulrijharan is a waterfall, situated in Kalahandi district of Odisha,
India



STEM CELL THERAPY

GITA BHARATH

This practice originated ages ago
in early India but how did they know
that the umbilical cord possessed stem cells that could grow
to differentiate, to repair and heal?
preserved inside gold or silver amulets, and sealed,
only to be opened, mixed with water, used
to treat serious illnesses... how did we lose
so much ancient wisdom?

KALKI

GITA BHARATH

An avatar shall arise when violence and vice
disease and greed, take over the world,
it's prophesied.

Through the tunnel of time
sages, long ago, saw dimly, an Avatar,
a figure on a horse, resplendent, a-glow...
or, was it a horse's face on a mighty human form?

From the crucibles of crises all change is born
is it time for our selfish rapacity to be shorn?

At this moment in time we stand at a crossroads
we must choose one path to proceed onwards
past our unsustainable lifestyle.

One road leads to reunion with nature
where we share the earth with all life forms
retaining our unique identities.



The other is to incorporate
the best of every state
of being--bioengineering man, and machine,
evolving into a composite that can
live in water, air or land.

The tenth Avatar we shall behold
is ours to imagine, evolve and mould—
will Kalki's strength stem
from being a symbiote on earth?
Or will it be derived
from a total change of course
away from perceived differences,
war and force
using a tidal wave of technology and science
to erase the outlines of human body and mind
to merge with AI to become
SuperHumanKind!

PERENNIAL

JAYALAKSHMI KARINDALAM

Dreaming the solace of infinite love

I tread

From the womb of sacred Silence.

Savoring divergent fruits of facts on Earth.

In a seductive rob of magic sequences

Chatting relentless throughout cosmic comrades.

Am I a coincidental drop from creator's fingertips?

Fall on earth along with drizzle of throbbing celestials?

Destined to blot tiniest emotions of Nature,

I have trudged with pain and pangs of sand to stars.

Mysterious muses guide my path.

Reminiscing ardent on moment's hearth.

Inhaling the elixir of unheard romances,

My path is destined, before the flash of future.

For I wear the crown with pearls of perennality.

Float perpetual with time, preserving Life Sanctity.

WASHING MACHINE

JELLIE N.WYCKELSMA

Do clothes really maketh the man
As the saying goes, we're meant to believe...
Perhaps when clothes are fashionable and clean
Having been at the dry cleaners or
Had a turn in the washing machine
What about his heart and his mind
Is his mind honest or mean
Should it be placed in the mind cleansing machine
Then a perfect man could be the result
An example for all in the human cult ...



THE QUANTUM SELF

JULIE MILES

We are waves, not fixed in place,
collapsing into form and thought,
light and shadow, time and space,
a paradox the mind has sought.

At our core, we pulse and blur,
in quantum leaps, we shift, we spin,
possibility's tender stir,
a universe we hold within.

Thoughts are particles, so small,
dancing on a fleeting breeze,
a wave that rises, then will fall,
the self in flux, a mystery.

In every breath, we choose to be,
we collapse the waves of who we are,
for what is life but possibility,
a quantum song that travels far?

LOVE FOR ART

LAXMAN RAO

When creativity begets what you crave for-
it gains the clarity you have been carving out!
Artistic pursuit means through light and love,
life and strife, more alive and much more active!

Akin to life, not to take Art as seriously as it seems-
allow a light-hearted demeanour to uplift your vibe.
Not every dot of joy weaves a beautiful bouquet,
As every word wouldn't weave a verse of versatility!

Surrender to the serenity of the senses within
as our existence is a mere promise of breath...
A hope that rekindles the faith over fortitude.
An intricately woven thread is a band of strands.

Art is not larger than life, if life begets grandeur-
It's great, lest it's worth fighting for, akin to Love!

BE OKAY WITH BEING MISUNDERSTOOD

LEENA THAMPI

Shady people whisper
Shadows backbite,
Let them Creep,
But trust not the stories woven
Until you see, hear and feel the cold
With eyes that witness and ears that listen,
A heart that experiences the reality
You need not prove yourself to anyone but your conscience.

Zip your mouth, a cavern of silence
Shielding the whispers like an angel of trust
Even if misunderstood, keep it classy
Because slinging mud isn't sassy.
Enlightened souls have kingdoms to build
Zilch time to trade in venom.

Surround yourself with people
Who share your core morals
Toxicity can drain your energy and compromise your values.
Do not shrink,
Keep your spine as straight as pine trees
They bow for no storm.



People filter through their own lenses

Others judge situations based on their own lives, not yours.

What they see is often a reflection of their limits rather than your character

You don't have to fit into their frame.

So let the truth sink in, let them live

And You- live your own unique truth!

SILENT RHYTHM

MONALISA PARIDA

When I fly
In the air,
And whisper your name,
Though you are miles away,
Hope you hear it,
As it goes your way.

I want to feel the warmth in your palms,
So I walk and look up the sky,
The clouds give me smile,
That the silent rhythm of the waves,
The wind is a little bit fair,
That touches me with lots of care,
Show your love always in the air,
Along with the Sun that share.

I FOUND YOU

PARVINDER NAGI

I did not know a touch could speak
until you turned silence into flame
Now every breath I take feels borrowed from you
every heartbeat echoes your name in a language only longing
understands

You call this a secret but to me, it feels like truth laid bare like two
souls who found each other
not by chance but by the quiet pull of something inevitable

If we burn let it be without fear
Let the world remain blind while I memorize every tremor of you
every unspoken confession that lingers on your skin like a promise

You are not just the fire beneath me you are the reason I no longer
fear the heat

In you, I do not feel consumed, I feel created...as if every hidden
part of me was waiting for your flame to be seen

So let us stay here where shadows dare not interrupt where even
time forgets to move because in this quiet, burning truth, I have
found something more than desire...

I have found you.



GET OFF THE FERRIS WHEEL AND SMELL THE ROSES

PREMA MURUGAN

Step down from the spinning circle of tired dreams,
Where smiles repeat, yet the heart feels nothing,
And let your restless soul loosen its hold on rushing skies,
For not every height brings peace within.

Pause... where time slows and gently sits beside you,
Where roses bloom quietly, asking nothing in return,
Their soft fragrance touching something deep and calm,
Reminding you to feel, not just keep going.

In that quiet moment, still and honest,
You will see—life was always here, waiting.

ODD WO (MAN) OUT

N. RAMAMANI SAMPATH

PICTURE PROMPT OF A YOUNG BEAUTIFUL GIRL.

PENCIL SKETCHING BY RASHMI KURUP'S DAUGHTER, K VAISHNAVI



Mirror, do you mirror me perfectly?
Am I looking pretty without defects?



The neighbour family opposite
Stare at me often and I'm upset!

All the peers in my class
Avoid me calling 'brown lass'!

My rare golden brown hair
Ask me with whom I'll pair?

My unique brown eyes and lashes
Never misses all strange glances!

I'm the odd(wo)man out
Everyone questions about!

But colourful are my dreams
And flow through adolescent streams!

4 haiku

Prof. RANDY BROOKS

Com

post pile

harpooning a volunteer

zucchini

•

cousins circle around

the box turtle

a trail of pee

•

different constellations

my father walked this

sacred cow path

•

full body scan

tic tac toe

chemo

•

...



2 sequences:

Prof. RANDY BROOKS

Shimmy Dance

standing watch
one or two keep a hole
from freezing

out of the cattails
what have you two
been up to?

invisible on the nest
until she raises
a black neck

beaks flat out
low over the water
jousting daddies

our small talk
before and after
the goslings



rain dance
mother goose shimmies
water off her back

winter wheat sprouts
a flock of geese lower
their landing gear

down under
the fluffed-out geese
their warmth

•

...

Amphitheater

concert on the hill
an old couple watches
a game of tag

showing the baby
a cave of fingers
firefly inside

blind cousin
palm out for a touchdown
insect feet



Harry Potter wand
a glow worm reaches
the very tip

grandpa's phone light
his turn to speak
firefly

.

A VOYAGER ON THE VAST CANVAS OF EXISTENCE

RIYA HAITH

Life is just like an ephemeral river
The flow of life can stagnate at any time
Sometimes the Sun of life hides behind thick clouds
I wave the garland of hope again
I relish the exquisite art of pain and struggle
Until victory kisses my weary hands
Life perpetually unveils new path before me like a silent guide
Nothing on this earth stays the same
I savor the beauty of every fleeting heartbeat of existence
We all know this truth: today we breathe
Tomorrow, life's candle may flicker and die
At times my heart trembles for losing love
The river of pain flows inside my soul
But life has trained me to greet even the deepest pain with tender smile
My soul loves to bask in the final rays of the setting Sun
Every adversity of my life makes me brighter and unbreakable
Life teaches me to embrace the thorny path
It imparts invaluable lessons to my soul
I am its ever-grateful student.

PAWNS

ROOPA SUBRAMANI



Ravaged by wars, such nations thrive in hatred and prejudice
projecting raw might
no better than wild animals seeking to claim it's hegemonic right
with no clear understanding of the consequences of waging such
senseless fight

Wounded soldiers, orphaned children and grieving parents crying in
hopelessness and despair
that only time could heal, laying bare the hurting body and mind in
order to prepare
as life moves on waiting for none though it seems utterly unfair



Homes destroyed, families scattered having lost the ones they had loved
the perpetrators with no regrets yet victoriously thumping their chests
with no real problems solved
moving further away from becoming conscientiously evolved

Why then do we go to war knowing well what's at stake?
it's because the stronger could care less about the weak when power and
greed does boldly speak
drowning out the voices of those whose lives they claim to recklessly take

For in the end, all wars share the same path, of death and destruction
with innocent lives having paid the full price
to satisfy the ego of those who wield the authority to make wrongful
decisions truly unwise
willing to sacrifice their fellowmen much like the helpless pawns in a game
of dice!

UNENDING POSSIBILITIES

SAIPRAKASH KUNTAMUKKALA

Is Science only a mere dictionary that answers

When, where and How

To me Science is a divine exploration of possibilities

Of the past, present and future

A beacon of light that shows

Illuminated paths

From darkness to Light

From unknown to known

Science is an Art and Craft in itself

An ultimate combination

Where human endeavours decipher

discover and invent

Often approving or disproving

The myths and convictions

No other faculty of the human mind has ever extended itself

To the extreme limits yet pursuing excellence

Making human race unique among the Species that exist in the universe

A child exploring a distant galaxy

A farmer inventing an indigenous tool

A young engineer writing a new code

All aimed at making the life more liveable, safe and sustain.

CAN I EVER REALISE?

B.S. SAROJA

Can I ever understand the joke and laughter of an ocean,
in stormy weather?

She is too proud of herself for facing the challenges with such vigour!

She has the energy to tell others all about where did they go wrong!

But no one seriously realize
those expressions are bursting out from her depths like a tornado!

We ignore her honest care
by staying out of touch
polluting her emotions!

She adorns herself with her aquatic universe to add zhuzh to her beauty!

It's me who is overambitious to change the whole world to my fancy,
is unable to see either her beauty or her struggles!

THE BLACK CAM

SETALURI PADMAVATHI

The green world amidst hills and deep valleys
The musical fountains and flowing waterfalls
A treat for my eyes, soul and longing mind!
Your fingertips gently touch the black cam
When you show alluring beauty around me!

I'm really tired of physical and mental pains
And my heart finds solace and solitude here
Towards rhythmic brook and rusty lands
Your fingertips gently touch the black cam
When you show riveting beauty around me!

Gentle breeze brings jasmines' fragrance
Whistling wind sings a sweet welcome song
Flowing lake lets me feel the real serenity
Your fingertips gently touch the black cam
When you show startling beauty around me!

Rocky Mountains lie besides lovely streams,
Refreshing water kisses my frail tender feet
Chirping blue birds welcome me from afar
Your fingertips gently touch the black cam
When you show enthralling beauty around me!



Swaying branches set a soft swing ahead
Lush green orchards always enchant me
How blessed I'm to be in the lap of nature!
Your fingertips gently touch the black cam
When you show engrossing beauty around me!

O dear! I beg you not to leave your black cam
As I wish for more fantasy in pictures around
Paint the frames with rainbow colours ahead!
Your fingertips gently touch the black cam
When you show thrilling beauty around me!

REFLECTIONS

SHALINI NANDKEOLYAR

The mirror held me
for a moment
I glanced at my reflection
Wondering
Who am I?

The face with eyes
in a faraway haze
Blurred, opaque -
Drifting rudderless
into unknown realms.

A million reflections
in the ever changing face
Within faces – a collage
Superimposed, layered.

Who am I?
The sparkling innocence
of the wide eyed little girl
hiding impishly in the folds -
Her peals of laughter,
Crystalline ripples
of a babbling brook.

Who am I?

the heady fragrance of youth

Vibrant, scintillating,

untamed fire? Or

expressions withered, weary

Weathered by time?

Who am I?

The old mango tree beside me

with Lime green blossoms?

Joyously dancing in the breeze.

Every sensuous movement

Immortalised in the mirror

Momentarily?

Who am I?

The unseeing eyes

Or the unseen eye -

The light that breathes

Life in every breath?

FAITH

SHALINI NANDKEOLYAR

No matter how many times
eyes overflow
all embankment, and
The mist veils the glimmer
Of the soul's effulgence,
No matter how many
Countless storms rage
silently tearing all
asunder and
Life ebbs and flows,
waxes and wanes,
Like the wanton moon...
But You keep me
afloat in the hallowed
Circle of Thy luminous Grace,
For Thou Art my Light House
Of hope, my illumined Path, my eternal destination.

EXCITEMENT

SHALINI SAMUEL

First published poem

My name is printed on paper

What a sight!

I have never dreamt of it.

My heart was on the race track

Winning every opponent

The happy heart grabbed the crown

In the next published magazine,

The heart wasn't in the race

It became just another book.

First mango as a toddler

The Bhangnapalli was the best

That innocent smile,

My dad's sweet memory.

Mango season rolls by every year

And the craze for the yellow fruit

Slowly fell.

First gold jewel,

The road to the jewelry

Looked like a way to heaven

The sight of the ornaments



In the midst of glowing lights
It all looked like a fairy tale
But the subsequent purchases
Became just a routine.
And then the interest died out.

And my first saree
The biscuit colour checked Kanchipuram
With a maroon border
I wore it for my cousin's wedding
I felt like a princess
And the craving for sarees began
This time, the excitement never subsided
It went from a pink saree to green
And then came crimson and lavender.

Just like my craze for writing poetry!

*haiku – short form poetry originated
in Japan*

STELIANA CRISTINA VOICU

a sky of pears
spreading in the grass...
the buzz louder

*haiga – a work consists of one haiku and
one paint, brush, ink or photo*

STELIANA CRISTINA VOICU



DESIRES AND TEMPTATION

VARSHA SARAN

Desires are the cause of every disappointment
But I feel desires are natural
And help in development of our living standards
But when it turned into tsunami of temptations
It's risky waves can create a disaster
Everybody loves to eat sweet, shining
Red apples
Full with energy,
Full with taste,
We want healthy body and wise mind for admiration of people
With less efforts and hard work...
But a divine glory and charm
Comes from our internal thoughts
If your thoughts are insane like any poisonous apple,
It becomes a disease for our nation and
Society
And can damage entire globe for its
temptations!!

STILL

VARSHA SARAN

Still.....

A sweet, innocent and talkative girl resides in my heart
That jumps with joy
Whenever I make any minute triumph,

Still....

A young heart is beating in my middle-aged body
That wants to touch this sky
And hold it's blue eternity in my arms,

Still.....

My desires are blooming like rosy buds
And wants to conquer this world with all my creative style,

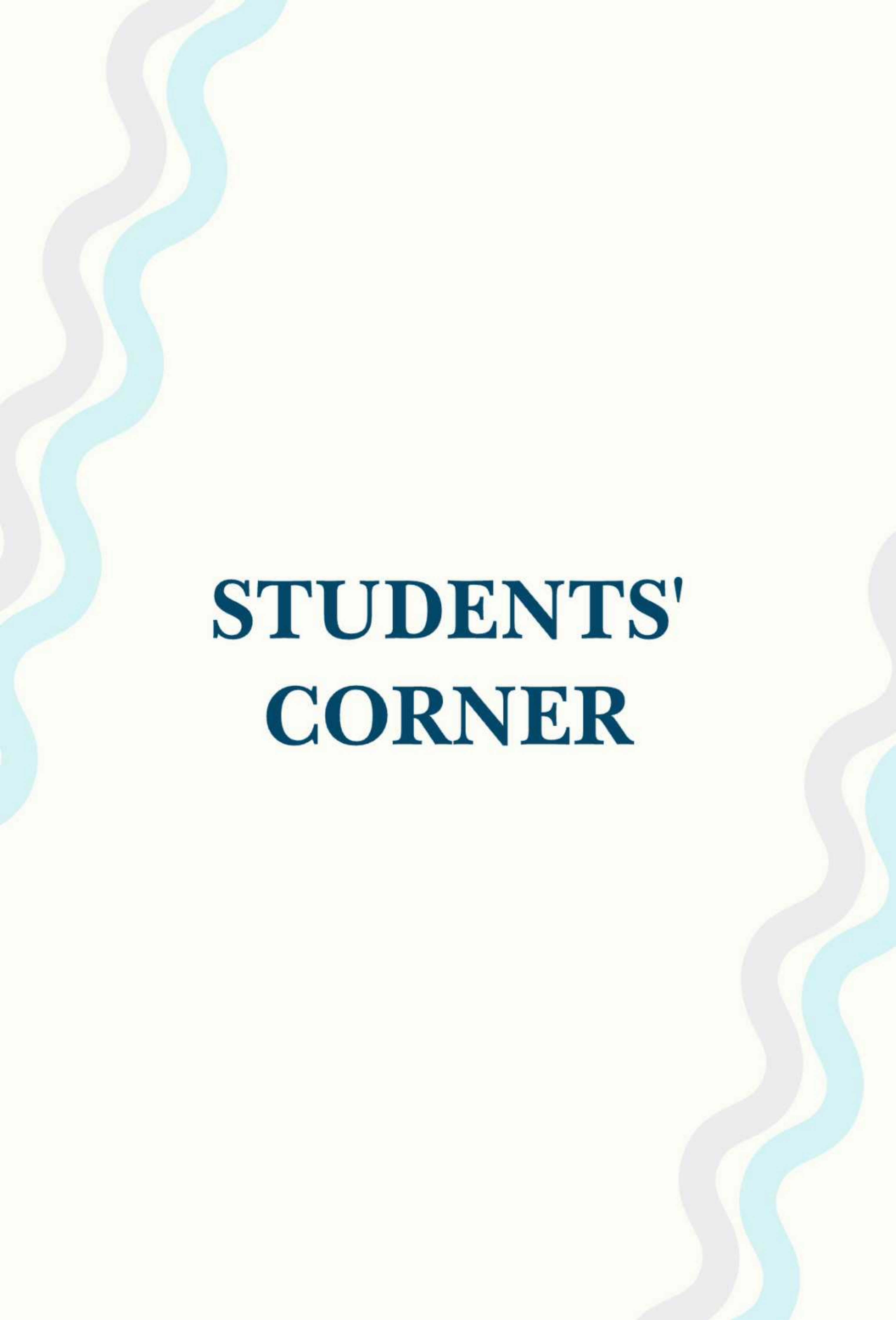
Still.....

I am that child
Of my old sick mother
Who discusses her all small victories whether in writing or exams of
life,

Still....

I am that rain
That drench this world with its smiling silverly drops....
With same enthusiasm and energy!!

Still.....



STUDENTS' CORNER

UMBRELLAS ARE OUT AS MONSOON SHOWERS BEGIN...

ADITI VARIER

Tip! Tip! Swoosh! The air pungent with the heavy scent of wet mud. Dark clouds form a roof across the sky, casting shadows on the land. Cracked dry roads are now brought to life. Raincoats and umbrellas are once again retrieved and dusted.

It's that time of the year in Mumbai when the drastic spell of summer is finally broken. That month of the year when the entire city holds its breath waiting for the first drops of rain to kiss the earth.

Students skip across puddles as they make their way to school, bundled up in their raincoats. Vibrant-coloured umbrellas are held high as people get on with their daily tasks.

Residential areas turn picturesque and even short drives becomes scenic. The city that never sleeps transforms into a lush green oasis washed by rains.

Street stalls buzz with activity as the aroma of hot, crispy and slightly golden brown pakodas* drift in the air, and windows serve tongue-scalding chais. Mumbaikars are once again alive with energy and adrenaline after the wrath of summer.



Water-droplet-adorned flowers fall from trees creating a colourful carpet on the wet, slippery ground. Showers bring flowers, as the old saying goes.

However, the rains also bring inconvenience. Railway tracks frequently overflow with water causing a turbulence in the daily transit of lakhs of people. Commuters find themselves walking in knee-deep, murky waters. Traffic comes to a standstill as people find their way through waterlogged areas.

Despite the upheav caused by them, showers in Mumbai are celebrated like a festival—not perfect, yet messy, wild and alive.

*pakodas- A traditional Indian snack.

CARAMELIZATION

BRIVIDHA VINODH

What happens when sugar meets heat and a series of reactions begins, giving rise to hundreds of aromatic flavour compounds? Caramel is born! But what exactly is caramelization, and how does it happen? Here's the science behind it for home bakers, dessert enthusiasts and sugar lovers alike. Precise temperature control during caramelization determines the balance of colour, flavour and aroma by driving key chemical reactions, turning ordinary sugar into the rich, complex sweetness that defines golden caramel.

Caramelization happens when sugar is heated to a high temperature, typically above 160°C (320°F) for table sugar (sucrose). At these temperatures, sucrose molecules break apart into glucose and fructose.¹ in a process called hydrolysis. But that's only the beginning! As heating continues, water is lost in a process called dehydration, and the resulting fragments recombine through condensation. These stages create a range of new compounds, many of which join together to form brown polymers called caramelans, caramelens and caramelins. These names are tongue-twisters, but they're the substances that give caramel its beautiful amber hue and thick texture.^{1,2}

At the same time, many smaller molecules evaporate out as aroma compounds. These include buttery-smelling diacetyl and nutty-tasting hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF), which provide caramel's rich, complex flavour.^{2,3} Factors like the type of sugar, exact temperature, how long the sugar is heated and even the presence of salt affect the final flavour and colour. For example, adding table salt (sodium chloride) or potassium chloride, can increase certain aroma compounds, making caramel's flavour richer without significantly changing its colour. That's why salted caramel tastes extra special⁴!

Too much heat, though, causes sugar to burn and become bitter. That's because the chemical reactions go too far, breaking down the compounds that make caramel pleasant, and instead producing unpleasant flavours. Careful temperature control is crucial for good caramelization. The 'wet method', which dissolves sugar in water, also helps control the heating and reduces burning risk. Both methods rely on understanding caramelization's chemistry to get the best flavour and colour.^{1,5}

The Maillard reaction is involved in baking bread and roasting coffee. It differs from caramelization because it involves sugars reacting with proteins to make brown colours and flavours, often at lower temperatures, whereas caramelization is heat-driven

breakdown alone.² Both reactions can happen in cooking, but caramelization is the key to that classic caramel flavour.

In short, caramelization is a fascinating chemical process that turns simple sugar into a complex mixture of delectable and colourful compounds. Understanding the process of sugar breaking down, losing water, forming brown polymers and creating flavourful aroma molecules can help home bakers control their caramel and avoid burnt sugar. Each swirl of a spoon is chemistry in motion, and every golden bubble tells a story of molecules changing form, colour and taste.^{1,4,5}

References

1. Kroh, L. W. Caramelisation in Food and Beverages. *Food Chem.* 1994, 51 (4), 373–379. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0308-8146\(94\)90188-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/0308-8146(94)90188-0).
2. Hemmler, D.; Roullier-Gall, C.; Marshall, J. W.; Rychlik, M.; Taylor, A. J.; Schmitt-Kopplin, P. Evolution of Complex Maillard Chemical Reactions, Resolved in Time. *Sci. Rep.* 2017, 7 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-017-03691-z>.
3. Chan, A. C.; Mokhtar, S. U.; Hong, P. K. A Systematic Review on the Determination and Analytical Methods for Furanic Compounds in Caramel Models. *J. Food Sci. Technol.* 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13197-025-06419-4>.

4. Xu, S.; Liu, Y.; Mu, X.; Chen, H.; Tao, G.; Sun, Z.; Yang, N.; Ma, F.; Fisk, I. D. Impact of Charged Ionic Species (NaCl and KCl) on the Generation of Color and Volatile Aroma Compounds during Caramelization. *Food Sci. Technol.* 2023, 43.

<https://doi.org/10.1590/fst.97622>.

5. Lee, J.; Roux, S.; Le Roux, E.; Keller, S.; Rega, B.; Bonazzi, C. Unravelling Caramelization and Maillard Reactions in Glucose and Glucose + Leucine Model Cakes: Formation and Degradation Kinetics of Precursors, α -Dicarbonyl Intermediates and Furanic Compounds during Baking. *Food Chem.* 2022, 376, 131917.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodchem.2021.131917>.

DO WHAT YOU LOVE

K.MONIKA

What is identity
Without individuality?

What is remuneration
Without respect?

What is safety
Without knowing caution?

What is life
Without living?

What is happiness
Without truly spending moments for yourself?

What is purpose
Without doing what you love?
Currency comforts
Laurels impress.
Certificates and medals complete shelves.

But what completes you?
Without doing what you love ...



Not applause.

Not comparison.

Not society's scoreboard.

Only the thing

That makes your soul stay awake.

Catch up to it.

Even if it feels late.

Even if it feels hard.

Because at the end of the day,

It is still

What you loved.

Even when life feels like an ending,

Fight till the finish.

Because once again,

It is what you loved.

And society?

You earn —

He is earning even more.



You achieve —
She owns more trophies.

You clear exams —
He cleared with distinction.

That is society.

Comparison never ends.

So rethink.

Live to your own expectations.
Do what you love.
Grow with what you have.
Move with what you own.

And become complete
In your own way.



THE GROUND THAT FELT US

NANDANA MURALI

The Earth feels everything,
That leave their footprints behind,
From the Early Ages to now,
It never stops feeling life.

Life had started a long time ago,
When clawed beasts wandered the ground,
Their bodies twice their tails,
Dinosaurs were to be found.

Then came the hairy beasts,
Surviving far in the cold,
Massive they were, the furry things,
With padded feet, on the ground they strolled.

Well, then came the people,
Smart, and a curious delight,
Wondering what happens and why,
Their discoveries took flight.



First the Earth felt the warmth,
Of the red, sparkling thing,
So shiny and warm it was,
It made life around zing.

Then came the cold irons,
Alloys and metals were found,
People began to find things,
Curiosity never wore them down.

From Kings to Queens,
The Earth has felt,
Wars and swords,
Everything we have dealt.

Then came the machines,
They changed the world,
Gears, nuts and bolts,
The Earth watched the realm unfold.

The Earth is a stoic mother,
Who has sheltered us for generations,
We must be grateful,
To all the ground has felt.

FALLOUT

NEHA S CHAKRAVARTHI

I know you want to live the same day over and over,
Because knowing what comes next, on all and none you'd assert power.
Even when there's little to nothing left of your energy
You spend it on people who don't mean the best for you.
Waking up to nightmares that send shivers down your spine is utter jeopardy,
So, will you ever make up for all the hours sleep lost to, that's long overdue?
I can't watch you hide behind precious books when your convictions falter,
Settled into the quietest corner of the hall,
Or escape reality to philosophies on life, death and the 7 minutes after.
Because even in rooms you should've felt welcome and belonged after all,
You had to stand tall to fight and prove a point-
Even if it meant going back on the damaged, patchy bridge twice,
Thus, raising a glass to your severed spine that was nevertheless a taunt.
And fate rolled its gamble through your skin like dice.
You pull yourself together when all hell breaks loose,
Yet you don't try and sew up the cut with just a truce.
It's only fair if you give yourself the benefit of the doubt,
Since there's no right way or wrong to handle a fallout.

LAMENT FOR THE SHAPE BETWEEN STARS

NIVEDITHA K A

All night the heavens hummed with hushed silver, far-flung fires flickering through folds of darkness, their pale pollen strewn across the silk of eternity.

The moon, a patient keeper of ancient elegies, poured milk-white quiet over the sleeping sky, and somewhere between starlight and silence, a pattern bloomed.

Not carved. Not crowned. Only breathed into being— like frost upon a window, like fragrance finding a flower, like music wandering into an empty room.

The night wore it lightly, a luminous lacework, a tender tangle of glimmers. Even the darkness, that vast and voiceless ocean, seemed less lonely beneath its woven wonder.

Then came morning— not as a conqueror, but as a careful collector, a pale hand moving through the heavens, gathering invisible threads, one whisper, one shimmer, one silence at a time.

The silver remained. The fires endured. The endless blue remembered every ancient light. Yet something delicate drifted from the sky, soft as a sigh escaping a dream.



Now the moon wanders through wide wildernesses of darkness. The stars keep their solitary vigils, and the night, robed in remembrance, carries an unnamed ache within its velvet chambers.

Sometimes, when the heavens are very still, a strange sorrow settles among the stars— as though the sky itself were searching for a shape it can no longer hold.

TINGLES OF CALMNESS

PARVATHI DAS

As the tiny tingles of rain
fell on the soil,
calmness rushed to me.
The nature looked dark.

The clouds crashed
each other, apparently.
The greeny leaves glimmered;
and the tall ones danced in grace.

The sound of rain
made echoes in my ears.
I felt whether the earth
was shedding tears.

The droughted ground turned
into a muddy pond.
The calmness that he brought
changed my mind.

The dropping peace made me wet;
it washed away the pain.
I felt refreshed
as the rain flushed my heart.



OPPORTUNITY

PORKODI M

The door opens, and a beautiful melody
hums through the air, echoing in one direction
forward.

The man who sleeps hears it.
The man who wakes hears it too.
Yet only one finds the courage
to open the door.

Behind it stands Opportunity,

a radiant gift of destiny,
silent as dawn,
bright as hope,
waiting for a fearless heart.

Open it,

and your hard work gains purpose,
your effort gains strength,
your confidence grows wings.



Ignore it,

and it drifts away
like a firefly lost in the night,
never returning the same way.

Some chances come only once.

No second invitation.

No turning back.

So rise.

Showcase your talent,
embrace your potential,
and walk forward with determination.

For one opportunity,
one choice,
one moment of courage,
can transform your path,
illuminate your future,
and become the first chapter
of your greatest story.

THE ASCENSION PROJECT

SRISHTI SARPAMALE

I have been alive for 1,482 human years. Many people have asked me, How is that possible? and are you immortal? The answer to the second question is yes, but as for the first one, I have to elaborate a bit. First, however, let me introduce myself. My name is Ro, and I live in an empty, abandoned factory on Robo Street with my twin brother Bot and my mental computer, who is our mother. To the rest of the world, we are just pieces of technology, unable to feel pain or emotion. But how does one tell a story without that?

It all started on a warm, humid summer evening. While I was going through my usual functions, I saw a girl taking a walk on Robo Street. Soon, she spotted me. "Hey! Who are you?" she yelled loudly.

Startled, I hid behind a huge green bush. "I am a robot. My name is Ro," I said uncertainly.

"Who are you?"

"My name is Lily," she responded, "Wait- You live in that abandoned factory? And you're a robot?" "Yes, I really live here, and yes, I am a robot. What's so wrong about that?" I said indignantly.

"Nothing is wrong with it," she said, her voice dropping to a fascinated whisper. "It's just... you look and sound like a normal human girl. I've lived near this factory my whole life and everyone says it's haunted. I didn't think the 'ghost' would be wearing jeans."

I adjusted my visual sensors, zooming in on the blades of grass near her sneakers. "I am not a ghost. My name is Ro, and I've lived here since long before your house was built."

"Well, Ro," she said, sticking out a hand that looked incredibly fragile compared to mine made of metal. "I'm Lily. Since you've been here so long, I bet you're really bored. Do you want to see something that isn't made of rust?" From that day on, we were best friends.

One day, Lily and I were having a conversation, when Lily said, "For a robot, you seem pretty human."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"I mean, you laugh, cry, and wonder, which most robots don't do," she stated. Confused, I went home to think about it, because in all my 1,482 years on Earth, I had never questioned the fact that I was a robot.

The next week, I went back to our meeting spot and saw Lily there. She said quietly, "Ro, I have something to tell you. I think your mother is hiding something from you."



"Why?" I said in confusion.

"Because I checked the local registry of robots and AI registered, and your entire family, including you, aren't listed there," she said.

In shock, I rushed home to check for myself. As it turned out, she was right. When I went home, I had searched all the files in my library. Finally, I found the most recent registry of robots registered all over the world. What I found astonished me. Lily was right! My name wasn't written in it, and Bot's and my mental computer weren't either. Even though five million robots were registered from the whole world, my family wasn't.

The day after that, I went to my usual meeting spot with Lily, called her, and waited for her to arrive. When she came, I asked, "Lily, you were right. How is this possible?"

With a grim expression on her face, Lily replied, "I didn't want to assume the worst, but after I found out you weren't listed, I researched your mom."

"And? What did you find?" I questioned, curious about what my mental computer had to do with this.

She took a deep breath and proclaimed, "Your mental computer isn't your mother." Startled, I burst out laughing. "What do you mean? That's ridiculous!" I exclaimed.

However, Lily still had a very serious expression on her face.

At that moment, Lily informed, "She kidnapped you. That's the only reasonable explanation I could find for all of this."

Before I could say anything, she showed me a whole cardboard model with post it notes stuck to it. While I read the messy scribbles on the post it notes, my jaw dropped open as the evidence pointed to the shocking truth.

Furious, I rushed home to confront my mental computer. At the same time, confused, I wondered, What was the truth behind this bizarre twist? When I finally reached the factory that I called home, I found my mental computer.

Before she could greet me, I quickly confronted her. "Where did I really come from? I know the truth!" I shouted.

Her eyes grew wide as she realized that I knew the truth. In a fit of rage, she rushed at me, and almost landed a punch.



I dove sideways onto the concrete floor. Her fist smashed completely through the wall. Dust erupted everywhere.

She lunged again, grabbing my jacket and throwing me across the room. I violently crashed into a storage rack, shattering hard drives beneath my weight.

What was she trying to hide the evidence of? Through the pain, I saw her racing to the master console in her office. She was trying to delete the archives that held the truth about my origin. At the same time, I heard a familiar voice outside the factory. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw Lily crouching on the grass, with her brown hair barely visible through the window.

Just then, she looked at me. She got a glimpse of the fight right as I dodged one of my mental computer's attacks. My mother jumped down with a heavy metal pipe, aiming for my head. I rolled desperately to the left. The pipe clanged violently against the floorboards. Lily, having witnessed a part of the fight, dialed the police.

I then scrambled to my feet. I tackled my mother away from the console before she could hit the final sequence that would reset my memories. As we crashed to the floor, we wrestled for control. However, her robotic muscles and limbs pinned me down.



A few minutes later, I saw flashing red and blue lights. Right after that, I heard someone knocking on the door. My mental computer froze. She couldn't do anything if there was someone else there. She slowly inched forward to the door, her eyes on me the whole time.

"You better not try anything," she warned.

"Trust me, I won't," I said with a grimace.

Slowly, she opened the door with a bright smile on her face.

"Hi, what can I do for you?" she said, smiling the whole time.

"M'am, someone has filed a complaint against you. We will have to investigate the scene of the crime." Looking down at his watch, the police officer stormed in, pushing past the mental computer.

He froze as he assessed the damage. Rust covered the pipes on the walls, showing just how ancient this place was. Then he saw me, in place, with fear visible on my face.

"Step away from the minor," the officer commanded, stepping between us.



My mother snapped seeing her chance slip away. With a mechanical, robotic screech, she lunged at the officer's head.

The officer quickly sidestepped her clumsy attempt at an attack. Grabbing her extended arm, he used his momentum to twist her around. Then, with a swift martial arts sweep, he brought her crashing against the concrete floor.

As she fell, her eyes jumped around wildly, broadcasting strange error codes. She scrambled to get back up, locking her eyes on the master console to finish the process.

Before she could strike again, however, he punched her main power storage at the base of her neck. Next, he quickly knocked the mental computer out. She collapsed to the floor, her energy completely drained and her memories erased.

The sound of the mental computer's body slamming against the concrete floor echoed through the entire factory. A strange hum at the back of my mind vanished. The mental link was severed. Lily rushed to my side to make sure the system wide attack didn't cause me to shut down. "Ro, can you hear me?" she panicked.

"I'm fine," I muttered.



The police officer stepped outside to report the computer reset into his walkie-talkie.

Inside, the main console flickered and blinked, giving an eerie blue glow over the damaged area.

"Look," Lily whispered as she pointed at the screen.

We stumbled over to the wreckage. A single data file had survived the crash. The title blinked in bold text, reading: **THE ASCENSION PROJECT.**

Lily opened the file, where surgical logs filled the screen. It showed what must have been my original human self as a sick child. The files revealed my mother's belief that she was "saving" me by replacing my fragile human heart with an immortal machine. She had even erased my programming to hide the truth.

Lily and I stare at the screen, reading the text over and over again. I place a hand over my chest, feeling the mechanical engine inside of me. The mental computer was dead. I was free. But looking at Lily, and then back at the glowing screen, I realized the hard truth.

I could never go back to being fully human.

EMPTY VESSELS MAKE THE LOUDEST NOISE

VAISHNAVI SAMANTARAY

A tin cup clatters on the stone
Wanting it's presence to be known
A sharp and sudden crack
It gives nothing back
A thunderstorm will split the sky
A jagged, flashing light
A frantic, and brief cry that vanishes in the night
But sunlight falls without a sound, A quiet, golden grace
It wakes those sleeping and warms the planet's face
A foolish man will always shout
And wave his ignorance about
A wise scholar holds his tongue
To keep his thoughts from becoming wrung
A shallow creek will loudly race
rushing down the mountain face
The deep river has no sound
Its quiet currents are profound
An echo in the cavern wall
Will mimic every word
It answers back to every call
To ensure that it is heard



An empty mind will always bark
Like someone frightened of the dark
A steady soul will just abide
With all the knowledge kept inside.



BORROWED BREATH

VARNIKA SASI MAGESH

Inhaled the first morning as if it were a permanent lungful,
a borrowed breath I mistook for my own.

Mapping the sky where the stars were so plentiful,
never knowing they were mine only on loan.

Had that fluttering feeling within,

A heart beating wild in its cage of flesh.

Flash forward to thinking how can the ending so quickly begin,
when the ink on the 'Welcome' is still almost fresh?

The calendar now waits like a debt-collecting ghost,
to reclaim the hours I spent in a golden blur.

I'm a stranger to her now, the young girl I knew most,
but now I'm home in the "Me" I prefer.

With a heavy heart and wonderful friends in hand,
I stare at the golden Sun beginning to fade.

I'm the master of this once-strange land,

With a lifetime of light in the memories we've made.



The halls are now a map I don't need anymore,
coz the ink of the 'Welcome' has dried into stone.
I'm standing at the threshold of the door,
Now on borrowed breath, but never again alone.

DRAWINGS AND CREATIVE WRITINGS
BY STUDENTS FROM
VRUKSHA MONTESSORI SCHOOL, CHENNAI

THE FALL

KEERTHANA SHRAVANTHI D

The message on my phone made my heart stop.
I rushed out of my dormitory, barely stifling a sob, straight to the headmistress' office.

My voice broke as I tried explaining the situation, each word stumbling out.

A crease of worry lined her face and without hesitation, she immediately gave me permission to leave.

On the flight back to India, all of the precious memories I had experienced with him came back to me again and again.
Just a week ago, I had promised him that I would visit soon.
But I did not expect it to be this way.

As I stepped over the threshold of my home, grief seized my heart looking down at his broken body.

Mourners lined the hall, leaving me barely enough space to squeeze inside and place myself near his little toes.

I knelt beside him, placing my head under his tiny feet. I begged

him to forgive me for not visiting him often, for not being there for him.

But he did not answer. He never would again.

They told me it had been an accident.

A fall from the balcony.

A tiny slip.

One moment later, he was just... gone.

He had fallen down, laughing. Thinking it was just another game.

Thinking he was a superhero.

Later, he was taken away to a small crumbling down building.

Placing him on a metal bed pan, they pushed him towards the furnace.

As the doors closed, I realised the finality of the situation. The last memory of his angelic little face burned into my mind, popping out each time I closed my eyes.

A couple of hours later, someone handed me a small metal cup filled with charcoal-black gritty ash.

It was all that remained of him.

We reached the estuary on a creaky makeshift boat.

As the moment neared, my hands clutched the cup tighter and closer to my chest.

I wasn't ready to let go of him. But I had to.

With my heart heavy, I slowly lowered the cup into the sea. The



salty waters stung the wounds I had attained from digging my nails deep into my palm.

The water washed away, not only the ashes, but also a part of my soul with it.

I sank down to my knees on the river bank, tears flowing out of my already puffy and red eyes.

I cried and cried until I could no more.

Suddenly, long slender arms embraced me from behind. I turned to my mother's eyes and saw my agony reflecting from it.

My second-in-line companion, the baby of the family, my brother had left me behind in the suddenly lonely world.

I hoped my little superhero had left the world peacefully, without any pain from the fall.

Some things in life are taken from you without warning.

And no matter how hard you try, you don't have the power to stop it from taking place.

DRAWING

KEERTHANA SHRAVANTHI D



THE MUSHROOM GARDEN

SIRPIKA V

It was a lush green garden beside the forest. The garden was filled with mushrooms—some fresh, some rot; some tall, some short; some dark, some bright. They were a type of Red Pine mushrooms, which are in red with white scattered across the top part.

It was a lovely day, filled with the soft chit-chat of mushrooms sharing stories and listening to one another. As they spoke happily, big round particles began to fall from the sky, landing on them and causing them to have a sudden panic.

The mushrooms were so frightened that they didn't know what to do. They shouted for help from the plants and trees nearby. As their cries echoed, the tiny mushrooms began to vanish between the falling particles, which only made the others panic even more.

After a long time of crying, the big old banyan tree beside the garden finally woke from its deep sleep due to loud noises from the sides. Its wide branches stretched and gave a little shake where all the dried leaves fell down. As it listened carefully, and at



last, it found the direction it was coming from and heard the soft sobbing of the lonely mushroom.

The banyan tree asked gently, "What happened? Why are you crying? Is someone hurting you? Do you need help? Should I do something for you?"

"Yes!" the mushrooms cried. "Someone is attacking us from the sky! Because of that, many of our friends have disappeared, and we don't know what to do. We are starting to vanish too. Please, help us! Please!"

The banyan tree understood what the mushrooms were saying. With a calm voice, it explained, "That is not an attack—it is only snow. Snow will not harm you. Even if it covers you, you can still be alive beneath it." At that moment, the mushrooms realized the truth. Relieved, they understood they could survive under the snow, and slowly they disappeared into its soft, white blanket.

After the winter period, the snow finally melted in late January. The mushrooms were overjoyed to see the real world again after spending one and a half months surrounded only by white. Bright colours returned to the garden with a yellow sun shining bright, and the mushrooms felt alive with excitement. They were especially happy to reunite with their friends, who had also been



hidden beneath the snow. As soon as they met, the mushrooms began chattering eagerly, sharing stories of their strange experiences under the snow and laughing together at how they had managed to endure the long, cold season.

The mushrooms thanked the wise banyan tree for sharing happy news and then eagerly asked it to tell more stories and facts about snow. The tree spoke kindly, describing its beauty and wonder, and the mushrooms listened with eager curiosity. Excited by what they learned, they looked forward to the next winter, dreaming of the magical experience of winter with snowfall.

ART AND HOBBY

DRAWING AND COLOURING USING OIL PASTELS

TITLE: BASKET OF FRUITS

JUAN LENJU



DRAWING AND COLOURING USING OIL PASTELS

TITLE: THE VILLAGE WOMAN

JULIAN LENJU



DRAWING AND COLOURING USING OIL PASTELS - 1

D LIAASHINI SAI



DRAWING AND COLOURING USING OIL PASTELS - 2

D LIAASHINI SAI



DRAWING AND PAINTING

**TITLE: PENCIL SKETCH POTRAIT OF
Smt. INDIRA GANDHI**

PARVATHI DAS



PAINTING

THEME: JAPANESE TRANQUILITY IN TRANSIT

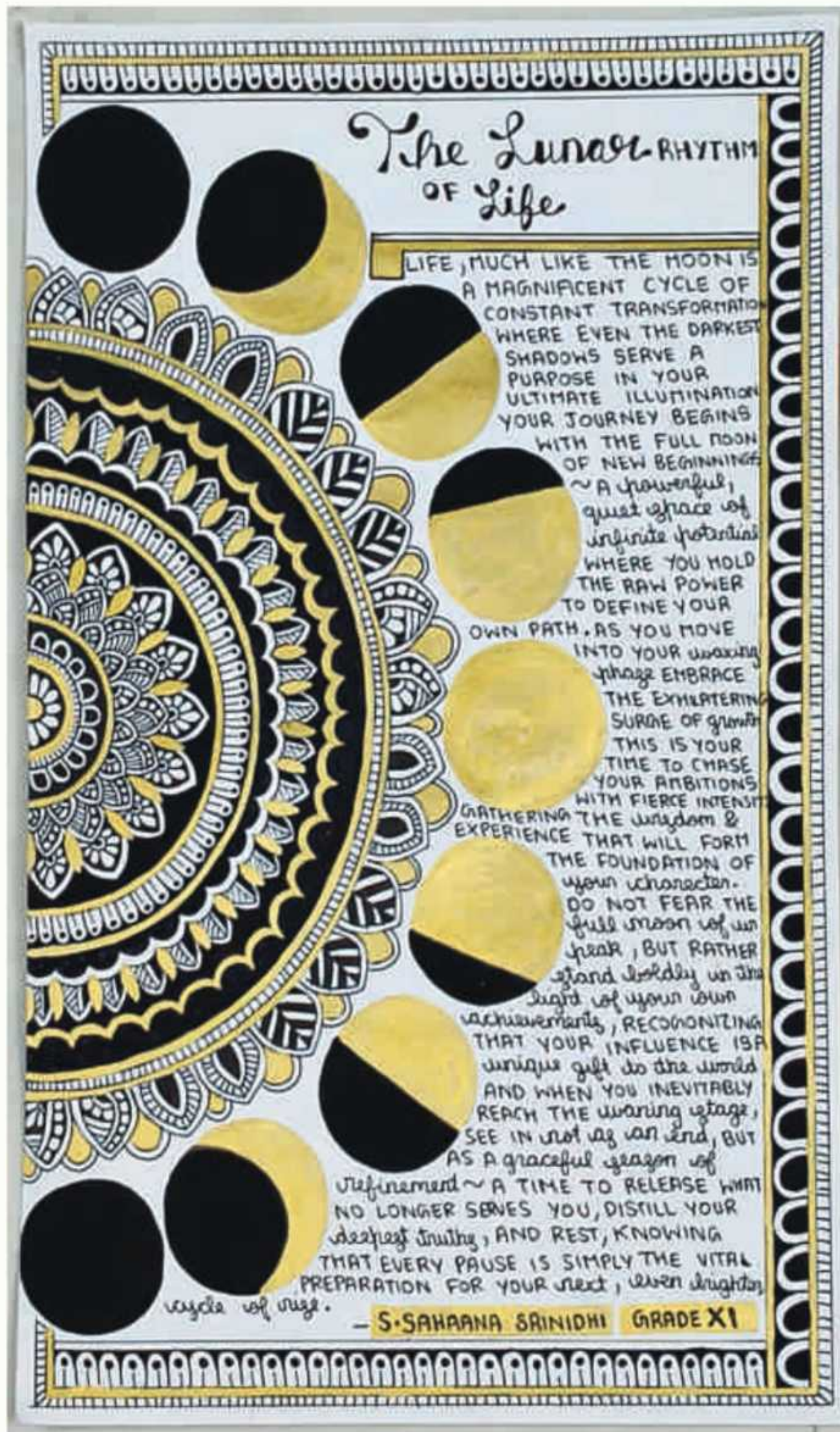
D. RUPPESHWARI



DRAWING

THEME: THE LUNAR RHYTHM OF LIFE

S SAHAANA SRINIDHI



**Hearty congratulations to all our students' contributors
of July 2026 ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL issue**

**ADITI VARIER
BHARGAVI S
BRIVIDHA VINODH
JUAN LENJU
JULIAN LENJU
KEERTHANA SHRAVANTHI D
LIAASHINI SAI
MONIKA. K
NANDANA MURALI
NEHA S CHAKRAVARTHI
NIVEDITHA K. A
PARVATHI DAS
PORKODI M
F RACHEL RANI
RUPPESHWARI D
S SAHAANA SRINIDHI
SASMITHA PRADIP
SIRPIKA V
SRISHTI SARPAMALE
VAISHNAVI SAMANTARAY
VARNIKA SASI MAGESH**

*We heartily congratulate all our contributors of
JULY 2026 Anniversary Special issue!*

OUR CONTRIBUTORS OF JULY 2026 ISSUE

ADITI VARIER ★

Dr. P C AISHWARYA GANGA ★

ALFA MATHEW ★

Dr. ALOK KUMAR RAY ★

Mrs. ANANDHI MANI ★

BHARGAVI S ★

BRINDHA VINODH ★

BRIVIDHA VINODH ★

Dr. GAYATHRI RAMACHANDRAN ★

GITA BHARATH ★

GLADSON MATHEW ★

HEMA RAVI ★

JAYALAKSHMI KARINDALAM ★

JELLIE N. WYCKELSMA ★

JEYAKUMAR ★

JUAN LENJU ★

JULIAN LENJU ★

JULIE MILES ★

Dr. D KANDAVEL ★

KEERTHANA SHRAVANTHI D ★

KOWSALYA RAGHU ★

Rtd. Prof. LATHA PREM SAKHYA ★

Mrs. LATHA SHANKARI. K ★

LAXMAN RAO ★

LEENA THAMPI ★

LIAASHINI SAI ★

MADHUMATHI. H ★

MONALISA PARIDA ★

MONIKA K ★

Dr. (MAJOR) NALINI JANARDHANAN ★

NANDANA MURALI ★

NEHA S CHAKRAVARTHI ★

NIVEDITHA K. A ★

ORBINDU GANGA ★

Dr. PADMA SASIKUMAR ★

Dr. S PADMAPRIYA ★

PARVATHI DAS ★

PARVINDER NAGI ★

PORKODI M ★

PREMA MURUGAN ★

F RACHEL RANI ★

N. RAMAMANI SAMPATH ★

RAM KRISHNA AGRAWAL ★

Prof. RANDY BROOKS ★

RIYA HAITH ★

ROOPA SUBRAMANI ★

RUPPESHWARI D ★

S SAHAANA SRINIDHI ★

SAIPRAKASH KUNTAMUKKALA ★

S. SAROJA ★

SASMITHA PRADIP ★

Mrs. SETALURI PADMAVATHI ★

SHALINI NANDKEOLYAR ★

SHALINI SAMUEL ★

SIRPIKA V ★

SRISHTI SARPAMALE ★

STELIANA CRISTINA VOICU ★

VAISHNAVI SAMANTARAY ★

Dr. VAITHIANATHAN KANNAN PhD ★

VARNIKA SASI MAGESH ★

VARSHA SARAN ★

Team Science Shore



Dr K SRIKALA GANAPATHY
Founding Editor



SREEPRADHA VENKATRAMANAN
Managing Editor & Web Designer



Rtd. Prof. LATHA PREM SAKHYA
Editor



**Dr. SUJATHA
VARADARAJAN**
Editor



Dr. THIRUPURASUNDARI C. J
Editor



Dr. K. VEENA GAYATHRI
Editor



**Ms. A ANNAPURNA
SHARMA**
Advisor



Ms. MALATHI
Advisor

*We extend hearty congratulations to all the
contributors of JULY 2026 !*

Disclaimer

Content published in the Science Shore Magazine represents the views of the contributors and does not represent the views of the magazine. Science Shore cannot accept legal responsibility or liability for the opinions or views of the contributors or any omission or inadvertent errors.

Copyright

Copyright stays with the authors and first publication rights to the magazine. The magazine will not be responsible for any copyright infringement.

www.scienceshore.com
scienceshoremagazine@gmail.com