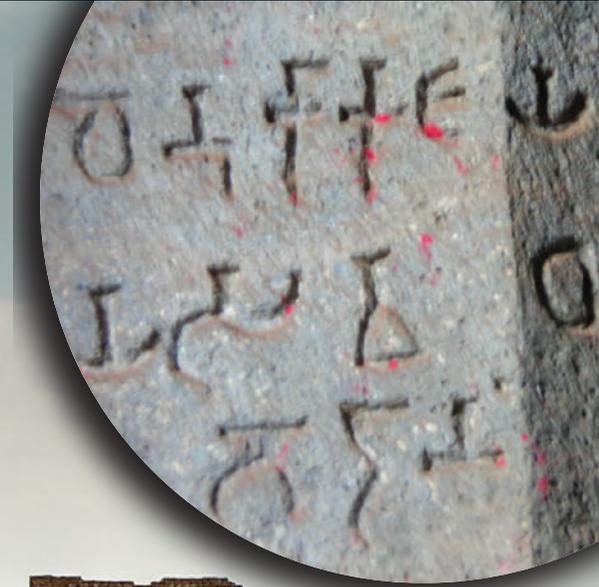


ONE INDIA ONE PEOPLE

Patriotism Redefined

ARCHAEOLOGY

2018



FACE TO FACE

DR. TEJAS MADAN GARGE

KNOW INDIA BETTER

MATHURA & VRINDAVAN

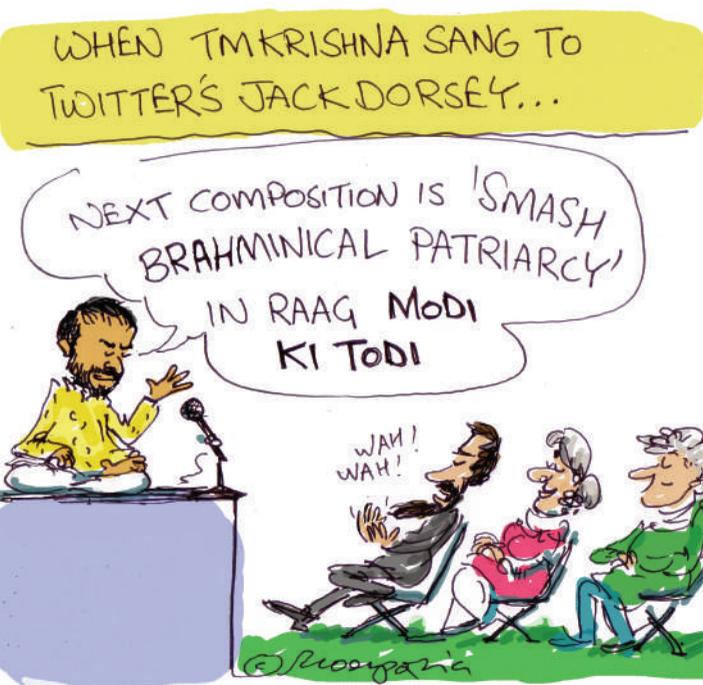
In the footsteps of Lord Krishna



THE STATE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

YAVANAS IN INDIA

SECURING OUR INTANGIBLE HERITAGE



WHEN TMKRISHNA SANG TO TWITTER'S JACK DORSEY...

NEXT COMPOSITION IS 'SMASH BRAHMINICAL PATRIARCHY' IN RAAG MODI KI TODI

WAH! WAH!

NO NO NO NO NO!

OK, OK! TAKE!

NOW, I DON'T WANT

YOU KNOW, SHE'LL MAKE A GOOD ACTIVIST WHEN SHE GROWS UP

SABARIMALA WOMEN ENTRY =

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**INDIAN
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COL. HARWANT SINGH, MC



YASHWANT DEV



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The state of archaeology

*Archaeology as a field of study is growing steadily in India, with more universities offering courses in it. **Abhijit Dandekar and Andre Baptista** examine the growing interest and popularity of this subject, and why it's important to study allied subjects too.*



The DCPRI, Pune, one of the premier institutes of archaeological studies

Today, in the age of information, there exists, ironically, a strong dichotomy between information and ignorance in modern education. While society tends to give more attention to such quantifiable results of education as skill acquisition, the qualitative aspects are often ignored, discouraged, or even dismissed. Education should ideally provide the means where individuals can connect new knowledge to personal and collective experiences – can think, discuss and question in order to acquire a wider understanding, and a deeper and more meaningful insight into life. While the natural sciences offer explanations about the physical world around us, it is the social sciences like history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, etc., that establish a medium to connect with the human experience.

Archaeology, the 'love-child'

By incorporating the study of human behaviour against the backdrop of the physical world, archaeology as a discipline aims to holistically address life's fundamental questions about who we are, from where we came, and where we are headed. It provides the opportunity for people of different fields of study to bring in their expertise, and contribute to an overall understanding of our roots. It can

therefore be said that if physics is considered the mother of all sciences, it is only appropriate that archaeology be deemed the 'love-child' of all sciences.

Archaeology, though always intertwined with romanticism, only fully entered the popular realm through movies like *The Mummy Trilogy*, *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* and through franchise characters like *Indiana Jones*. His escapades and the portrayal of impending adventure, were ever enticing. Despite the innocent naivety and heightened romanticism of the franchise's premise, it inspired an entire generation of archaeologists to pursue the field. Television channels like The Discovery Network and National Geographic would run specials on civilisations like ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, that not only raised awareness, but rendered a more serious tone to archaeology. It managed to reach out to a much wider audience by bringing visuals of an archaeological dig or an exploration, to one's personal television set. This approach was soon tainted with the introduction and popularisation of tin-foil theories such as "ancient aliens", and their alleged hand in creating much of the world's built heritage. Such ill-considered notions would find appeal amongst the masses, and inevitably played a role in paving the way to the post-fact/post-truth world in which we live.

Politicisation of archaeological concerns and convenient manipulation of archaeological facts have only further deterred the cause. In addition, constant innovations in science and technology have resulted in rampant progress and social change. The quick pace of this change can lead to a certain detachment or disconnect, and a loss of perspective arises. At such times, the old adage that states “the past holds the key to the present” comes to mind, where a retrospective to regain lost perspective can help us move forward in a more measured way. So, if at one point, archaeology was a pursuit driven purely by curiosity and an element of fancy, today, archaeology is in dire need of professionals trained under its principles to take up the field, value our shared histories and our shared cultural past, protect them for posterity, and as a consequence, add perspective.

With the change in the world economy, newer avenues opened up. As the middle class gained economic affluence, its urge to travel and visit heritage sites also increased. As a result, maintenance of such sites became pre-eminent. This added a new dimension to the traditional education in archaeology, and it became more job-oriented. The apprehensions that once existed concerning a career in archaeology are slowly being dispensed by its increasing scope reflected in its well-defined sub-fields. Job avenues now lay open at universities, museums, galleries, auction houses, the travel industry, and a multitude of organisations for those trained in archaeological research, art history, museum and archival studies, conservation, heritage management, tourism, etc.

Studying archaeology

Archaeology, by definition, is the scientific study of the past. It uses material evidence to estimate the processes of the past. The study of materials and equipment used by humans since their earliest existence on this planet, development in technology over hundreds and thousands of years, environment change and humans’ response towards it, is a very fascinating study in itself. Some premier institutes which specialise in such studies are the Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute, Pune, Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Tamil University, Thanjavur, University of Calcutta, Kolkata, Kerala University, Thiruvananthapuram, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, Allahabad University, Prayagraj (Allahabad), etc. In addition, there are many other universities and institutes which also offer many courses in various fields of archaeology. For example, the Institute of Archaeology situated in New Delhi is run by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to train its current officers and future aspirants. It offers a comprehensive, two-year postgraduate diploma in archaeology. Recently, the University of Mumbai has commenced a Masters course in Archaeology, along with basic and advanced certificate courses in archaeology.

Apart from this fundamental training in archaeology, other disciplines related to archaeology also have been attracting students from various fields. Art history is one



Conducting heritage walks has become popular today

such area which has lucrative openings. Institutions like The Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, the National Museum Institute, New Delhi, Visva Bharati University, Birbhum, West Bengal, offer full time as well as part-time courses in art, aesthetics and the history of art. Another discipline allied to archaeology is museology, i.e., the science of organising, arranging, and managing museums. Although museums house many other objects apart from artefacts from the past, a majority of their collections, nonetheless, concerns human ancestry. Hence, it is always beneficial to have the background of archaeology for a museologist. There are many universities which offer museology as a postgraduate subject. Some of the important institutions are, the Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, National Museum Institute, Delhi, Chhatrapati Shivaji Mahararaj Vastu Sangrahalay, Mumbai, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, University of Calcutta, Kolkata, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, University of Mysore, Jiwaji University, Gwalior, etc. They offer either part-time or full-time postgraduate diploma or degree courses in museology.

An upcoming field related to archaeology that is growing very fast these days is the field of heritage management. It covers areas such as architectural and object conservation, and tourism management. Of these, the object conservation is part of the museology course in almost all the institutes that conduct a course in museology. However, architectural conservation requires knowledge of architecture, and this branch is developing as a part to architectural studies.

(continued on page 08...)

Yavanas in India

Who were the Yavanas? What was their origin? How have they evolved as a community in India? Dr. Manjiri Bhalerao gives us a complete account.

‘Mastani’ was a ‘Yaavani’! This was the statement used for the famous lover of Peshwa Bajirao I. What did people in that era mean by the word ‘Yaavani’? It was not a community or caste in medieval India. However, the people of the contemporary period understood that Mastani was a Muslim woman. In the medieval times, Muslims were called Yavanas, and the Muslim women were called as Yaavanis, simply because they were following a religion of the foreigners. Traditionally, foreigners were known as Yavanas.

The antiquity

If one tries to see the antiquity of this word Yavana, its first textual occurrence is seen in Ashtadhyayi by Panini (5th century BCE), the famous text on grammar. There is a mention of Yavanani, which is interpreted as the Greek script. Panini was located in the North Western regions of modern Pakistan. He was probably aware of the script used by the people living in the then Persian territories, mainly the Greeks. The old Persian records use the word ‘yauna’ for the Lonian Greeks. These were the Greek people who resided on the islands of Lonia in Asia Minor. The Persian king Cyrus the Great had defeated them. Thus the Persians called the Greeks as Yauna.

Inscriptions in India can be found from the times of Ashoka, the famous Mauryan ruler and are dated back to the 3rd century BCE. The inscriptions of Ashoka provide a lot of information about the contemporary world. He even

mentions the people and their kingdoms on the borders of his empire. His empire had spread far and wide in all the directions. In one of his inscriptions he mentions the community of the Yonas along with those of the Kambujas and Gandharas. He also mentions the names of his contemporary rulers in the western world to whom he had sent his missionaries for the spread of Buddhism. One of them was Yavanraja Antiyaka, i.e., Antiochus and four kings beyond Antiochus. Ashoka correctly gives the names of the four kings who were ruling in Europe at this time. In one of his edicts he says that Brahmanas and Shramanas (wandering monks) are found everywhere in his empire except the regions of Yonas and Kambojas. The Kandahar inscription was a bilingual inscription written in Greek and Aramaic (used in the Persian Empire), obviously for the Greek and Persian populations living in that region in those days. This clearly indicates that during the times of Ashoka there were considerable numbers of Greek and Persian people living in the regions known as Kambuja or Bactria, i.e., modern Afghanistan. This could have been the effect of the invasion of Alexander the Great and the rule of Seleucus Nicator in this region.

Ancient India, the welcome host

Ancient India was a peaceful amalgamation of people coming from many parts of the Old World. Many of these people came to India, and many have settled down here. Their references can be seen in literature, as well as in the inscriptions carved in various monuments where



(Left) Guardian with winged ears found at Pitalkhora | (Right) Inscription in Karle Chaitryagriha mentioning the donation by Yavana Yasavadhana

they gave munificent donations for the creation of those monuments or parts of them. The Buddhist literature also provides some important information about the people living in ancient India. Dipavamsa, the Buddhist chronicle from Sri Lanka mentions that after the Third Buddhist Council (which took place during Ashoka's rule), the monk Maharakkhita was sent to the Yona country to spread the religion. It also mentions that Ashoka sent a monk Yona Dhammarakkhita to Aparant (North Konkan, i.e., today's Mumbai, and surrounding region). All these references tell us that the Greeks were very much present in India, and some of them were influenced by Buddhism, and had even become monks to take up the work of a missionary.

After the disintegration of the Mauryan Empire, the Indo-Greek rulers from Bactria started ruling over the Gandhara region, one of them was the famous king Milinda, i.e., Menander (2nd century BCE) of the Pali text Milinda Panha. He is referred as Yonaka in this particular text. Similarly, Heliodorus (2nd century BCE), an ambassador from Takshashila's Indo Greek (Yavana) King Antialchidas to the court of the King Bhagabhadra, erected a Garuda stambha (pillar) in front of the temple of Vishnu at Vidisha in Madhya Pradesh. The inscription on the pillar gives the detailed background of Heliodorus and calls him as a Bhagavata (i.e., a devotee of Vishnu). It is interesting to note that the region from where Heliodorus came, i.e., the Gandhara region, was the stronghold of the Krishna and Balarama worship. It is not surprising to see that the coins of the Indo – Greek king Agathocles carried the images of Krishna and Balarama. These facts indicate a slow assimilation of the Yavanas into Indian society and their adoption of Indian religions.

A very strong evidence of the presence of the Yavana traders in western India comes from the inscriptions in the western Indian caves. The inscriptions at Nashik, Karla, Junnar, have preserved the details of the donations given by the Yavana traders to the Buddhist monasteries; most were written between 1st century BCE to 2nd century CE. A major chunk of this evidence comes from Karla. There are seventeen inscriptions on the pillars in the Chaitya hall at Karle, which mention that the donor had come from Dhenukataka. Out of these six are by the Yavana traders. No confirmed identification of this place has been done as yet, but many scholars propose that this was a colony of foreign traders. Scholars have proposed various identifications for this place which include Dharanikota in Andhra Pradesh, Devghar near Karla, Junnar, and recently Dahanu. There were many foreigners living in ancient India. However, while giving donations and recording them in the monuments, the foreign donors were very specific about mentioning their respective ethnicities such as Yavana (Greeks), Shakas (Indo-Scythians), and Pahlavas (Indo-Parthians). These references are found in ample numbers at various places in western India. Many a times the Yavanas use their Indianised names, e.g., Yasavadhana (Yashavardhana), Sihadhaya (Sinhadhvaja), Dhammayavana, Chulayakha (Kshudrayaksha), Vitasamgata, Dharmadhvaja at Karle, Indragnidatta from Nashik, etc. Sometimes they had names which sounded different than the Indian names like Chita

and Irila at Junnar.

This suggests the possibility that those Yavanas who had Indianised names, could be the second generation residents in the Indian territory. One example comes from the inscription in Cave No. 17 at Nashik. The donor is Yavana Indragnidatta. He was a resident of Dattamitri (somewhere) in North India. His father's name was Dhammadeva and his son's name was Dhammarakkhita. There is a possibility that his father belonged to the Vedic tradition and hence his name was Indragnidatta (mentioning the names of the Vedic deities Indra and Agni). However, he himself could have had leanings towards Buddhism, and hence his son was named Dhammarakkhita, after the celebrated Yavana Dharmarakkhita who was sent to Aparanta by Ashoka.

The product of intermingling

This indicates that the Yavanas were staying in India for a long time. This had also resulted in the exchange and intermingling of the two cultures, visible mostly in the form of art and architecture that was produced in ancient India. Some concepts and motifs that were completely foreign to the Indian culture are seen in the monuments, e.g., the depiction of Sphinx at Nashik, Karle, Junnar (man-lion combination derived from the Egyptian Sphinx), Centaurs at Bhaja (man-bull combination of ancient Greek mythology), Griffins at Nashik (animal and bird combinations), owl at Nashik (an inauspicious bird for Indian culture, but very auspicious for the Greeks as it was the symbol of the Goddess Athena), guardian figures with ears like pixies or elves (at Pitalkhora and Kondane), suggesting their super human powers and ability to overpower calamity,



A bronze image of Poseidon was found in the excavations at Brahmapuri in Kolhapur

Triskelion at Nashik and Junnar (an ancient Celtic symbol, the antiquity of which goes back to 4,400 BCE, and since then occurring frequently in ancient European art and the specific meaning of which is still a riddle for the symbologists), etc. Such motifs are found in the western Indian caves like Pitalkhora, Nashik, Karle, Junnar etc.

All these motifs occur in Indian context only till around 2nd or 3rd century CE when the Yavanas were active in the Indian territories. These figures with the Greek origin probably acted as the protective auspicious symbols warding the evil off from the monuments. Just as some traditional Indian auspicious motifs were used to protect the sacred monuments, some foreign symbols were also used for the same purpose. An interesting simile can be found in the modern world when people take help of both the Indian Vastushastra as well as the Chinese Feng Shui for their professional success and prosperity. The influx of the Yavanas India also brought some interesting objects belonging to their own cultural context. A very good example can

be seen in the form of the small bronze image of Poseidon, the Greek sea god, found in the excavations at Brahmapuri in Kolhapur. Many other antiquities of conceptually Greek origin were found in this excavation. But this particular bronze image is testimony to the worship of the Greek sea god by some foreign devotee.

Eventually, the term Yavana was applied to any foreigner coming to India. The specific association of the Greeks with the term Yavana was forgotten and hence, later on, when the Muslims came to India, even they were called Yavanas. However, the study of the hoary antiquity of the Yavana presence in India would help to understand many more aspects of the ancient Indian social, economic and religious life in its real sense.



Dr. Manjiri Bhalerao is Associate Professor of Indology, Centre of Sanskrit & Indological Studies, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune.

(...continued from page 05)

It has been observed though, that a conservation architect without any background of archaeology is likely to make errors in his/her assessment more often than not, which further reflects in the actual act of conservation. Hence, many architects prefer to study archaeology before starting their careers as conservation architects. Institutions such as Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology University, Ahmedabad, the Kamala Raheja Vidyavidyalaya Institute of Architecture and Environmental Studies, Mumbai, School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, Aayojan School of Architecture, Jaipur, offer postgraduate courses in architectural conserva-

tion. Institutes like the Delhi Institute of Heritage Research and Management, New Delhi, Centre for Heritage Management, Ahmedabad University, Ahmedabad, Srishti Institute of Art Design and Technology, Bengaluru, Vikram University, Ujjain, offer post-graduate courses in overall heritage management. Universities like the Jiwaji University, Gwalior, University of Mysore, Mysuru and University of Rajasthan, offer postgraduate degrees and diploma courses in heritage and tourism management.

Thus, from being merely a hobby, the discipline of archaeology has come a far way to establish itself not only as a pure academic pursuit, but also as a prospering avenue of commercial importance, along with building a future that will take care of the past.



Abhijit Dandekar is Assistant Professor of Epigraphy, Palaeography and Numismatics at the Department of AIHC & Archaeology, Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute (DCPRI), Pune, since June 2003. He received his doctoral degree in AIHC & Archaeology from DCPRI. He has carried out excavations in coastal Maharashtra and has participated in many excavations all over the country. His areas of research include the archaeology of long-distance trade, anthropology of religion, along with the epigraphic and numismatic records of Ancient India.



André Baptista is Visiting Faculty for Archaeology at the Kamla Raheja Vidyavidyalaya Institute of Architecture and Environmental Studies, Juhu. Trained under the Master's programme at the DCPRI, Pune, he has represented universities as well as ASI at a number of explorations and excavations at sites ranging from the prehistoric to the early medieval. He is presently pursuing his doctorate in Landscape and Environmental Archaeology from Deccan College.

Securing our intangible heritage

*Epigraphy as a field of study has declined in India, and it's a pity, says **Raamesh Gowri Raghavan**. We have a huge wealth of information on our monuments and caves which will remain unread by the younger generations, he says, while outlining his own efforts to encourage the use of ancient scripts.*



There are fun ways of engaging students in learning and understanding ancient scripts

When you go to a monument, whether it's a temple, a fort, a cave, a maqbara or a palace, what is it you notice first? The grandeur of the building, the intricacy of the architecture, the glory of the paintings and sculptures? Perhaps, the stories told by the guides enliven your imagination. You might buy a souvenir or two. Do you ever notice the things etched on the walls and floors, the graffiti of a time bygone?

A statement to its builder

Each monument is a statement of its builder, an attempt to leave a stamp on the face of the earth. Many carry the words "Yavat Chandra Sūrya virāje" (where the Moon and Sun reside), even if all that is left is a picturesque ruin, sometimes surrounded by an impeccably manicured ASI (Archaeological Survey of India) lawn. However, over time, some monuments become a living entity, a part of the social life of those who live in and around it, becoming modified, sometimes even pulled down and reconstructed (jīrṇōddhār). Each generation of people leave their stamp on it, as inscriptions, sculptures, etchings, and board games. Art historians have paid attention to the middle two, for the etchings of animals and birds and other motifs. The making of sculptures in the walls talk of the evolution of both aesthetics and art. Epigraphists read inscriptions and can tell us not just the text, but also its context. Indeed, much of India's history has been worked out through inscriptions. However, the board games have sadly been neglected.

Today, however, the study of inscriptions (epigraphy) has suffered a sharp decline. Society places lesser value on the arts as against 'earning' subjects like law and engineering, so the

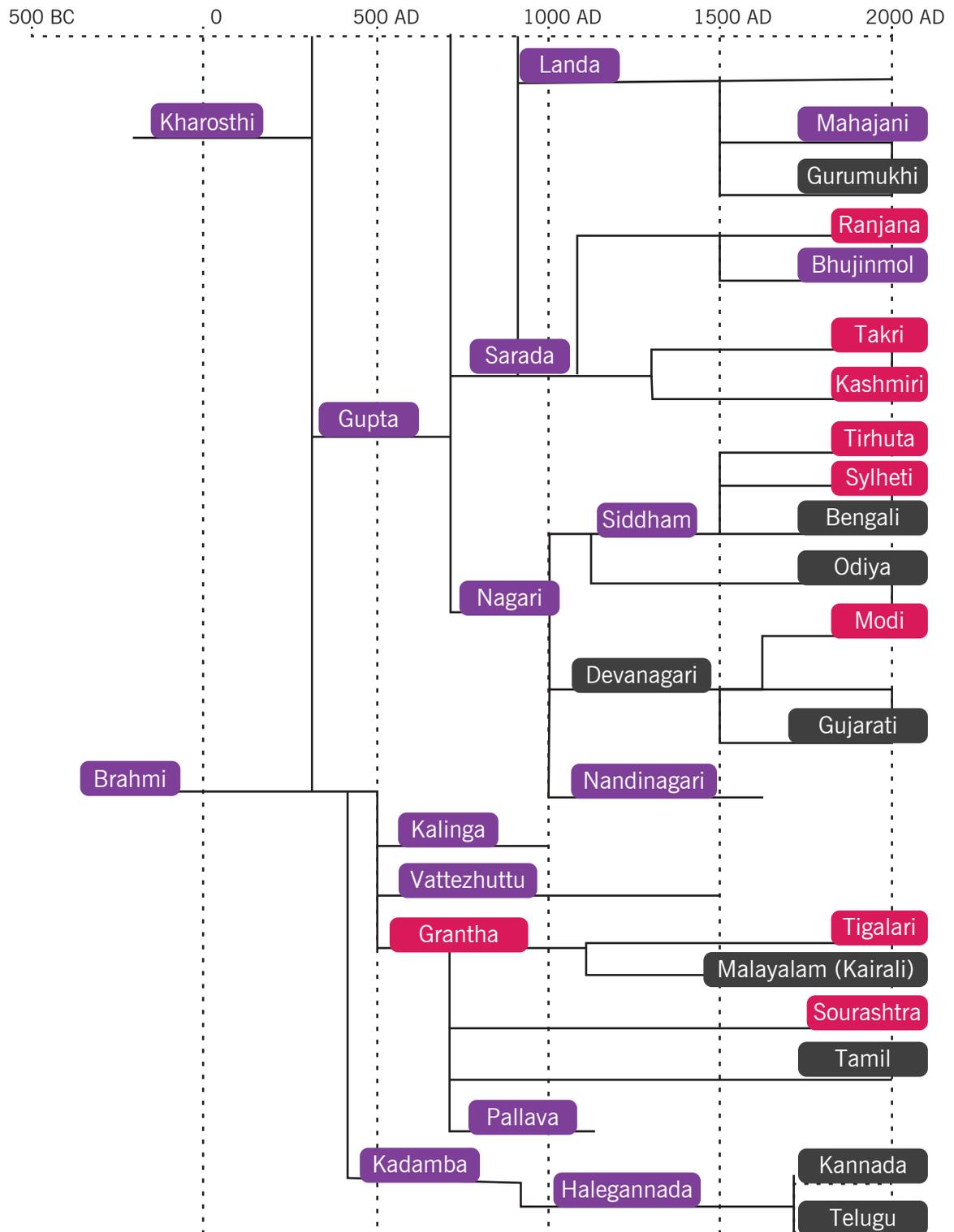
brightest do not take up subjects like history or philosophy. Those who do, are drawn understandably to the ability of 'monetising' this knowledge through tourism and conservation. The last great epigraphist of this country was possibly my near-namesake K. V. Ramesh (1935-2013). Dedicated jobs in epigraphy probably no longer exist (except in ASI), and many archaeologists who double up as epigraphists, have too little time for it. As for board games, they are dismissed as, well, 'games'.

Scripting a revival

For an inscription, knowing the language and the script makes it come alive. You can then say that the stone literally spoke to you and revealed its secret. A number of institutions have realised that the knowledge to read them is now vanishing. Very soon, they will become mere etchings on a wall, that tourists pass by without even a glance, or at worse, leave their own inscription on them, saying "Pappu loves Bindu", or some such thing. .

Luckily for us, the hardwork of deciphering the scripts and arranging them according to eras has been done by the greats before us. All we need to do is teach the script; for that is the intangible part of an inscription. Without knowing the relationships of the letters, we cannot form words and sentences. The straightforward way to do it is to teach the letters, make some words, read some short inscriptions, and hope some of this sticks in the head. Without knowing the relationships of the letters, we cannot form words and sentences. The straightforward way to do it is to teach the letters, make some words, read some short inscriptions, and hope some of this sticks in the head. I tried that the first time I started teaching ancient scripts, and realised how inadequate that was.

Evolutionary Tree of Brahmic Scripts



Key: Extinct Scripts Endangered Scripts Scripts in Modern Use

The next attempt was teaching the letters, but making words as you go along. Nonsense words like Aaoo, which everyone recognises as Shakti Kapoor's trademark. And some coined words to describe things that had no Indian names: like dhoomrapanadandika (cigarette) or lohapatgami-ni aavakjaavak soochak stambh (railway signal). It got the class rolling on the floor laughing, but this too had its limitations.

My third attempt was to use word games along with humour. This turned out to be not only fun, but a big hit with young students who are very competitive and innovative. I began with well-known games like Scrabble and Boggle. Here's how a typical class went:

- 1). Divide the class into teams and promise them candy for every word they come up with.
- 2). Draw the 'board' on the blackboard, usually just blank squares in chalk.
- 3). Each team gets it hand-out of the alphabet and the vowel signs (mātra).
- 4). They begin with simple two-*akshara* words like 'mama', 'kaka' and 'dada', and go on to make complex words.
- 5). Each team took turns to walk to the blackboard and form their word, using a letter from a previous word.
- 6). Longer words get disproportionately more points (so two marks for two-*akshara* words like Mātā, But 10 points for Bhārata and 50 for Mahāvishnu).

At some point, the game would lose its formality, and turn into a crossword of sorts, with teams militantly making Sanskrit words, and even physically fighting for the chalk. I would soon get words like Rnanubaddha (debt-ridden), and aggressive tricks. Adding Mahā- to any word is a popular trick, so Devi (2 points) becomes Mahādevi (50 points) and so forth. Teams would station a representative permanently near the board. But it all ended amicably with a sharing of candy. I have now taught scripts like Brahmi, Kharosthi, Modi and Haleganada in this way at several colleges. And I'm always on the look-out for more pedagogic games.

Studying the games

The study of games and their history and sociology has been a neglected field in India, barring a few scholars like V. Balambal and S. Y. Wakankar, whose work is not widely known. Almost all of the research done is by Western authors like Irving Finkel of the British Museum.

You might be astonished to hear that India has over 100 board games, not counting field games like Laghōrī or recreational games like Phugdī. Some games are played in nearly the same way in all the states, like Ashtachamma (but with different names), while others like 'Tiger and Goat' change both in rules and names from region to region. I was also surprised to discover that many games played the world

over, like chess, snakes and ladders, ludo, backgammon and carrom, are actually of Indian origin! Chess, which is called the King of Games and the Game of Kings, was probably invented in a royal court in the Gupta period, as the game of 'Chaturanga'. Similarly, Pachīsī (or Chaupar) was a Mughal favourite, which is now sold commercially as the simplified Ludo, now going crazily viral as a mobile-phone app. Snakes and ladders was invented by Jain munis (saints), perhaps a 1000 years ago, as a way to teach young people about karma and dharma, pāpa (snakes) and punya (ladders).

At the Centre for Extra-Mural Sciences, I joined a few ex-classmates and colleagues to launch an Ancient Games Weekend in June 2018. We wanted to popularise the games, but also educate people on how to make them. Unlike modern board games like Monopoly, Indian games are the simplest to make. We made many games by drawing the board on chart paper, and colouring and painting them – with acrylic paints, sketch pens and crayons – and getting them photocopied and laminated. For the playing pieces, we innovated by painting betel-nuts in the themes of tigers and goats (for a game called Bāghchāl), or husband and wife (for a game called Navra-Navri). Other alternatives were buttons, bottle caps, shells, pebbles and even wooden beads. We used plastic dice, or cowry-shells picked up from the shore. The games proved popular and our weekend was covered widely in the press. By both teaching the rules of the games and innovative ways to make them, I felt we could do our share to preserve another aspect of our intangible heritage.

Epilogue

By themselves, the inscriptions and game-boards etched on our monuments are lifeless fossils. Though British game scholar David Parlett said that the best games came from India, many game boards still remain on cave floors, but their rules have been forgotten. Only if the way to play a game is known by the people, it lives. Thus, the job of preserving this heritage is a task for each generation.

The teaching of scripts and games through interactive and hands-on way turns out to be not only fun, but enduring. The students remembered the script and were able to read ancient inscriptions and coins, long after I had taught them. One happy coincidence allowed me to teach both an ancient game and an ancient script at the same time. The game was a 2000-year old favourite of young Buddhist monks called Akkharika, drawing the shapes of letters in the air. Though the Enlightened One did not look at it kindly, I used it to help my students learn Brahmi, the script of many Buddhist inscriptions. They made not just letters but whole words in the air, and we applied the rules of 'dumb charades' to make a competitive team game. I'm aware that not even one of the students will become a professional epigraphist; but when they visit a monument next, they will not be merely a tourist there.



Raamesh Gowri Raghavan is an advertising professional, who also takes a deep interest in archaeology, having studied with Dr. Dalal. He also teaches part-time at the University of Mumbai.

Managing our heritage

A country's heritage is a very important part of what the country represents, and its place in history. And how we manage it, says a lot about us, says Anand Kanitkar.

When I started working in the field of cultural heritage in 2008 in Pune, I had to always explain what the field of heritage is all about, and what exactly I do. Today, the word 'heritage' has become a popular term, and is being used everywhere especially on social and print media.

What is heritage?

Heritage is what we inherit from our forefathers and what we are going to hand over to the next generation. Unless this heritage is protected, preserved, properly taken care of, it cannot be handed over to the next generation in the same condition in which we have received it. The way we take care of our family heritage such as property or jewelry, we also have the responsibility of managing our common heritage so that it can be enjoyed by our future generations.

The heritage around us can be divided into two broad categories, namely, cultural and natural heritage. In this article, we are going to concentrate only on cultural heritage. Not only artifacts, sculptures, historic buildings, monuments, archaeological sites, but also arts, crafts, festive celebrations, social practices, rituals, oral traditions, etc., form part of our cultural heritage.

Of course, not all the heritage is good enough to hand over to the next generation such as some traditions, belief systems which are out of the current context cannot be called as our rich heritage which ought to be passed on to the next generation. The best example of it could be the tradition of Sati.

Our ancient heritage

In India, we often hear that we are proud of our rich heritage of 5,000 years. Which heritage are we talking about? Here, people might be referring to the Indus Valley Civilization and the archaeological sites related to this civilization, or they might be referring to the Rigveda, compilation date of which is considered around 3,500 years before present. We have inherited the Indus Valley archaeological sites at Lothal and Dholavira (Gujrat), Kalibangan (Rajasthan), Rakhigarhi (Haryana), to name a few. Now it is our responsibility to take care of these sites and the archaeological material found during the excavation of these sites.

Though the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the state departments of archaeology protect many monuments, we often come across artifacts, sculptures, temples found in neglected conditions. So, do these sculptures, ruins, form part of our heritage? Most of the times



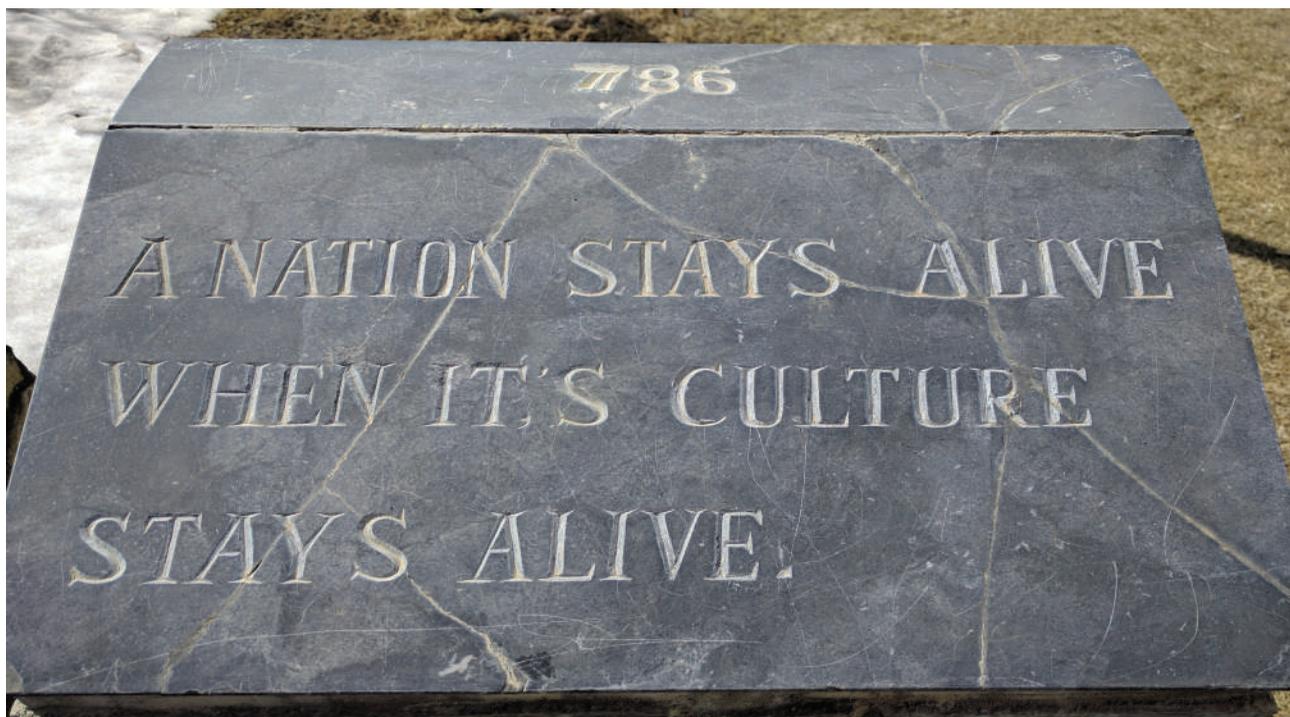
Guardians at the entrance of the Vihara at Pitalkhora Rock Cut Caves, Maharashtra.'

researchers, scholars, students of archaeology, Indology, art history are the ones who consider these remains of hero stones, pillars, sculptures, temples, monuments as important links to our past and thus a part of our heritage. But for the local residents the meaning of these remains, thus a link to their own past, is long forgotten and hence they do not value it as their heritage. Once the locals are made aware of the link between the archaeological remains and their own past, they will value these remains as their own heritage, and will take care of it.

In heritage management, it is important to understand the cultural value of the heritage (may it be a monument, sculpture, art or a craft). Without understanding the cultural value or cultural context in which the monument, archaeological site was created, we tend to only protect the physical features of the archaeological site, but we lose the original value or character of the archaeological site.

Managing our heritage

Heritage Management is an amalgamation of various management activities related to the heritage, which should be carried out in isolation. Most often in India, our focus has been on conservation, restoration of the monument, and basic presentation of the monument to the public. In this way, we definitely take care of the heritage structure or site which can be handed over in a good condition to the next generation. But do we really make use of the full potential of heritage for our present generation? Heritage Management involves inventorying, carrying out research, interpretation of heritage, preservation of heritage, presentation, awareness raising and marketing of heritage, carrying out the sustainable development of the surrounding areas, including making a positive social impact.



A sign outside the National Museum of Afghanistan, Kabul

The field of archaeology, Indology or art history does not cross the line of inventorying, research and interpretation of heritage sites, hence there is a need for management of heritage.

Heritage Management also comprises the economic aspects related to cultural heritage such as fundraising, marketing, revenue generation, job creation, etc., thus making heritage sites self-sustainable as far as possible. The field of heritage management is still a relatively new field in India. As mentioned earlier, we are proud of our own heritage, we carry out restoration activities, but we are still not used to a holistic approach of managing our heritage.

The long-term planning and implementation, presentation, marketing, revenue generation, for an archaeological site can create new job opportunities. It should not only be done by the scholars or experts, but the local communities should also be involved in planning as well as implementation. Many times it is seen that some of the heritage management activities are used as 'cut and paste' activities from the best practices or foreign models. The way heritage related souvenirs, merchandise is sold in European countries, it is not the same for India. Important European

heritage has received adequate research, interpretation, awareness raising in the last few centuries, which is currently used for marketing and revenue generation.

We need to value our own heritage, raise more awareness about it among the local residents at the national and international level, then only we will start to give importance to our own heritage. Nonetheless, Indian heritage should also be presented in a better way, the facilities available at the heritage sites should also be looked after, which is a part of the heritage management.

Indian cultural heritage is an underutilised cultural resource. If tapped efficiently, it can produce more economic benefits not only for the Government, but also for the locals. In order to create the required ecosystem to generate socio-economic benefits around the heritage, its proper management right from inventory, documentation, research, to its presentation, preservation, marketing, revenue generation, sustainable development is imperative. By implementing a holistic heritage management for the monuments and sites, not only the present generations, but future generations will also value and enjoy India's rich cultural heritage.



Anand Kanitkar is the Director of Pradaya Heritage Management Services. He obtained his Master of Arts (Indology) from Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune, in 2008. He received the Erasmus Mundus European Scholarship in 2010-2012, and has obtained Master's degrees from the Universities in France, Germany, and Italy. He has worked at the World Heritage Centre, UNESCO, Paris, as also New Delhi and Kabul. In 2016, the Khangchendzonga (Kanchenjunga) National Park received the World Heritage Status thanks to his efforts for the Govt. of Sikkim. He is a visiting faculty for heritage management at Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, since 2016.

'Adopt a Heritage' - the good and the bad

The 'adopt a heritage' scheme of the Government of India, where a corporate body 'adopts' a heritage monument and maintains it, has attracted both praise and flak. Here, Dr. Kurush F. Dalal and Raamesh Gowri Raghavan present opposing views.

In defence: Dr. Kurush F. Dalal



New Delhi's Red Fort which is at the centre of the controversy

A few months ago, there was a huge uproar in the media and on social media regarding the Government of India (Gol's) scheme to allow corporate houses to adopt heritage sites both cultural and natural. "Shah Jahan's iconic Red Fort in Delhi is now Dalmia Bharat group's Red Fort": This is a typically 'click-bait' type of headline with virtually zero due diligence.

The hue and cry was that the Gol has,

- a) 'given away' these heritage structures to multi-national and mega corporate houses
- b) that this was a 'saffron plot' to re-write history
- c) that this is a blatant giving-up of responsibilities, and that
- d) it is an insult to all those people who lived, died and strove to make these monuments what they are.

Should we debate this? Yes, we should. Debating the pros and cons will only make our democracy and the scheme stronger. Should we go off shouting how horrible it is, without looking into it? No, that would be plain foolish.

Let's look at the facts. This scheme is a revamped version of an older scheme (first proposed by the last government), and at no point does the scheme give away the monument. The monument per se and its conservation

continue to be in the very safe hands of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). The adopting agency is responsible for cleanliness, security, sanitation, drinking water, ticketing, and facilities like lighting, park furniture, disabled access, Wi-Fi, audio guides, and a visitor's centre. They may set up a food and beverage concession, and a gift/souvenir shop. The ticket amount goes right into the coffers of the ASI. Any money generated by the adopter is put into a specific account, and all profits have to be funnelled right back into the monument adopted. The landscaping will still be strictly in the hands of the ASI.

Why do I think it's a good idea? The first reason is because our heritage desperately needs help. This scheme will allow the ASI to concentrate on what it does best, i.e., taking care of the conservation aspect of the monument. It will also take a huge load off the ASI's shoulders regarding the nitty-gritty of non-archaeological and non-conservation matters. The second reason is because the government and its agencies take loads of time to do things. They have complicated, cumbersome mechanisms, and the smallest cog failing can result in months, if not years, of delays. The corporate world in that way is the antithesis, and will get done what needs to be done, when it needs to be done. And in the most cost effective way possible.

Many an Indian corporation does (contrary to public belief) care about the nation's heritage, and would love to give back a little something to it. They have the funds and are willing to use them under the very strict guidelines and supervision of the ASI, and the responsible ministries. They have to take on a government-empanelled conservation architect, and even after that the monument per se is completely off-limits. So, what do the corporates get out of this? They get satisfaction, pride and bragging rights. They also get their logo on a board outside the monument, on one corner of the tickets, and inside the toilets. Let's give them a chance. The Gol has very clearly maintained that they can and will immediately pull the rug if the corporate sponsors don't follow meticulously the guidelines. Let's be the public watchdogs and keep them in line!

So let's breathe a little easy and take stock of the situation and calmly proceed.

Counter-view: Raamesh Gowri Raghavan

Let us look at Dr. Dalal's statement, "Our heritage desperately needs help." This is beyond any question. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) alone has 3,650 monuments under its care, not to mention thousands more under departments of archaeology belonging to each state. As stated by Dr. Tejas Garg in his interview published in this issue, the State Government of Maharashtra has 373 monuments under its care, with a mere 80 watchmen to guard them. Conservation of monuments is an expensive task, and make demands on our public resources. In a country with pressing needs for education, health and defence; every paisa spent on a building from the past is an unconscionable distraction.

So why should we argue that 'handing over' monuments to private parties that have the resources, is in fact a bad idea? I will advance two reasons.

Firstly, all our monuments are a shared heritage of the country, and whatever their origins, belong equally to all classes and communities of citizens. The Indian state, which governs the country on the basis of a Constitution enacted by 'We The People', thus holds these monuments in trust. A corporate entity, whose primary motive is profit, has no such obligations. Having worked in the advertising industry, I can say with confidence that a company will attempt to milk the branding opportunity, however much the government limits it.

Monuments like the Red Fort, Mahabaleshwar Shore Temple, Ellora Caves or Konark Sun Temple are already well maintained, as they attract a large, ticket-buying public. Textbooks, popular encyclopaedias, tourist guidebooks and websites talk ad nauseam about them. In advertising terms, these count as 'eyeballs' to whom you show your brand and as 'mindspace', which your brand aims to conquer, even in a toilet. For a corporation, this is money well-invested. But there are many monuments, away from the public imagination, that are still critical to our understanding of the past, for example the wondrous pyramid of Mansar near Nagpur, dating from the Vākāṭaka period. We can bet that few from even Nagpur will have heard of it, leave alone the rest of the country. Which corporation will not think twice before 'adopting' this monument?

A second reason is that this leaves the long-term funding of our monuments to the whims of the private



Pyramid of Mansar near Nagpur

world's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) priorities. These are in turn hostage to the government's tax policies. Tomorrow, if it creates other incentives or mandates for private money (such as electoral bonds or cleaning the Ganga), you can bet that the 'adopted' heritage will be promptly de-adopted. Also, you may be sure that this CSR money will be an excuse to trim the ASI's budget, which the government will not replenish quickly if the private money dried up.

It might be a sounder scheme to allow corporations to donate directly to the archaeological agencies, and to give them generous tax relief for doing so. ASI should also be allowed to invest this corpus through something akin to a sovereign wealth fund, so it has an autonomous cash flow. This would let it conserve all monuments, not just the popular ones; and also hire talented young people to do this (without needing permissions from the bureaucracy). ASI is already under public oversight through RTI and parliamentary monitoring through CAG audits, so you know what happens to the money. Also, as the CSR is fulfilled by transferring the money, the corporate will be relieved from dealing with the bureaucracy, which Dr. Dalal rightly describes as 'complicated, cumbersome mechanisms'.



Dr. Kurush F. Dalal is a trained archaeologist who teaches the subject at the University of Mumbai. He also consults with a company desiring to adopt some of this heritage.



Raamesh Gowri Raghavan is an advertising professional, who also takes a deep interest in archaeology, having studied with Dr. Dalal. He also teaches part-time at the University of Mumbai.



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Mathura & Vrindavan

In the footsteps of Lord Krishna

The cities of Mathura and Vrindavan which are so intrinsically linked with the legends and stories of Lord Krishna, are mesmerising, even though many changes have occurred over the past decades. Yet, the devotion of the pilgrims and the sheer magnetism of the sacred towns have ensured that these towns continue to attract visitors by the hordes.



Boats ferry pilgrims for a waterfront view of the *aarti* at the Vishram Ghats Temple in Mathura

Many moons ago when we first visited Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh, river Yamuna flowed past the ghats of the holy city, fielding reflections of the monuments, that lined its banks, in its placid waters. On our recent visit, two decades later, we felt a stab of pain when we discovered that the course of the river had shifted some 50 metres away, with sand banks rising between it and the ghats. Sadly, the monuments, languishing like a lover separated forever from its lover, had started to crumble.

Our mind raced back to the time we cruised town the ghats in a rowing boat when two European girls, draped in saris, walked down a flight of steps lapped by the river and took a purifying dip in its waters. “Modern day gopis,” our boatman observed with a chuckle. He was referring to a childhood prank of Lord Krishna who stole the clothes of cowgirls bathing in these very same waters. Born in Mathura, 15 km away, under compelling circumstances, Krishna played out his rather mischievous childhood in Vrindavan, slaying demons and performing miracles, even as he teased the gopis and tenderly wooed his beloved Radha.

“I don’t think Lord Krishna would recognise the Vrindavan of today,” our boatman commented. We could not agree more as we were witness to change in a span of two decades. Yet the little wooded village in which Krishna grew up, still revolves around him, and this was evident in the number of temples, each one as distinct as the many avatars of the Lord, that stood the jumble of narrow congested streets and boisterous little markets of the bustling pilgrim town.



One of the many shrines that dot the city of Mathura

Temple hopping in the land of Krishna

We started our temple hopping foray with Prem Mandir, undoubtedly the most flamboyant of the new temples that have been added to the roll call of temples and shrines in Vrindavan. As we gawked at the vast expanse of white marble, intricate carvings and the ambitious scale of the project, we recalled what an information officer of the temple had told us. A whopping 30,000 tons of pure-white Italian marble was used to construct this grand edifice on whose walls the highlights of the life of Lord Krishna (as also the guruji who built it) were etched in brilliant colours. The complex had the feel of a religious theme park that exploded in rainbow hues – red, green, purple, yellow - as floodlights washed over the central structure after sunset.

The marble ISKCON temple of the Hare Krishna Hare Ram order was of older antecedence (built in 1975), and it was the star attraction on an earlier visit. It still draws visitors but has the feel of a religious fair ground where devotees loiter around its courtyards, while disciples – many of them originating from foreign shores – chant bhajans to the clash of hand cymbals, the pounding rhythm of tablas, and the strains of sitars and harmoniums. Located on the premises is a restaurant with a takeaway counter, a book shop, a guest house, and a tourist office.

The mid-19th century Rangaji Temple, however, has a different kind of buzz, one stirred with faith,

devotion... and laughter. A clutch of women milling around in one of the pillared halls suddenly burst into raucous laughter. We looked around us to see what was the source of their mirth. Seeing our bewilderment, one lady offered us a simple explanation. “When the gods see us happy, they are happy too, and they laugh along with us.” Huge smiles lit up our faces, and we knew the gods were smiling too.

The feel-good emotion stayed with us as we continued to explore the shrine whose towering entrance gate was etched with sculpted images. It is unique in that it is very South Indian in its architectural design. Not surprisingly, Lord Krishna, as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, enshrined in the holy sanctum of the 204-pillared complex, is cared for by 108 pundits from the southern reaches of the country.

Once every year, during the months of March-April, Rangaji Temple is the heart of a grand Ratha Yatra or car festival known as Brahmotsavam. Over a period of 10 days, the main deities of the temple are taken in procession atop elaborately decorated chariots around the city.

The only way to Banke-Bihari Temple, our next stop, was to walk there and the narrow roads leading to the shrine were crawling with devotees, pouring in from Delhi and other major cities. “Don’t forget to make a wish, for Lord Banke-Bihari grants whatever you ask of him,” our guide reminded us as we pushed through the milling crowds towards the temple.



Banke Bihari Temple, Vrindavan



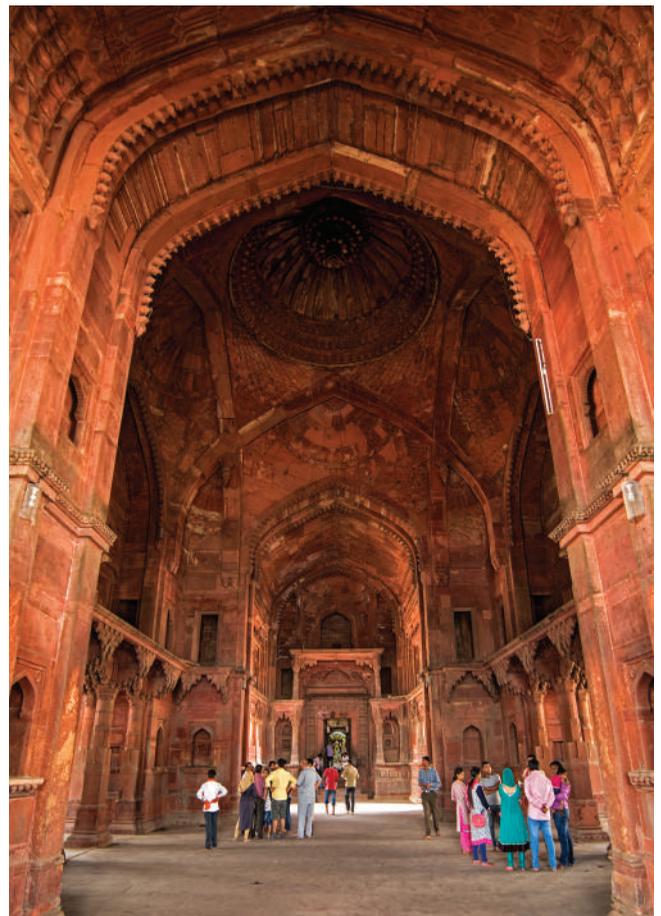
A glass mosaic painting on the walls of the Glass Temple in Vrindavan

According to our guide, the idol of Banke-Bihari, a manifestation of Lord Krishna as the supreme 'enjoyer', was discovered in Nidhuvana by Swami Haridasa, guru of the famous musician Tansen, whose music was reputed to draw tears from wild animals and rain from clouds.

A swirling ocean of devotion, the chanting of bhajans and loud invocations of the gods greeted us as we entered the shrine. The courtyard in front of the main alter was packed tight with devotees but that did not deter our guide from nudging, pushing and short of fighting his way - with us in tow - through the throng. Around us, devotees let out full-throated, ear-piercing cries, supplicating Banke-Bihari and Lord Krishna for favours.

Suddenly: Pandemonium! The battery of priests tending to the black stone idol, smothered in garlands, started to hurl garlands into the crowd. Hands flew all around us, snatching at one of the floral necklaces that floated in our direction. Yank, pull, tug...The garland was torn to shreds in seconds. Our guide managed to emerge from the tussle with a fist full of flowers of which he offered us a few. "Even one petal is enough. Banke-Bihari will make your wish come true. Let's go."

The narrow street outside the temple was awash with the rich aroma of deep-fried snacks – orange jalebies, mountains of kachories, sizzling samosas - that emanated from the row of stalls that hemmed it. We treated ourselves to a glass of the city's famous lassi, and as we slurped the thick white liquid, a street band struck up a raucous rendition of a popular Bollywood song which was cluttered with a flurry of false notes.



Imposing arched central hall of Govind Deo Temple in Vrindavan

Some monkey business!

There was serious monkey business going on at the Govind Deo Temple. As we approached the grand red sandstone edifice built by Maharaja Man Singh of Amer in 1590, a monkey sprang out from behind a pillar and snatched the glasses right off the face of a European tourist walking in front of us. She screamed. We were in a flap, wanting to help her but not knowing how to. Our guide, however, understood the cunning of the thieving simian and sprang into action. He picked up a few savouries from a nearby handcart and tossed it on the ground near the monkey who in turn tossed the spectacles aside and accepted the offering in exchange.

The first time we had been warned about watching out for our glasses, we figured that the grey bearded man with caste marks on his ample forehead was joking. But as we encountered others dishing out the same warning – “Take off your glasses,” the more strident ones cautioned – we figured there must be an element of truth in it. But the spectacle raid in front of Govind Deo Temple – which looked more like the palace of a favourite queen than a place of worship – was the first time we had seen the thieves in action. “You can’t really blame the monkeys,” our guide pleaded the case of the four-legged bandits. “They are only doing what Lord Krishna did when he stole pots of butter and the garments of the bathing gopis.”

Lord Krishna as a kid was undoubtedly a mischievous imp, but he was also a demon slayer and the Kaliya Ghata shrine marks the spot where he jumped into the river to chastise the many-hooded serpent Kaliya who was contaminating the waters with its deadly poison. (Today, the river no longer flows past the shrine).

According to the scriptures, the venom of the enormous serpent Kaliya (black) that one day took up residence in a lagoon of the river was so potent that it not only killed all the fish in the water, but even the birds flying overhead started to fall off the sky, and the surrounding trees and grass started to wither and die. Seeing this devastation, Lord Krishna decided to confront the serpent by jumping into these poisonous waters. His splashing about attracted the serpent which reared its hundred-hooded head (each head adorned with a precious gem) to see what the commotion was all about.

Breathing fire from its nostrils it coiled itself around Lord Krishna, who responded by expanding his body and forcing the serpent to release its grip. Quickly regaining his original form, Krishna started to dance upon the serpent’s many hoods. Bewildered, confused and tormented, a dizzy Kaliya started to vomit blood. Just as he was about to die, his many wives pleaded with Krishna to spare their husband. Taking pity on them, the Lord banished Kaliya and his family forever to a great ocean.



A shrine around the central courtyard of the ISKCON Temple in Vrindavan



Prem Mandir, where 30,000 tons of Italian marble were used

We settled for the story but skipped the excursion to the Kaliya shrine as also the Madan Mohan Temple which is believed to be built on the hillock where Krishna rested after his encounter with the serpent. We needed to get to Mathura, where the story of Lord Krishna started.

At the outskirts of Vrindavan, we stopped briefly at the Glass Temple whose walls and pillars were covered with mosaic images of glass pieces with scenes plucked from the life of Lord Krishna.

The temple to the ‘mad saint’

A few kilometres down the road towards Mathura, the marble Pagal Baba (mad saint) Mandir pierced the sky. The temple is named after a 20th century sage whose obsessive devotion to goddess Kali drove him to a point of insanity. According to legend, Goddess Kali was so pleased with Pagal Baba’s devotion that one night she appeared in his dreams and gave him a red handkerchief. The next morning, the Baba awoke to find a red piece of cloth under his pillow. And it was no ordinary piece of cloth, but one that granted his every boon, including the funds needed to build his temple. The miraculous swathe of fabric is enshrined in the Electronic Ramayana museum in the basement of the shrine where mechanical dolls enact scenes from the legendary

epic, much to the delight of devotees who crowded round the exhibits with wide-eyed fascination.

Our final stop just before entering Mathura was at the rust coloured Birla Temple (also known as Gita Temple) in which the entire text of the Bhagwat Gita – Lord Krishna explaining the true meaning of life and *karma* to Arjun as two mighty armies prepared for the final showdown of the Mahabharata War – has been inscribed on marble tablets within the shrine. As we started to leave the temple complex, we came upon a group of women in brightly coloured gaghra-cholis dancing at the entrance of the main shrine. “Lord Krishna’s gopis,” our guide answered our unstated question.

The town of Mathura

It was a fitting welcome to the city in which Lord Krishna was born under extraordinary circumstances. The story goes back to the time when the evil king Kansa unleashed a reign of sheer terror. No one dared to challenge or confront him. However, one day a learned sage informed him that he would be defeated by one of his Prime Minister’s offspring. King Kansa did not quite believe the soothsayer, but as a precautionary measure he threw the man and his wife in a high security prison. Over the years, as each child was born to the couple, the king entered their prison cell and killed it.

The script changed dramatically the moment the eighth child was born. The heavens raged as lightning and thunder rent the sky. The chains that bound his parents fell away. The prison gates flew open. Despite all the commotion around them, the guards nodded off to sleep, and did not notice the child’s terrified father carry the infant past them. Once out of prison, the former prime minister swam across the River Yamuna to the neighbouring village of Vrindavan where he swapped his son for a daughter born that very moment to one of his kin. Quietly he returned with the infant girl to his prison cell, and was not unduly alarmed when chains that bound him clamped back in place, the doors closed and the guards awoke.

Early next morning, news of the birth was out. The evil king entered the prison to repeat the heinous drill he had been through seven times before. He grabbed the child from its parent’s arms and prepared to slam it on the floor. But this time something amazing happened. The infant slipped from his grasp and soared up to the heavens.

Deep down, the king knew that he was doomed; that even the gods had conspired against him. In a desperate bid to stay the inevitable, he deputed the services of an evil *rakshas* (demon) who delighted in carrying out the monstrous plan chalked out for him. Masquerading as a woman he started to kill all the new born male babies in the kingdom by getting them to suckle at his poisoned breasts. Little did he realise what would happen to him as he honed in on his intended target. The moment Lord Krishna attached his mouth to the demon’s breast, he sucked the life out of him, and what remained of his body was an empty shell.

The prison cell where this miraculous birth took place is enshrined as the central sanctum of the Janmabhoomi Temple complex which is located in the heart of the gasping old section of the city where narrow winding streets are paved with enormous flagstones and cud chewing cows play the role of road dividers and traffic islands. Driving down to the temple was like entering a lost world where sadhus with flowing locks whizzed past on motorbikes.

At the enormous gate, atop which a blue-bodied Lord Krishna drives the prancing horse chariot of Arjun, security police, armed with metal detectors, checked everyone – holy men, devotees and tourists – passing through. The reason for this heightened security was more than apparent to see as the Janmabhoomi Temple complex shared a common compound wall with the Jami Masjid built in 1661 by Abd-un-Nabir Khan.

The Janmabhoomi complex which comprises a number of temples was a festival of devotion, celebrated with the chanting of mantras and bhajans. Shaven head women walked endless circles around a tree, people prostrated themselves before the various shrines while others browsed around a little bazaar lined with shops selling religious trinkets and souvenirs.

The heartbeat of Janmabhoomi, however, was a little prison cell, quite unlike any temple building, where Lord Vishnu, incarnated as Lord Krishna, came down to earth in dramatic fashion to eventually fulfil his destiny and

slay the evil king Kansa. Years, later, when he had completed his karmic mission, Krishna went down to the banks of Yamuna River to have a purifying dip in its waters and rest. Today, that spot known as Vishram Ghat is crowned with a temple which is the venue of a flaming river aarti every evening. To a rising crescendo of chanting bhajans, tolling temple bells and throbbing drums, a battery of priests performed a synchronised fire dance of swirling lamps.

Today, the waterfront is lined with 25 ghats which receive a steady stream of pilgrims and visitors. After a leisurely boat ride with an old weather-beaten boatman, we hurried along for a darshan of Lord Krishna enshrined in the popular Dwarikadhish Mandir, built in 1815 by Seth Gokuldas Parikh, treasurer of the State of Gwalior, in the narrow bustling street behind the ghats. We reached the temple a few minutes before the main deity was to be awakened. (At the stroke of noon, the deities in the temples around Mathura and Vrindavan retire for their afternoon nap to return once more at 4 pm and shower blessings on their devotees with rejuvenated vigour.)

As the second hand of a large wall clock ticked towards the appointed hour, the chanting of bhajans rose to a fevered pitch. Then a hushed silence as the pujaris prepared to draw back the curtains behind which Lord Krishna was enthroned. And as the curtains parted, a cry of devotion exploded like a thunderclap. We added our voice to the chorus that soared up to the heavens where each prayer, we liked to believe, was individually blessed.



The Pagal Baba marble temple of Vrindavan



The South Indian Rangji Temple's many pillared hall, Vrindavan

File Facts

- Though Agra (62km) is closer, Delhi airport (175km) offers far better and convenient connections.
- Mathura is an important stop on the Western Railways' Mumbai-Delhi sector. All trains – including the superfast August Kranti Rajdhani Express except the Rajdhani - stop here.
- Mathura and its twin city of Vrindavan are 15 km apart.
- Most of the important temples across Mathura and

Vrindavan are open between sunrise and 12 noon and then again from 4.00 pm to sunset.

- Of the many festivals, Holi (Feb/Mar) and Janmashtami (Aug/Sep) are the most important and particularly colourful and vibrant.
- By way of accommodation, there are a number of dharamshalas, hotels and UP state tourism lodges.

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Gustasp and Jeroo Irani are travel companions for whom life is a never-ending journey. Over the last 25 years they have travelled extensively across India and the globe, taking the rough with the smooth; sampling different cultures and cuisines. In the process they have trekked in the Australian Outback, slurped snake soup in Hong Kong, have danced with the Samburus in Africa, stayed with a local family in a Malay village, cracked the Da Vinci Code in Paris... For them, writing and photography are more than just freezing moments of that journey; it's a passion.

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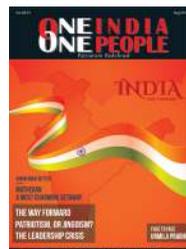
The right to be a child



Literature



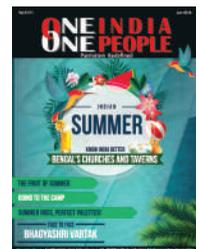
India: Past Forward



NGO



Indian Summer



“First and foremost, the problem is a shortage of manpower and funds. We have 373 monuments and 13 museums, which are looked after by just 80 watchmen.”

Dr. Tejas Madan Garge is at present Director, Archaeology and Museums, Government of Maharashtra, leading several projects of conservation, explorations and excavation. He served the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for 13 years at New Delhi, Aurangabad, Guwahati, and Aizawl. He participated in excavations at Rakhigarhi, Shravasti, Balathal, Daulatabad, Kamarej, Changdeo, and exploration projects in Ghaggar Valley, Kumbalgarh, Hathnora, Girija and Shivana river valley, Diu, Revdanda, Korlai, Janjira, Padmadurga, and Daulatabad Fort.



He obtained his PhD from Deccan College, Pune, on the topic *Settlement Pattern of the Harappan Civilization in Chautang Basin*, and authored a book on the same topic. He has co-authored seven monographs on inventories of monuments, cannons, and art history. He is credited with the publication of 29 papers in international and national journals. Dr. Garge spoke to **Raamesh Gowri Raghavan** about the future of archeology in Maharashtra, and India.

Sir, you have been in the job for over a year now. What are the new plans and schemes you have introduced in this period?

During this tenure, I can divide the project work into four segments:

Conservation, with a heavy-duty emphasis on conservation of forts. There was already the 'Gadsamvardhan' scheme for conservation of forts, initiated by Vinod Tawade, Hon.

Minister for Culture, Government of Maharashtra. In the earlier phase, the Directorate had shortlisted 14 forts; in the 2nd phase (after I joined), after consulting the committee we shortlisted another 14 forts. For the past one year, we were working on the preparation of conservation plans of these forts, for which we have submitted estimates of about ₹ 63.5 crores. The ministry has given approval, and out of this, we have started work on five forts. By the end of the year, we will execute the plans for the remaining forts.

Besides, there is a very ambitious project for conservation of the Sundarnarayan Temple in Nashik city at an estimated ₹4.5 crores. This is a temple of the Peshwa period. The problem is that the stone selected was not of a good quality, so the outer surface had withered and cracked, leading to several breakages. We have dismantled the entire shikhara and the exterior walls of the garbhagriha. We will be recreating new members in good quality basalt stone, and re-erecting the shikhara over the garbhagriha. This was a challenge as heavy-duty lime was used as the original binding material, which you don't often see in stone temples. In terms of technology, this is entirely different. As this is right in the middle of the city, we had no space to store the architectural members once they were dismantled, so space around had to be really optimised. A team was summoned from Tamil Nadu to do stone carvings. Besides this, there are a few wadas where conservation is ongoing.

There are a few projects in the pipeline. There is a clustering of monuments in Sindkhed Raja (the birthplace of Jijabai) including a few wadas, for which an integrated development scheme has been taken up by the Directorate. Estimates have been prepared and approval has been sought from the government. In the next financial year, we will be executing this project.

The second is development of museums. When I joined, I noted that security is a major concern. So, a scheme of installation of hi-definition CCTV cameras was launched. Out of 13 museums with the government, in the past one year, installation of CCTV is complete in five museums: Nagpur, Aundh (Satara district), Kolhapur (two museums) and Sindkhed Raja on which we have spent ₹ 4.35 crores. Installation of CCTV in the remaining museums will continue, for which Mantralaya has sanctioned ₹ 3.85 crores.

In the future, there is also a scheme to turn the entire power supply of our museums to solar. We did a pilot in Nagpur museum (24kV) and the Chief Minister Devendra Phadnavis inaugurated this project. Now the entire power in the daytime is supplied by solar. We are trying to make our museums energy-efficient, conservation-oriented, and futuristic.

Two, new projects for museum buildings were prepared by the Directorate.

Three, scientific excavations and explorations. We did scientific clearance and excavations at a temple in Kikli, near Ambejogai, in Beed district. Many beautiful sculptures and architectural members were found by villagers accidentally when a JCB was excavating a plot for construction. We have also found a tank near the temple. We have prepared a protection proposal and have sent it to Mantralaya. If the proposal is approved, we will take up the excavation of the tank and conservation of the entire temple complex. Last year, we also surveyed petroglyphs of Ratnagiri. One training-cum-exploration camp was organised at Patne for departmental candidates for prehistoric explorations, in collaboration with IISER Mohali.

Four, the revival of publications. We have plans to revive the guidebook series which existed during the time of Dr. A.P. Jamkhedkar. For the past 20 years, there have been no new publications, except for one or two annual reviews. The earlier series was site-centric, while the new series is focussed on districts. The first in this is already launched, called Aurangabad and its Neighbourhood. The second publication is Gadsanvardhanacha Margavar, which is about the conservation of forts. We are also planning an annual bilingual bulletin called Mahapuravrutta so that people in Maharashtra as well as outside get information about archaeological departmental activities. A compilation of reports on excavations at Nagardhan is also in progress. Two catalogues from the Aundh Museum, the first on Ajanta series and the second on Kiratārjunyam are also under progress and they are likely to get published in 2019.

Sir, what are the difficulties and challenges faced by the Directorate in the preservation of monuments and antiquities? How can citizens assist in your work?

First and foremost, the problem is a shortage of manpower and funds. We have 373 monuments and 13 museums, which are looked after by just 80 watchmen. There are constant efforts of getting more manpower from the government. We are also exploring possibilities of providing security through CSR funds, local village-level committees and organisations (NGOs) involved in the conservation of forts, who can approach the Directorate with plans to provide a volunteer workforce for watch and ward, and cleanliness.

What are the ongoing excavations and explorations the Directorate is conducting? Are there any planned for the future?

We will be carrying out explorations in River Shivana in Aurangabad District. Next year we are proposing excavations at Hatnur, a chalcolithic site in Aurangabad district.

What is the role of the Directorate in education, with respect to heritage, conservation, and archaeology?

Right now, this is more of awareness. The Directorate conducted workshops for people who are enthusiastic about fort conservation. Five workshops were conducted across Maharashtra at Mumbai, Nashik, Pune, Aurangabad, and Nagpur to create awareness about conservation. In the future, we are planning a collaboration with Mumbai University for a certificate course. We are also collaborating with CSMVS to host their Museum on Wheels at our respective museums.

Many amateur groups in Maharashtra are interested in the conservation of monuments, especially the forts. Are their attempts scientific? If not, what can they do to remedy the situation?

Personally, I have great respect for their feelings. But ethically and legally, hardcore conservation work should not be attempted by amateur groups. It should be left to professionals.

Instead, these groups can take up important works like cleanliness campaigns under Swachh Bharat Mission, and they can create awareness of responsible tourist behaviour. They will really help conservation by doing that. There is a Government Resolution that allows such groups to approach the Directorate and conservation will be carried out by contractors empanelled by the government under Directorate supervision.

While Maharashtra is home to archaeological wonders like the Ajanta, Ellora, Kanheri and Elephanta Caves, what are some of Maharashtra's hidden archaeological secrets?

I think today, I can call the petroglyphs in the Konkan area as the actually hidden treasures. Earlier it was known on a limited scale, but as we are finding more and more petroglyphs from Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg, a full-scale survey may actually lead to finding thousands of them. This is going to throw light on a dark age in the history of the Konkan. This could also bridge gaps between the Stone Age and Iron Age cultures.

How do we achieve a balance between conserving our past and our developmental needs?

It's a very difficult choice between development and the preservation of a bygone era. It seems Mumbai has achieved its balance, where one can see preserved caves of the early historical era, and rich colonial buildings, which are inscribed as World Heritage. The Salsette Project by Mumbai University is creating a database which is filling the gaps in between for archaeological evidence. A complete history of human habitation would be known with more data created by projects like the Salsette Project.

Are you planning to carry out similar projects in other cities on Maharashtra?

One scheme of listing heritage buildings and the status of their conservation has already begun in Aurangabad. This is being done in order to check the feasibility for the nomination of Aurangabad as a World Heritage City on the lines of Ahmedabad.



Raamesh Gowri Raghavan is an advertising professional, who also takes a deep interest in archaeology, having studied with Dr. Dalal. He also teaches part-time at the University of Mumbai.

WHO AM I?

*I am a proud Indian,
citizen of the world community,
inhabiting this lonely ...
but lovely little ... ★
planet ...*



Earth...



Deterrence and retribution

The debate over capital punishment is a rather vitriolic one in India. Rashmi Oberoi weighs in for capital punishment as a deterrent for the heinous crimes that are increasingly being committed against women and children in India.

I find it appalling that the Union government has expressed its objection to prescribe the noose for child abusers, rapists and paedophiles, for they feel that the death penalty is not an answer for everything.

The law metes out varying levels of punishment for crimes against children. For child harassment, it is imprisonment of up to three years, five years' imprisonment for sexual assault, and 10 years to life imprisonment for aggravated sexual assault. I strongly feel that they need to change the punishment for a child rapist to the death penalty.

The death penalty is a must

Crimes against infants, children and young girls in particular, are widespread for unfathomable reasons and isn't it the primary obligation of the law and law-makers to cultivate respect for these victims who are treated with such barbarity and savageness and bring them swift justice? Such heinous crimes are horrific and vile – the perpetrators the lowest form of mankind. A victim of such a crime, not only goes through tremendous mental agony, but also long-lasting fear. There is a need to take extreme steps for stopping this kind of child abuse.

In India, awarding capital punishment is an exception, and not the rule. The Supreme Court has held that only in 'the rarest of the rare cases' when the alternative option is unquestionably foreclosed, the court could award a death sentence.

Rape and sexual assault are not merely crimes of passion but an expression of power, and in our social fabric, inter-linkages of caste, religion, poverty, disability and sexual orienta-

tion cannot be overlooked. As noted by the Ministry of Women and Children, the crime of child sexual abuse is an under-reported offence in India, which has reached epidemic proportions. For the rape survivor and especially if the survivor is a child, the process of bringing up a complaint in itself can be a traumatising experience. It gets murkier and far more challenging in cases of incest.

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Mandatory reporting of the crime of rape is not automatic, and is often dampened by systemic and operational issues. A major systemic issue is that child victims are made to believe that violence is a way of life; it is normal to be abused, and therefore violence meted out against children – especially girls – has to be tacitly accepted or dismissed as inconsequential due to familiarity or relationship status of the abuser.

Other problematic zones are social stigma, safeguarding family honour, threat to life, and adverse repercus-

sions by perpetrators of crime belonging to a dominant caste, economically sound background, and those in positions of power and authority. There is also an administrative indifference and lackadaisical approach in the failure to register the FIR at the time of reporting the incident, insensitivity, ineffectiveness and re-victimisation during various stages of investigation, medical evidence and trial, undue delay and challenges in securing timely judicial redress, and lack of support for victim and witness protection.

Historically, and even today, women and girls are under-represented in the criminal justice system, and over-represented as victims and survivors. Despite positive discrimination and women focussed legislations, implementation is often fraught with misogynistic and stereotypical predisposition about women in general, the offence of rape, and about victims of rape.

Such an uneven landscape calls for overhauling and addressing systemic and operational challenges, by entrenching gender-sensitive and gender-responsive strategies to address widespread violence against women and girls. Awarding death penalty as a punishment for rape can definitely act as a deterrent to any crime. Though we still need to do more.

Making justice child and women-friendly

For ensuring effective implementation of child friendly justice, the state and its machinery must remain committed to end the culture of impunity against the perpetrators by sending out strong and consistent messages of zero tolerance – to crimes of violence against women and girls.

The role and concerted efforts of the first responders – namely the child welfare committees, police and medical officers – is absolutely paramount and crucial in reposing confidence in the child victims and her family. Of equal importance is time bound intervention of the criminal justice system, including public prosecutors and the judiciary.

Serious efforts need to be put into: Revising laws, providing training to police and justice officials on handling such crimes, restructuring services to enable complaints to be handled sensitively and efficiently, and monitoring application of relevant laws and regulations. We also need to identify the points where pressure can be more effective, identify the basis of 'excuses' made, and how to use our own culture and values to counter these. We also must identify official commitments already made (e.g., India is a signatory to Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and to the International Convention on Child Rights – and those international conventions, under international law, are prime over national law); these are tools that can be used in advocacy work.

We need to identify the challenges to be tackled (what, who, where) and adapt the pressure and focus for each 'actor' (government service, political leadership, large NGO groups, networks). Then involve all the 'actors' in developing strategies and action plans that can lead to a clear national strategy against gender-based violence (and don't ignore male victims of violence, they're out there as well, but hidden behind greater taboos) – and national (or state) action plans for implementing this. Women are still told by society that being a victim of rape is shameful, that seeking justice will only ruin their lives and that raising their voice



Protests by citizens have led to some systemic changes

against a family member will bring dishonour to the family... And unless that thinking changes, capital punishment will make no difference to the reality on the ground.

The other justification for the death penalty is that criminals should get what they deserve, and I truly believe they should. In other words, an eye for an eye, blood in return for blood. Parents and family members of victims have maintained that only a death sentence will satisfy them – and their grief and need for retribution is completely understandable. Capital punishment for a rapist within six months needs to be made mandatory along with the steps mentioned above. We do need to look at the root cause of the issue and address it.

After every incident that captures the nation's attention, there are calls for stringent measures to deter criminals. There are vociferous debates on TV channels, protests, candle marches and other methods of expressing our collective anguish. Once the anger subsides, the millions of other cases

that escape the media's radar continue to tarnish our national conscience, until another shameful incident comes to light.

Instead of fuelling rhetoric, the media should play a constructive role in ensuring that legislators act with more maturity and objectivity. Our school curriculum should periodically be audited to ensure that they eliminate the scope of perpetuating prejudice, stereotyping and patriarchy.

Rather than making a spectacle of a few perpetrators to score political brownie points, political parties need to deliberate and arrive at a consensus to ensure there is a climate of respect, conducive to gender justice. So long as we don't honestly introspect and seek solutions, India will remain a regressive society.

Change doesn't happen overnight, but if people are sufficiently shaken up by some of these extreme examples, it should help mobilise people around action... as long as they're not allowed to forget until the next atrocity.



Rashmi Oberoi an army officer's daughter, who was lucky to travel and live all over India, as also a few years in Malaysia and U.S.A. Keenly interested in writing for children, she wrote two story books - *My Friends At Sonnenshine*, which was published in 1999 by Writer's Workshop, Kolkata, India and *Cherie: The Cocker Spaniel*, which was published in 2009 by the same publishers. For a few years she moved into the corporate world of HR, but her love for writing took precedence, and she pursued her passion by writing articles and middles for newspapers, print and online magazines, including a children's magazine abroad.

The India focus at IFFI

The International Film Festival of India held in Goa recently, had interesting focus this year on films from Jharkhand, and sports. Shoma A. Chatterji chronicles the festival.



A still from Shaji Karun's *Olu*

The 49th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) opened on 20th of November, and continued for eight days. The international competition section had 15 films out of which three were Indian. The competition section represented films produced and co-produced by 22 different countries.

The Jharkhand, sports focus

Two most interesting screening programmes this year were – a focus of the cinema of Jharkhand, which probably few knew about, and the screening of films on sports and sportspersons. The first feature film of Jharkhand was *Aakarant* made under the banner of Drishyantar International, 1988. Earlier this year, The Ranchi Press Club organised the Jharkhand International Film Festival where 42 film personalities from Jharkhand were bestowed awards. The Jollywood Cine Kala Awards were initiated way back in 2008. The Jharkhand film industry works together with films made in Nagpur so these films also formed a part of the Jharkhand film industry. Some of the award-winning films are – *Road to Sangam*, *Pyar Kar*

Mehendi Rachaye Lio Re, *Nari Kar Dil Aisan Bhi Hoyela*, the documentary *Unity in Diversity* made by the students of Karim City College, Jamshedpur, and *The dark side* by the students of Central University, Ranchi. A very good short film that has won awards is *Speed*.

As an extension of the Khelo India Campaign, there was a special film section as a part of the Open Air Screenings at IFFI. Biopics and films of incredibly talented sports players who have made our country proud through their achievements included, *Gold*, *Mary Kom*, *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*, *M.S. Dhoni – The Untold Story*, *Soorma* and *1983* (Malayalam.) A sports film that is fiction demands extremely detailed technique and the use of training and other paraphernalia including the choice of the main cast and the actual framing and choreographing of the sports scenes. One wonders why films like *Chak De India*, *Lagaan*, *Paan Singh Tomar* and *Saala Khadoos* were overlooked. Besides, the open air screenings kept much of film lovers away because they were aware that this involved difficulties in the audiovi-

sual quality of the films.

The international section screened around 144 films from 68 countries. There were 15 acclaimed films that vied for the Golden Peacock award and two debut filmmakers who made it to the international competition section. This included three Indian entries with two in Malayalam. One is *Ee Ma Yau* directed by Leo Jose Pelliserry, and the Tamil entry *To Let* which has already won the national award. Then there was *Olu* (She) in Malayalam, the latest directorial venture of Shaji Karun which is also the inaugural film of the Indian Panorama. *Ee Ma Yau* is a beautifully eloquent exploration of the relationship between an irresponsible, alcoholic father and his son, who promises the father that he will give the father a memorable last rites celebration. *To Let* is a very simple, straightforward narrative that journeys with a young couple in their incessant struggle to find a rented abode. She unfolds the love story between a man and a beautiful young woman who he cannot see because she is destined to live under water. It is poetic, lyrical, and a visually rich film.

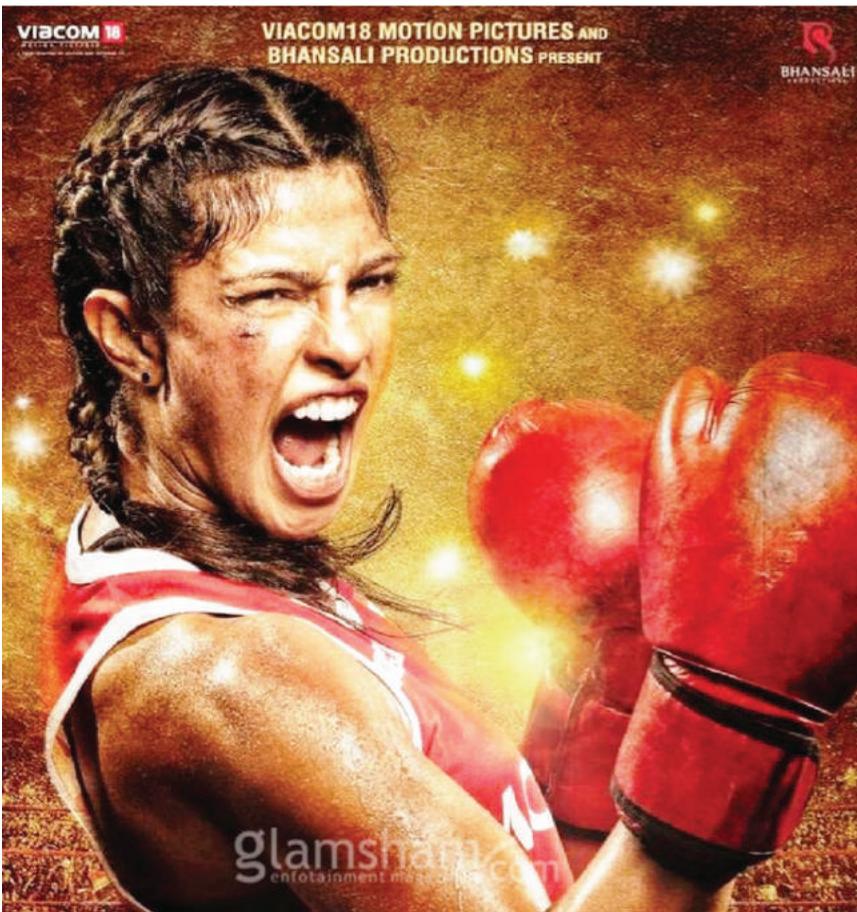
The tributes to Sridevi, Vinod Khanna

A tribute section was dedicated to the late actress Sridevi whose last film *Mom* had a special screening. Sridevi's performance in *Mom* as the avenging step mother reiterates the fear that films like *Pink* and *Drishyam* and *Badlapur* have already shown – that in a world where rapists go scot-free and unpunished in a court of law, the victim becomes the victimiser even if it leads to a series of murders. Letting go of criminals sets the ball rolling to produce new criminals in society without eliminating the ones that exist!

The late Vinod Khanna who also passed away last year, received a posthumous tribute with the screening of *Achanak*, *Lekin* and *Amar Akbar Antony*. The first two are films directed by Gulzar who gave him his first break as the leading man in *Mere Apne*. *Achanak* is an intriguing thriller with a powerful underpinning of humanism. *Lekin* boasted a lilting musical score telling a ghost story with Dimple Kapadia featuring in the female lead. *Amar Akbar*



IFFI paid tribute to the late Sridevi



A still from the movie *Mary Kom*

Antony having been a thumping hit about three brothers separated at birth was a thumping hit that needs no introduction. There was also a Homage section dedicated to the late Shashi Kapoor that screened his old film *Vijeta* that featured his elder son Kunal Kapoor, *Karunanidhi*, whose national award-winning film *Malaikkallan* was a part of and Kalpana Lajmi's much discussed and researched film *Rudali*.

The Indian Panorama

The Indian Panorama boasted of 22 feature films from across the country and four mainstream films. Among the Panorama films, one must mention music director and singer Arijit Singh's directorial debut film *Sa* in Bengali. *Sa* is a tribute to Arijit's love for Indian classical and folk music and the tough regimental life it advocates. It is about finding peace and harmony in pursuit of the final layer of the sound of music. *Sa* is also about the simple, innocent life that still sustains in India amidst the natural ambience of Mother Nature.

(continued on page 35...)

A mirror to our society

Some plays make us introspect about society and issues of gender, such as Dr. Shankar Shesh's plays, one of which, *Are! Mayavi Sarovar*, was staged in Mumbai recently. Prof. Avinash Kolhe reviews this play and explains why it's still so relevant.



(Above and next page) Stills from the play *Are! Mayavi Sarovar*

Dr. Shankar Shesh (1933-1981) was a prolific writer and playwright in Hindi. In the year 2015, his sons established 'The Dr. Shankar Shesh Foundation' to promote interest in Hindi plays and writing. Since then the Foundation has held the annual Shankar Shesh Festival. This year the festival was ambitiously organised in the month of October, holding plays in ten cities of the country, including Mumbai. In Mumbai his *Are! Mayavi Sarovar*, written in 1973, was staged at the Royal Opera House (ROH) and St. Andrews auditorium.

Ancient theme, contemporary relevance

Shesh's *Are! Mayavi Sarovar* is a

well-known play. His other plays include *Ek Aur Dronacharya*, *Rakta-beej*, *Poster*, etc. His plays have been staged by stalwarts of Hindi theatre like Satyadeo Dubey, Dinesh Thakur, M.S. Sathyu, among others. Bollywood films like *Gharonda* and *Durinya* were based on his novels.

This year the Dr. Shankar Shesh foundation commissioned Salim Arif to direct *Are! Mayavi Sarovar*, and the result was a spectacle which forced one to think deeply about gender equation prevalent in Indian society through the centuries. Dr. Shesh has cleverly drawn on colourful Indian mythological motifs, and used them brilliantly to comment on gender inequality across the strata of Indian society, and of course, power struggle.

The play tells the story of King Ilavalu and his beautiful wife Sujata (mother of his hundred sons). As per their practice, they take regular holidays in deep jungles. In one such sojourn, they come across a very unusual place where 'trees hang upside down' and 'donkeys sing raag Bhipalasi'. They find a beautiful 'mayavi sarovar' (magical pond). Entranced by the beauty of the lake, the King decides to take a bath in it ignoring the protests of the queen who senses that something terrible would happen. When the King comes out of the lake, he is transferred into a queen.

The new lady tells the queen that he enjoys being a woman, and now she should go back to their kingdom and rule in his name.



The queen retreats and the new lady falls in love with a Brahmin hermit, marries him and bears him a baby, a boy. In due course, Sujata, the original queen, comes back to the forest to fetch the king. A clash takes place between Sujata's son who she thinks is the rightful heir to the Kingdom, whereas the King-turned-woman feels that her son from the Brahmin priest is the legitimate heir to the kingdom. This raises the philosophical debate about the child and his/her lineage. Is a man more important than a woman in bringing children to this world? This leads to the age-old debate about gender equation which is relevant even in the year 2018. In the heat of this gender-discussion, the Brahmin raises another equally relevant point about Indian caste-system: Can a Brahmin's son become king, a prerogative of Kshatriyas? This play by Dr. Shesh carries these heavy-duty debates on its shoulders, with ease.

Salim has used the format of musical play and wants audiences to indulge into 'willing suspension of disbelief', so that they digest the transformation of man into woman, a trick used by many playwrights. His team has smartly contemporarised the play originally written in early 1970s. There are cell-phones and selfies to ensure that it appeals to today's audiences.

The play has a traditional 'sutradhar' to take the narration forward. This role has been played by Sunil Upadhyay. The play has some top class acting from King Ilvalu (Paras Gandhi), Queen Sujata (Simran Tondon), and the new woman (Mohit Mehta). Salim Arif has roped in good talent to compose music (Anadi Ravi Nagar), and choreography (Shreekant Ahire). The play has been produced by Lubna Salim, and designed and directed by Salim Arif. The play leaves the audiences with a feeling

that some issues in our ancient society will perhaps never go. Caste system, inferior status of women in our society, etc., are issues which will perhaps be discussed in 3018 too! Sad, but true. Does it mean that the efforts of social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and others, have been wasted? Yes, and No. 'Yes', because these issues have not disappeared from our society even today, and 'no' because they are not present in the same cruel form as they were in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Playwrights like Dr. Shankar Shesh hold a mirror to us and force us to confront the harsh reality that we would prefer to sweep under the carpet.



Prof. Avinash Kolhe retired as Associate Professor in Political Science from D.G. Ruparel College, Mumbai.

Don't worry, be happy!

Worry is common to all humans, some worry less, some more. A. Radhakrishnan gives us tips about how to best tackle worry.

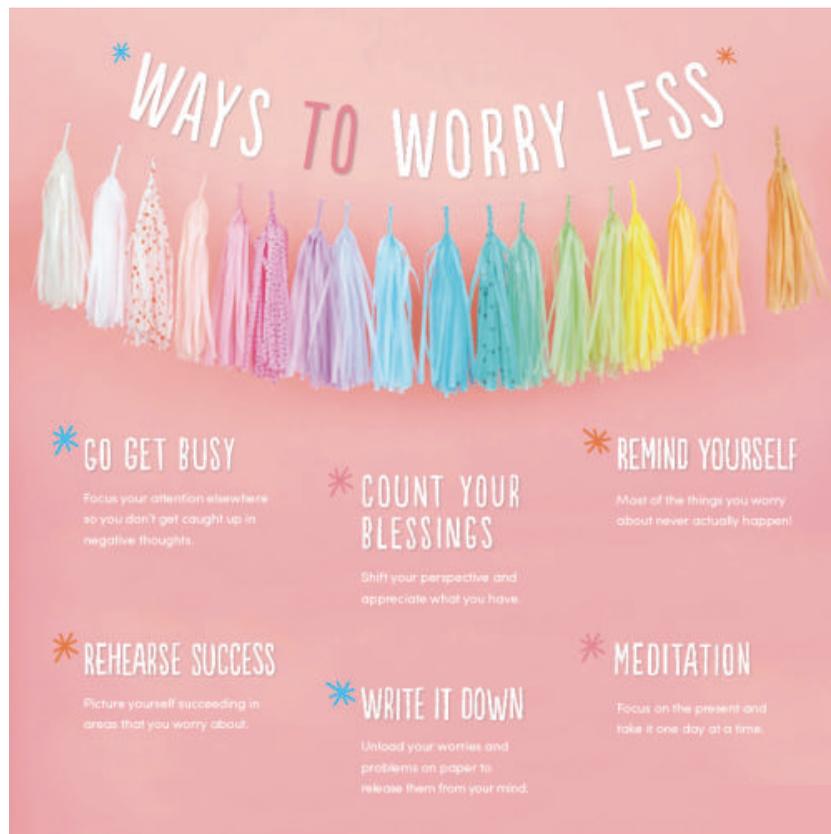
Once I knew someone who used to be perennially worried. Sometimes she was worried because she did not have anything to be worried about. It was almost like a hobby to her. Worry, stress and anxiety are often used interchangeably, and there is overlap, though the causes are usually different. Derived from the Old English *wyrgan*, which originally meant strangle, worry changed over the years to mean first harass, and then, cause anxiety to.

Worry turns problematic if one has been excessively apprehensive more days than not, for at least six months. If it becomes irrational, it is harmful, and you can't focus on reality, or think clearly. It may lead to actual physical symptoms. The excess emotion that remains after all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard your family and personal interests is worry, an emotion that derives from the appraisal of threat.

Why do we worry?

So, why do we worry? Mental tension translates into physical tension, which can make us feel like we really should worry, because we're feeling so physically agitated. Worry occurs when fight or flight is triggered daily by excessive worrying and anxiety. Its response causes the body's sympathetic nervous system to release stress hormones such as cortisol. It can also be an overthinking disorder. The anxious brain is hyper vigilant, always on the lookout for anything it perceives to be dangerous or worrisome.

Sometimes, a little worry or anxiety is helpful, as it can help you get ready for an upcoming situation like a test or a job interview. Excessive worry, ongoing fear or anxiety, however, is harmful when it becomes so irrational that you can't focus on reality or think



clearly. When people have difficulty shaking their worries, they may experience actual physical symptoms. Is anxiety the same thing as worrying? A normal reaction to stress, anxiety manifests itself in multiple ways, and does not discriminate by age, gender, or race. But ongoing anxiety may be a generalised anxiety disorder, panic disorder, or social anxiety. Excessive worriers react quickly and intensely to these stressful situations or triggers. The hallmark of generalised anxiety disorder (GAD), is worrying too much about everyday things, large and small. ... It tends to interfere with daily life, accompanied by noticeable fatigue.

Often, people with acute anxiety may find themselves feeling sick to their stomach, nauseous, or getting sick more often, because their anxiety

weakens their immune responses. Sweating is one symptom. Anxiety disorders run in families, with a biological basis, much like allergies or diabetes, developing from a complex set of risk factors, including genetics, brain chemistry, personality, and life events.

While one may not normally die from worrying, it will make one more susceptible to disease. There is a relationship between cortisol and diabetes, osteoporosis, and heart disease. Depression, bipolar disorder, panic disorder, and burn-out can be caused by stress and fear. If you don't stop worrying, you will die!

The silver lining

But happily, it turns out that 85 percent of what subjects worried

about never happened. There is a story about a Polish man whose plant was taken over by the invading Germans. He made a mistake involving thousands of zlotys and afraid of the consequences, he went underground for a week. Thinking that at best he would be shot, he returned only to have the General admonishing him for his lapse and absence, and asking him to get to work. He had worried needlessly.

The synonym of worry is learning to welcome and accept every emotion as it arises. As Cohen writes, "When you watch your own emotional flow with no effort to change it, you realise you can endure it." If you find yourself wasting time worrying about things you can't control, here are six things that can help: Determine what you can control, focus on your influence, identify your fear, differentiate between ruminating and problem-solving, create a plan to manage your stress, and develop healthy affirmations.

If you are tired of losing sleep or living in fear, you could read a book, don't

toss and turn, take action, tell someone, write it down, exercise, or have guided muscle relaxation, meditation, and exercise. It can help to quiet our mind and body and find a sense of ease.

Let's end with a joke: Moishe, Shmuel and Chaim met once a week in the Lower East Side in Manhattan to discuss the world's situation. On one occasion, they tried to solve the problems of life.

"Where do all of life's problems come from?" asked Chaim.

The more they talked about it, the more they thought they knew the answer. The problem of life is that everyone has worries. "If people didn't have any worries," said Shmuel, "then life would be easy." But now that they knew, another question remained, how can we three end our worries? They thought for a while and then Moishe said, "Why don't we hire somebody to do all the worrying for us so that we can then have it easy?"

Shmuel said, "Great idea. It won't be an easy job though but between us, we could come up with enough to compensate him for this challenging

role." So they all agreed to chip in to pay someone \$2000 a month to do all their worrying for them.

They were very happy with this decision until Shmuel pointed out the flaw.

"Tell me," he said, "If the man is making \$2000 each month, what has he got to worry about?"

Let's face it. Like some enlightened man said, "There are only two things to worry about: Either you are well, or you are sick. If you are well, then there is nothing to worry about. But if you're sick, there are two things to worry about. Either you will get well, or you will die. If you get well, there is nothing to worry about. But if you die, there are only two things to worry about. Either you will go to heaven or hell. If you go to heaven, there is nothing to worry about. But if you go to hell, you'll be so damn busy shaking hands with friends, you won't have time to worry".

Remember always, worry saps your tomorrow of its energy!



A. Radhakrishnan is a Pune based freelance journalist, short story writer and poet.

(...continued from page 31)

The other Bengali films in the fray were – *Uronchandi*, *Uma*, *Abyakto* and *Nagarkirtan*. *Nagarkirtan*, directed by Kaushik Ganguly, has already won four national awards, but is yet to get a theatrical release. It explores the dilemmas and the social struggles of the transgender community and stands out for its unusual structure plus the brilliant acting. *Uronchondi* marks the debut of a young director Abhishek Saha. It is a road where the road is both a physical reality and forms the central backdrop of the film and is also

a journey film that defines both the external journey and the metaphorical journey of the four characters who become a group unto themselves. They are the "others" who bond "together" by the common thread of being outcastes, of their own volition.

Uma is inspired by the true story of Evan Leversage, known as "the boy who moved Christmas." This seven-year-old who lived in St. George, Ontario, Canada, was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 2015, and doctors said that he would not survive to celebrate Christmas. *Abyakto*, directed by Arjunn Dutta, is firstly about the

coming-of-age of the protagonist, and secondly, about the constant flux in the relationship between a mother and her son.

Of the four films in the mainstream section, one interestingly discovered the inclusion of *Raazi*, an outstanding film, and *Padmavat*, besides *Mahanati* in Telugu and *Tiger Zinda Hai* in Hindi. Sujit Sarkar's *October* too, found a place in the Indian Panorama.



Shoma A. Chatterji is a freelance journalist, film scholar and author. She has authored 17 published titles and won the National Award for Best Writing on Cinema, twice. She won the UNFPA-Laadli Media Award, 2010 for 'commitment to addressing and analysing gender issues' among many awards.

COL. HARWANT SINGH, MC

Gallant officer (1920-2015)

Col. Harwant Singh was born on 15 September 1920, and was commissioned into 2 Sikh on 30 September 1940. He served with 2 Sikh in World War 2 in the Middle East, Africa and Italy. He was wounded thrice in the Battle of Poggio on the Gothic Line against the German forces in Italy, but carried on to capture the objective. He was honoured with a Military Cross (MC). He was then posted to 1 Sikh in Malaya and participated in the Victory Parade there on 12 June 1946. The unit was then moved to New Delhi. As the seniormost Indian officer in 1 Sikh, he had the honour of being in charge of the flag hoisting ceremony by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on the Red Fort on 15 August 1947.

A large number of raiders had infiltrated into Kashmir in October 1947 and 1 Sikh was the first unit to be airlifted to Srinagar on 27 October. The landing went off well except for the plane carrying the communication equipment, which had to force land in Jammu. The equipment reached Srinagar after three days during which period, the unit had no signal communications. Col. Dewan Ranjit Rai, the Commanding Officer, rushed with the available troops to Baramula to hold the raiders well away from Srinagar. They had to withdraw due to the large strength of the enemy. He died at 1730 hours on 28 October while fighting a rear guard action, and was awarded MVC (posthumous).

Harwant Singh took over the command of the unit. Col. Rai had given instructions to hold a position at Shalateng Spill Channel, about five miles from Srinagar. Harwant Singh realised that the Shalateng position could be by-passed and instead boldly moved up to Mile 17 on Srinagar-Baramula Road. They came under repeated attacks while they were still preparing the defences. They held the position and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. The 48 hours delay imposed on the raiders saved Srinagar. Harwant Singh earned the reputation of being a saviour of Srinagar.

Troops build-up continued and Uri was captured on 13 November 1947, and the unit was deployed to hold firm base at Uri as part of 161 Infantry Brigade. Capture of Uri ensured the security of Srinagar. The unit made a lightning advance to deal with the enemy who had infiltrated into the

Handwara Valley via the Nastachhun Pass. On 16/17 May, the enemy HQ at Dogarpur was surrounded. Harwant Singh took part in the capture of Chowkiwal, Nastachhun Pass and entry into Tithwal on 23 May 1948. This operation was carried out in difficult mountainous snow covered terrain against an enemy skilled in hilly terrain. The unit held on to the vital part of Tithwal which was constantly under pressure. The enemy made constant efforts to drive 1 Sikh from their position and on 13 October, made a desperate attempt to take over Richhmar Gali bypassing Tithwal. The attack commenced with heavy artillery and mortar fire which destroyed most of the bunkers. 1 Sikh held on and the enemy was beaten back. The

enemy casualties were 1206 killed, 1215 wounded, and 15 missing.

During this period, the men took the opportunity of befriending the local population, which helped towards building political stability in the state.

He was station commander Srinagar, before taking over the command of 4 Sikh in Kashmir in December 1948. In 1951, he was transferred to Rajputana Rifles when the state forces were merged into the Indian Army, and he commanded 18 Raj Rif, 6 Raj Rif and Raj Rif Centre.

After retirement, he joined BSF (Border Security Force) and commanded 57 BSF Battalion in Akhnur Sector in the 1971 War.

The gallant officer passed away on 4 August 2015, at the age of 95. It is incomprehensible, that despite the gallant role played by this brave soldier in the 1947-48 war, fate denied him the honour of being decorated for gallantry. His role and contributions have well been recognised by the Regiment which he served with dedication. He left behind one son and two daughters. His grandson is a fourth generation officer in the Army.

- Brigadier Suresh Chandra Sharma (retd.)



YASHWANT DEV

Exponent of 'bhaav geet' (1926-2018)

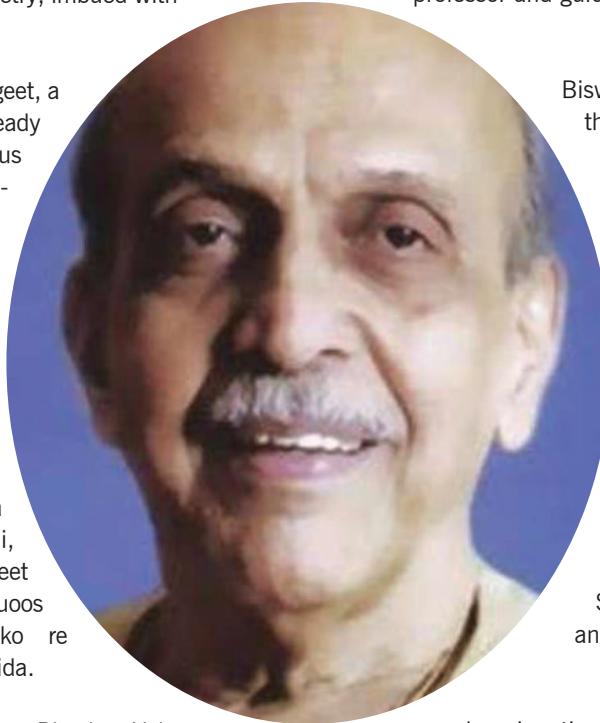
The death on of popular veteran Marathi lyricist, poet and music composer Yashwant Dev on 30 October 2018 at the age of 91, due to chikungunya and pneumonia, shook the Marathi film industry and fans alike. Born on 1 November 1926, one of the finest Marathi music composers, Dev, trained by his father, quickly marked his presence with his songs and catchy lyrics. He also contributed a major share in Marathi literature, film world and plays, apart from the singles, albums, folk songs, etc. He scored music for more than 40 Marathi plays, films and radio plays as well. In stage shows, Dev would extol the virtues of classical Marathi poetry, imbued with lyrical romanticism.

He enriched the bhaav geet, a semi-classical composition of heady mix of rich poetry and mellifluous music, and rendered it in a brooding, low-simmer style to great heights, and used it effectively. His body of work includes compositions of irreplaceable popular gems like Ya janma-var, ya jagnyavar shatda prem karave, Nako jau komejun majhya pritichya fula, Jeevanatli ghadi ashich rahu de, Bhatuklichya khelamadhli raja ani rani, Yeshil yeshil yeshil rani, asen mi nasen mi, Tuze geet gaanyasaathi sur rahu de, Pauos kadheecha padato, Nako nako re pawasa, and Tujhyaachsaathi kitida.

Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Usha Mangeshkar and Arun Date, among others, made Dev's songs popular in the 1960s. His soul-stirring Marathi songs, featured in Aapli Aawad, AIR's popular programme based on listeners' choice, regaled countless Maharashtrian connoisseurs on Mondays and Fridays. Along with Zakir Hussein, Bhupen Hazarika and Raj Kamal, he composed music for the Hindi film Saaz, inspired by the lives of the Mangeshkar singer-sisters, directed by Sai Paranjpye, and got writer-poet Javed Akhtar his first National Award for Best Lyrics. Comparing the sisters, he had said that "each one was unique, and never tried to do what the other was doing".

He spent his early years in Pen and Nagpur before settling in Dadar, Mumbai. A physics graduate from Mumbai, he joined All India Radio as a sitar player. His job also involved checking if poems or songs were music worthy.

"That is where I started to learn (music) seriously, as I had to give reasons for rejecting songs and poems. Often, I would present a better alternative, and silence the complainant," he used to chuckle. He acquired the Sangeet Visharad degree from Gandharva Mahavidyalaya in 1968. After a brief stint with His Master's Voice as sitarist, he launched his music career with All India Radio in Dharwad and Nagpur, and then as a senior grade producer of light music in Mumbai, from 1958 to 1984. A popular lyricist at AIR, he was also associated with the University of Mumbai and S.N.D.T. University, as a music professor and guide.



He considered Anil Biswas, the legendary composer of the 1950s, as his icon. Later, a programme called Bhavsaragam on A.I.R made him mainstream all over Maharashtra. Honoured with awards like Gan-samradni Lata Mangeshkar Award and Gadima Puraskar, the Maharashtra Government award for Best Music Director of the play Amrapali (1974), and the Ram Kadam Kalagaurav Award 2015, Dev also published books on devotional music of Shirdi Sai Baba, light music and Marathi bhaav-geets.

Dev peacefully accepted the changing times. To him, "Existence has a timetable and things happen only according to it." He further used to add, "Today, you see everyone rushing with a cell phone glued to their ears. Each one has so many tasks that everything is completed almost breathlessly. That same dhad dhad (chaos) is reflected in music and liked by the people as they identify with it. That is neither good for music nor the psychological health of a person."

Married initially to the famous ventriloquist Ramdas Padhye's sister, Vijayalakshmi, after her death, he married in 1983, the widow of late Babban Prabhu, Karuna, a noted radio announcer.

A.Radhakrishnan is a Pune based freelance writer, who dabbles in short stories and poems.

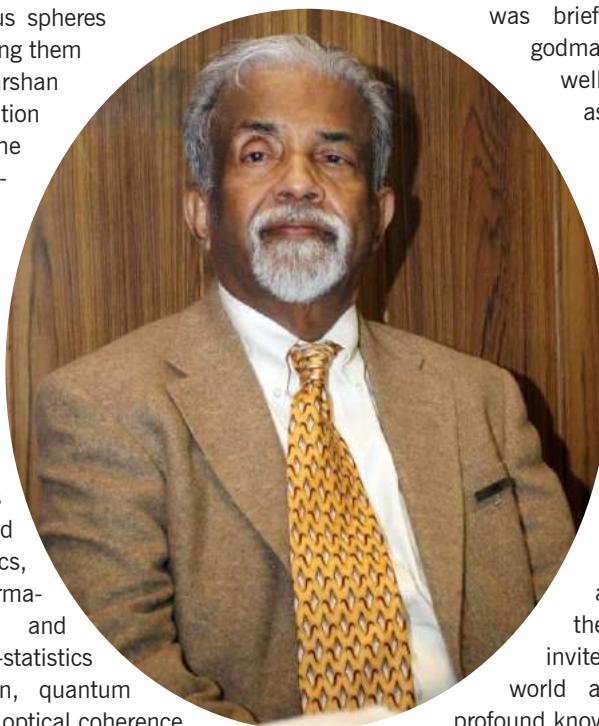
E.C.G. SUDARSHAN

Renowned Physicist (1931-2018)

One of the most well-known names in the world of physics, Dr. Ennackal Chandy George Sudarshan was born in Pallam, Kerala, on 16 September 1931. He had his collegiate education at the CMS College in Kottayam in Kerala and completed his Masters with honours from the Madras Christian College, University of Madras. He initially taught at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) where he had the opportunity of rubbing shoulders with the eminent nuclear scientist Homi Bhabha. He obtained his doctorate from the University of Rochester in New York, and later moved to the Harvard University. During a long and eventful career he contributed extensively to various spheres of physics, most significant among them being the V-A Theory by Sudarshan and Marshak. George's collaboration with another physicist yielded the 'Sudarshan-Glauber representation' which explored the quantum representation of coherent light. Ironically, Glauber won the Nobel Prize for this theory but Sudarshan's claims were ignored. Incidentally, Dr. Sudarshan was nominated for the Nobel Prize as many as nine times, but was passed over every time. His main areas of interest included elementary particle physics, quantum optics, quantum information, open quantum system and Lindblad equation, open-statistics theorem, quantum computation, quantum field theory quantum zero effect, optical coherence and classical research. George was also passionately interested in some of the most fundamental problems that theoretical physics was confronted with, and his advanced research in the field resulted in the formulation of the V-A theory dealing with the weak nuclear force. He had earlier analysed the phenomenon while pursuing his PhD for thesis, supervised by renowned physicist Robert Marshak.

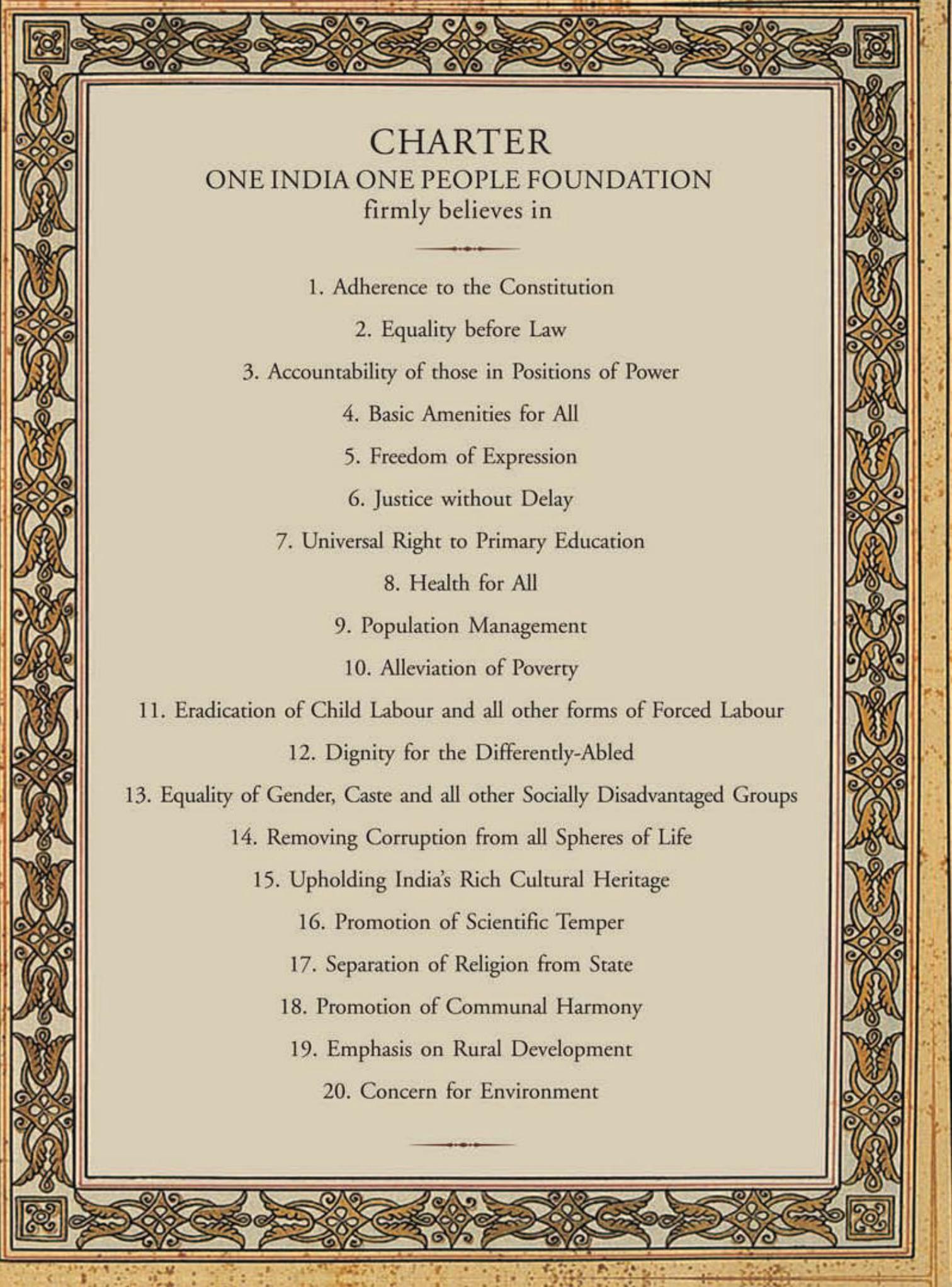
George Sudarshan's most significant contribution was in the sphere of quantum optics where he identified the existence of tachyons – particles that travel faster than light. During his long and illustrious innings Sudarshan has been a teacher at TIFR, University of Rochester, Syracuse University and Harvard. He was also associated with the Indian Institute of Mathematical Science, Chennai, where he was a Director for a five year term, dividing his time between India

and the US. During his tenure he was instrumental in turning the institution into a centre of excellence. He also set up the Centre for Theoretical Studies at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. However his longest tenure was at the University of Austin in Texas, where he worked for four decades and was a Chairman Emeritus at the time of his demise. The physics wizard also nursed an abiding interest in philosophy and keenly explored the relationship between east and west, philosophy and religion, and also had confabulated with the eminent philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurthy, revealing his erudition and deep knowledge of Vedanta philosophy. He was briefly associated with another godman, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as well. Dr Sudarshan was also associated with the Meenakshi Temple in Houston, and served as its Honorary Council member too.



At his passing away, the University of Austin, Texas observed that it mourned the passing of George Sudarshan, titan of 20th century physics. The late physicist mentored hundreds of students and always took his wards seriously, and always encouraged them to air their views. He was a regular invitee to conferences around the world and his endearing wit and profound knowledge ensured that he was an asset at seminars attended by scientists from several continents. Dr. George Sudarshan was the recipient of several awards and honours including the Padma Bhushan in 1976, the Padma Vibhushan, the second highest civilian award in India in 2007. In 1970 he also won the Sir C.V. Raman Award instituted in honour of the Nobel Prize winner. A gifted orator and a prolific writer, George Sudarshan also authored a number of books in collaboration with fellow scientists Doubt and Certainty with Tony Rothman and Classical dynamics with N. Mukunda were outstanding works. Dr. Sudarshan passed away at Austin in Texas on the 13 May 2018 at the age of 86, leaving behind a large fraternity of mourners from the world of science the world over.

C.V. Aravind is a Bangalore-based freelance journalist.



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Am I a Hindu first or an Indian first?

Am I a Muslim first or an Indian first?

Am I a Christian first or an Indian first?

Am I a Buddhist first or an Indian first?

Am I a Brahmin first or an Indian first?

Am I a Dalit first or an Indian first?

Am I a South Indian first or an Indian first?

Am I a North Indian first or an Indian first?

Am I the President of India first or an Indian first?

Am I the Prime Minister of India first or an Indian first?

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Sadanand A. Shetty, Founder Editor
(October 9 १९३० – February 23 २००७)
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