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OF RANIGANJ GIRLS' COLLEGE

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From the Editor's Desk

609 days or 14616 hours or 876,960 minutes or 52,617,600 seconds - yes, that is exactly the time we had to wait for Colleges and Universities to resume the “offline” classes on the campuses after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The institutions of higher education in West Bengal were closed from 16th March 2020 and finally reopened on 16th November 2021. The concept of “online” education which was hitherto unknown to most of us, became a norm during this period. A pandemic, which created havoc (and still is through the Delta and the Omicron variants), made us struggle for our existence. But slowly and steadily we coped with the situation and are getting ready to continue with our daily routine amidst the pandemic. This period has been an eye opener for many of us. We saw the resilience of the human race and the dedication and support from the different sections of the society. It helped us to retain faith in our belief that if we try, we will surely succeed.

Such is the story of Gita Gopinathan, the Indian American who has been promoted to the position of the First Deputy Managing Director

(FDMD) at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) from her previous position of Chief Economist of the global financial lender. Gita had been the **first woman** in the IMF history to have served as the Chief Economist. Born on 8th December 1971, in Kolkata, Gita's family moved to Mysore when she was nine years old. She completed her school education in Mysore and went on to get a B.A degree from Lady Shri Ram College for Women, Delhi University in 1992. In 2001, she joined the University of Washington, for a five-year PhD programme and it was here that her professor recommended her to Harvard and Princeton, stating she was the best student they had in twenty years. She completed her PhD from Princeton University and was placed under the guidance of eminent economists like Kenneth Rogoff and former Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke.

What is striking in Gita's story is that she used to score 45 percent till Class 7 and after that she started scoring 90 percent. This fact has been confirmed by Gita's father TV Gopinathan, in a recent interview. What transformed her from a mediocre student in school to one of the leading figures in world economics is her inner strength, confidence in her own ideas and her ability to push through in difficult situations. These qualities, confirmed by Gita herself, made her a role model for many women hoping to touch the sky with their efforts and determination,

vindicating the mantra: "Where there is a will, there is a way".



Araku: A hidden beauty

Aishwarya Das, English Honours, Semester III

"Beauty should be kept
hidden.
The beauty kept secret
Is the beauty that's sacred."

My finger hovered over my phone screen as the words surfaced in my social media interface. It was quoted by someone named Neo. The quote itself wasn't anything downbeat but it kind of opposed my feminist self. Is beauty that fragile? To stay pure, it must remain hidden. *Thud!* The door slammed open breaking my inner musings. I looked up from the screen and met my sister's eager gaze.

"Di! Hurry up! Stop scrolling your phone and get dressed! Everyone's ready. We are leaving in fifteen minutes."

She reported in one breath. Clearly, she appeared much more thrilled about our trip than I was. It wasn't that I was particularly uninterested, but the fact that our destination, the "Araku valley", was mainly used as a weekend escape by the locals rather than a proper tourist spot, convinced me not to expect much from this trip.

Two hours later I found myself in the back seat of my uncle's car heading towards the Eastern Ghats. We left the Vizag city behind about an hour ago and since then coconut grooves on the both side of the road remained our constant travelling companion. Our human group of companions included my parents, my sister, my uncle, aunt and their two kids. My sister and cousins had yielded to sleep long ago due to early rising and as I checked my phone out of boredom for the nth time, my aunt suddenly chimed,

"Riya have you ever heard of Araku before?"

"Yeah, it's the favorite spot of the locals to enjoy weekends, dad told me yesterday." I said.

"Beta it's not just the locals who treasured it. Araku is the darling of the whole South India. It's the sacred beauty of the Western Ghats, yet to be known to rest of the world. Each and every tourist who comes here eventually ends up falling in love with the place." She mused.

"What if I don't fall for it?" I argued playfully.

"We will see." She chuckled and then pointed towards the right-side window. As I turned right, veiled by fog the Araku valley came into view. Lush green adorned its surface while misty clouds circled its top like a crown. It seemed I accidentally entered a serene alternate world which was at once foreign and welcoming. I came to myself as my mother handed me a packet of chips. The car had already started climbing the mountain road by then. The surroundings had changed

from coconut trees to greenish leafy coffee bushes with ripe red coffee fruits. The elders chatted among themselves while my cousins and sister remained busy giggling and tossing biscuits to the little red-faced monkeys by the road side. Having nothing else to do I joined them in the fun too.

About an hour and a half later we reached our first destination, the Chaparai Waterfalls. Encircled by green forest on all sides, the cascade flowed in its own rhythmic way. Despite the time of the year being November, its water wasn't chilly. As we sat there, soaking our feet in the foamy water, the weariness of the long drive wore off, leaving us with a feeling of freshness.

We departed for our next stop Borra caves after having our lunch at a local restaurant.

I had an illusion that we were somehow transported to Howrah station when we reached near the ticket counter of the Borra Caves. The length of the waiting line was intimidating enough to convince even my ever-excited sister to head towards our hotel. Nevertheless, after much hemming and hawing, it was decided that we would line up for tickets. So, about an hour later we found ourselves trudging towards the entrance of the humongous cave. As I took my first step passing the entrance, I became glued to the spot. Irregularly shaped stalactites jeweled the ceiling of the cave while mound like stalagmites furnished the floor and to accentuate them artificial lights were inserted here and there. The scene was breathtaking. I realized both with delight and dismay

that aunt was right, each and every tourist who came here was bound to fall in love with this place and I was no exception.

My phone screen showed the time as 9:17pm when our dinner arrived. It was a local delicacy called Bongulo Chicken. We had made it to our hotel about two hours ago after visiting the Tribal Museum. It was a great place where we learned a lot about Araku Valley's lifestyle and cultural background. We spoke to a few tribesmen too. As I sat in the hotel room enjoying my Bongulo Chicken, it dawned on me that the trip had turned out a thousand times more exciting than I expected. Moreover, a strange sense of melancholy clouded my heart at the thought of leaving this place tomorrow.

The sea breeze teased my hair as our car drove along the coastline towards the Vizag city. We left our hotel early in the morning and headed towards my uncle's residence after visiting the Padmapuram Botanical Garden as well as the Ananthagiri waterfalls. Both the places were stunning. I could not help but wonder how Araku, this enchanting creation of nature was kept hidden from the outside world in spite of its serene sacred beauty. Or maybe that was not the point. I looked at my phone screen and the yesterday's quote filled my gaze. Maybe the point was Araku became a sacred beauty because it remained untouched and hidden from the most of the world.



The Special Gender

Sohini Nandy, English Honours, Semester III

Whenever a baby is born, the first question that clicks into our mind is about the gender of the infant. Even before enquiring about the health, we often ask about the gender. Gender identity is very important in a society. Our so-called society has cultivated a particular mind-set within us. Any sort of change is always considered negative. A 3 to 5 years old child, who doesn't even have the sense about his or her gender, is always forced to behave in a particular way. A boy wearing a pink outfit always gets bullied and criticised by people. A girl always needs to behave in a sober and polite manner, any manly behaviour will always get trolled. In this sense, a girl is always expected to get sexually attracted to a male and vice versa. But what if we get to see something beyond our expectations? If we witness any boy behaving like a girl or someone having homosexual attraction, we tend to frown and turn up our nose in contempt. But why is it so??

The words like "Gay", "Lesbian" or "Transgender" are very common but few people tend to get a broader conception about these ideas.

In our society, these words are often used as "Rebukes" or "*Gaalis*" towards someone. Being a gay or a lesbian is always challenging as people conceive a negative idea. As it is not in our power to decide if we want to be a boy or a girl, similarly being a gay or a lesbian is also a common phenomenon. They don't have any medical issue or anything abnormal in themselves. But still, they go through a lot of struggles and hardship in their life. We often make fun of them, without analysing the situation wisely.

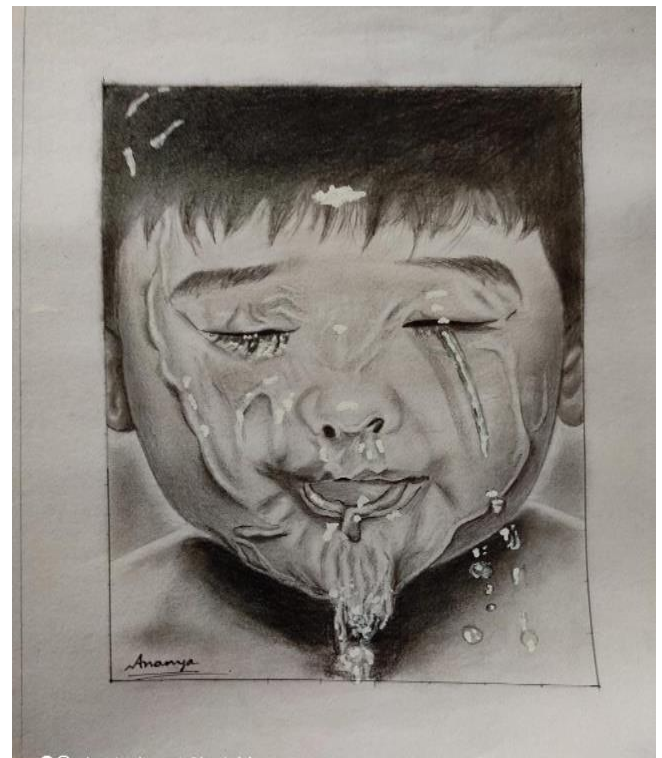
Gender is not something which reflects our identity. It's one's personal choice which everyone needs to respect.

While judiciary has taken a significant step to remove the stigma attached to the third gender, it is our turn to recognize the true implication of this judgment and prioritize its enforcement. While throwing money at hijras to spurn them away, we are not just insulting these individuals, but are relegating the very basic principle of humanity; even curs are better treated by the love of humanity. It is the duty of the new generation to throw a positive light into this concept and extend our hands towards them with a positive intention to make them feel equal.

Hindering the growth of a particular section will never lead to a greater development of a country. In this society, where there is a galaxy of

reasons to grand reservations, the community which is synonymous to social backwardness is seldom thought about. It is hence necessary to not only pen down laws, but also bring them to action for the upbringing of the transgender community to the basic rostrum of human dignity.

It is high time that we start changing ourselves for a better nation.



Ananya Bhattacharya, English Honours, Semester III



The Welcome Generation

Erum Afroz, English Honours, Semester III

Covid 19 pandemic was beyond anyone's imagination. People were dying and the world literally stopped. Everyone was stuck in their homes. The year 2020 was very hard for people, especially for the youth. Schools, colleges, and other institutions were fully closed. Markets were completely locked down, all means of transportation were stopped and we were forced to stay at home. So we all got the time to think, to learn, to explore, and to be imaginative while staying at home. The time was not desirable but we all welcomed it with a new normal. It felt like our world has shrunk into a 10×10 room. But we were wrong, the small rooms and the undesirable time helped us to explore some new and unknown world about which we all were so unaware. So most of us developed some sort of hobby or started finding interest in some new avenues.

Well like many other people I, also came across something which I enjoyed during that undesired but valuable time. Back in February 2020, I came across a boy group of singers and dancers known as BTS. I started liking them after watching their performances, achievements, shows, and interviews, etc. They are spreading the message of hope, to love ourselves, and also encourages the youth to enjoy whatever little they are doing through their songs. Recently the group had the

privilege to represent the youth at the SDG Moment Youth in Action, United Nations. They performed their recently released song 'Permission to Dance' at the United Nations General Assembly. The song gives easement through the lyrics which says 'We don't need to worry because when we fall we know how to land, don't need to talk, the talk just walk, the walk tonight because we don't need permission to dance'. They included some sign languages in their dance moves so that even the deaf people can enjoy the song with us. Despite some many positive approaches in their performances I don't know why they are getting hate remarks for how they look, how they sound, and for speaking and singing in their native language.

I am sharing this because they helped me at that time when I was alone and was trying to figure out what is going on and what I am going to do in my future. Their songs, their shows, their videos were the best thing to put off the feeling of being alone. Whatever the voice I have or whatever I am saying right now is something I've learned from them. I wholeheartedly enjoy watching them. To sum up this article, I would like to share some comforting messages from their recent United Nations speech:

"If we believe in possibilities and hope even when the unexpected happens we won't lose our way but discover a new one." -RM BTS

"I hope we just don't consider the future as grim darkness. There are still many pages left in the stories about us and, I thought we shouldn't talk as if the ending is already written." -V BTS

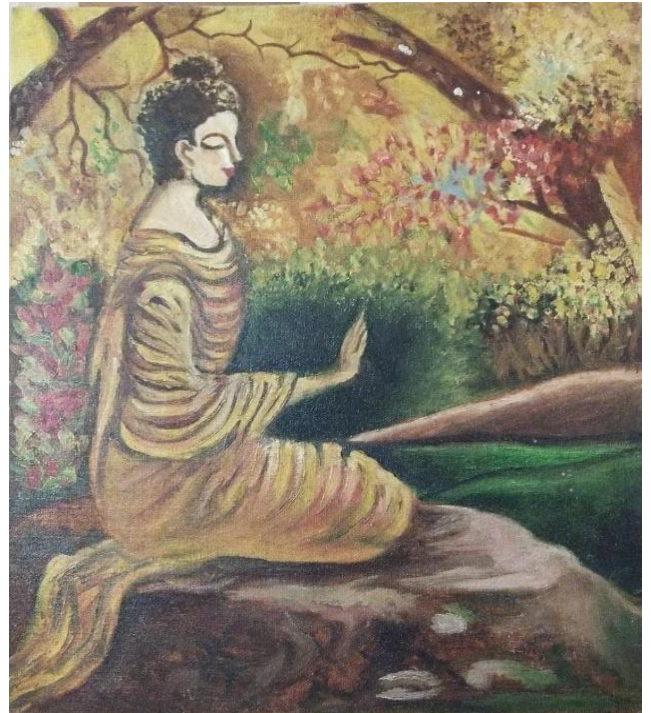
"Rather than calling this Corona generation a 'lost generation', the term 'welcome generation' is more suitable. We will be the generation that welcomes changes." -Jin BTS

"It wasn't as if we could blame anyone, you must have felt the same frustration, here I am the same I was. I was saddened to hear that the entrance and graduation ceremonies had to be cancelled." -Jimin BTS

"Sometimes it feels like the world is stuck in a place. It feels like you've lost your way. There was a time when we felt the same way." - Jungkook BTS

"What is important are the choices we make when we are faced with changes" -Jhope BTS

"The choices we make may not be perfect, but that doesn't mean there will be nothing we can do." -Suga BTS.



Ankita Prasad, English Honours, Semester III



The Virus

Moumita Bhattacharjee,
Alumna, Department of English

Let's talk about a *Virus* spreading rapidly in India.

Over 21 lacks adults got affected by this pathogen. Which one? Eh well, THE MARRIAGE VIRUS. Whenever am scrolling my Social Media feed, one gets hitched. You know why I call it virus, about 33,796 marriages in India are forced (that's what the Ministry of Home Affairs says). It is disturbing to see young girls getting married before getting a job or finishing their studies and worst of it is some of them are choosing it. It's just

a gigantic joke, which isn't funny (pardon for copying words from a very wise man) Thousands of girls are not able to pursue their dreams, thank Grace you are a lucky one to choose your path. Wake up from your cretinous dream, buy a pair of stilettos may that be hypothetical and start walking on them. Trust you me men will come to marry you; your family does not have to find one. You must be thinking who am I to sermon this dogmatic talk. Well, my dear am in no position, but a girl, coming from a stereotypical orthodox family who has been taught not to talk loudly, not to wear short dresses and red lipstick, to be a wife, and walk properly. However, I turned out to be a rebel, doing all that and most importantly deciding what to do with my life, a student of Master of Psychology and a trainer in one of the best IT companies in the world. Start breaking the stigma and start from your family, chase your dreams, someday I will meet you doing way better than me.



Shilpi Karmakar, English Honours, Semester III



Update on Omicron

On 26 November 2021, WHO designated the variant B.1.1.529 a variant of concern, named Omicron, on the advice of WHO's Technical Advisory Group of Virus Evolution (TAG-VE). This decision was based on the evidence presented to the TAG-VE that Omicron has several mutations that may have an impact on how it behaves, for example, on how easily it spreads or the severity of illness it causes.

Source: www.who.int

