

Mind Brew

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT E-ZINE
DURGAPUR WOMEN'S COLLEGE

1st Edition | July 2021



CURATED CHAOS

Find amazing articles consisting of thought-provoking ideas, significant issues and relatable experiences. In addition, there are some wonderful paintings, photographs and poetry on various themes.



Foreword

Dear Readers,

We are extremely delighted to introduce you all to the first edition of the departmental ezine MIND BREW. It is a medium to exhibit the literary skills and creative faculties of the current students and alumni of the Department of English, Durgapur Women's College. The purpose of the ezine is to engage ourselves in creative work as well as inspire others to do the same, not just because we don't do it very often as we should but also because being students of literature and humanities, we are well aware of the fact that creativity is a great way to provide solace to the mind, especially during turbulent times.

The first edition of MIND BREW primarily focuses on three central topics. These include—

- The Pandemic: Pains, Paranoia and Perseverance
- Social Media: Uses/Abuses
- Everyday Feminism: Praxis and Gnosis

The contributors have showcased their enthusiasm by sending wonderful articles, essays, paintings, poems, film reviews and snapshots on the aforementioned topics. They expressed their thoughts, opinions and ideas on various issues such as the kind of problems they faced during the pandemic, their coping mechanisms during the dire situation, whether they believe that 'home' is the ultimate remedy for all the problems, the significance of social media and if it is a democratic space, whether they feel social media eats into our lives, the meaning and relevance of feminism for them and the ways in which they believe feminist thinking can change lives.

MIND BREW is the result of the hardwork and dedication of the teachers and the students of the department. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our teachers, Prof. Chandrima Das, Dr. Shyamasri Maji, Dr. Anugamini Rai, Prof. Runa Chatterjee, Prof. Riman Rakshit, Prof. Ayan Mukherjee and Dr. Amitayu Chakraborty, for their inspiration and kind consent to grace the editorial board.

We are especially grateful to Prof. Runa Chatterjee, Prof. Riman Rakshit, Prof. Ayan Mukherjee, and Dr. Amitayu Chakraborty for reviewing and editing the articles. The idea of the magazine was first initiated during an online class by Dr. Amitayu Chakraborty; without his belief and encouragement we could not have imagined completing such a task within such a short time as none of us had any prior experience. We are also extremely grateful to all the students and the alumni who actively contributed to the ezine and made it what it is today.

We sincerely hope that you all have a good time while reading the ezine and that it is able to kindle your thoughts and brew your minds!

*Regards,
Team Mind Brew*

*Pallabi Mondal- Semester VI
Aishika Dutta- Semester VI
Ankita Ghosh- Semester VI
Ankita Dan- Semester VI
Chumki Chakraborty- Semester VI
Sonal Mahanti- Semester VI*

THE



Pains

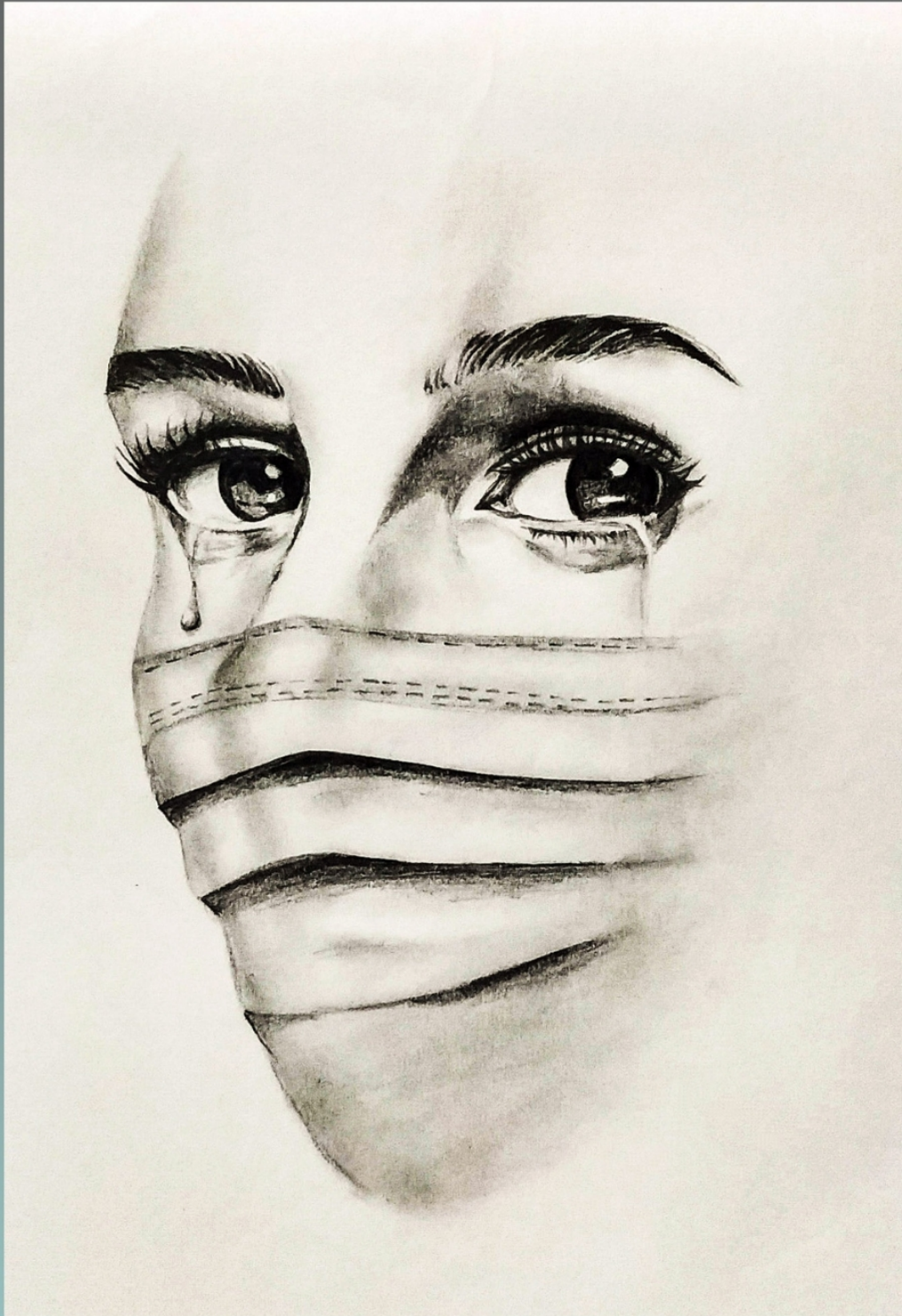


Paranoia *and*

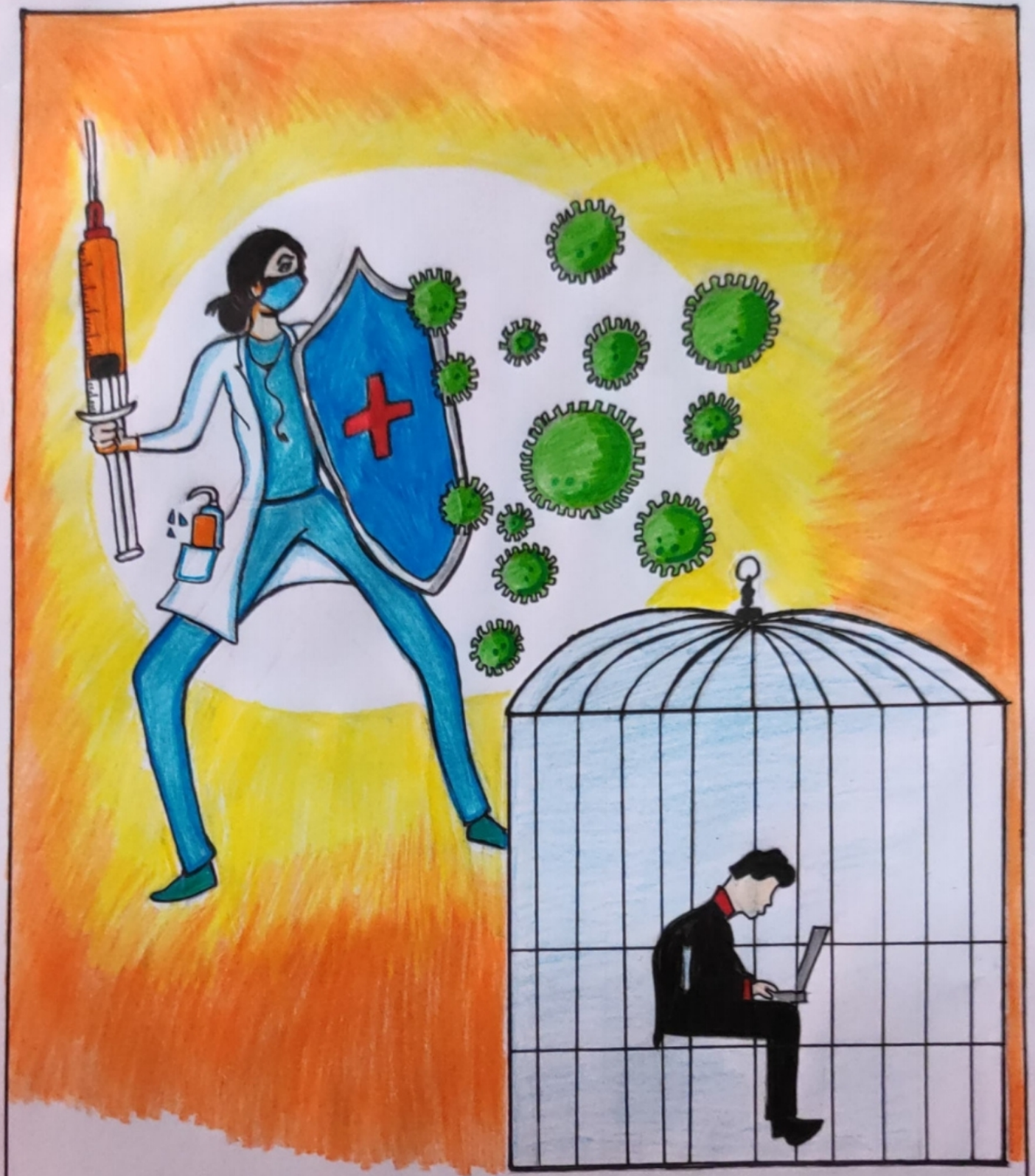
Perseverance



*Behind every mask,
there are a thousand dried-up tears!*



**- Art by PALLABI MONDAL;
Semester: VI**



SHE needed a HERO. So, SHE became ONE!

*Art by Aishika Dutta
Semester VI*

“Third one in two months. 10th May, 2020.”

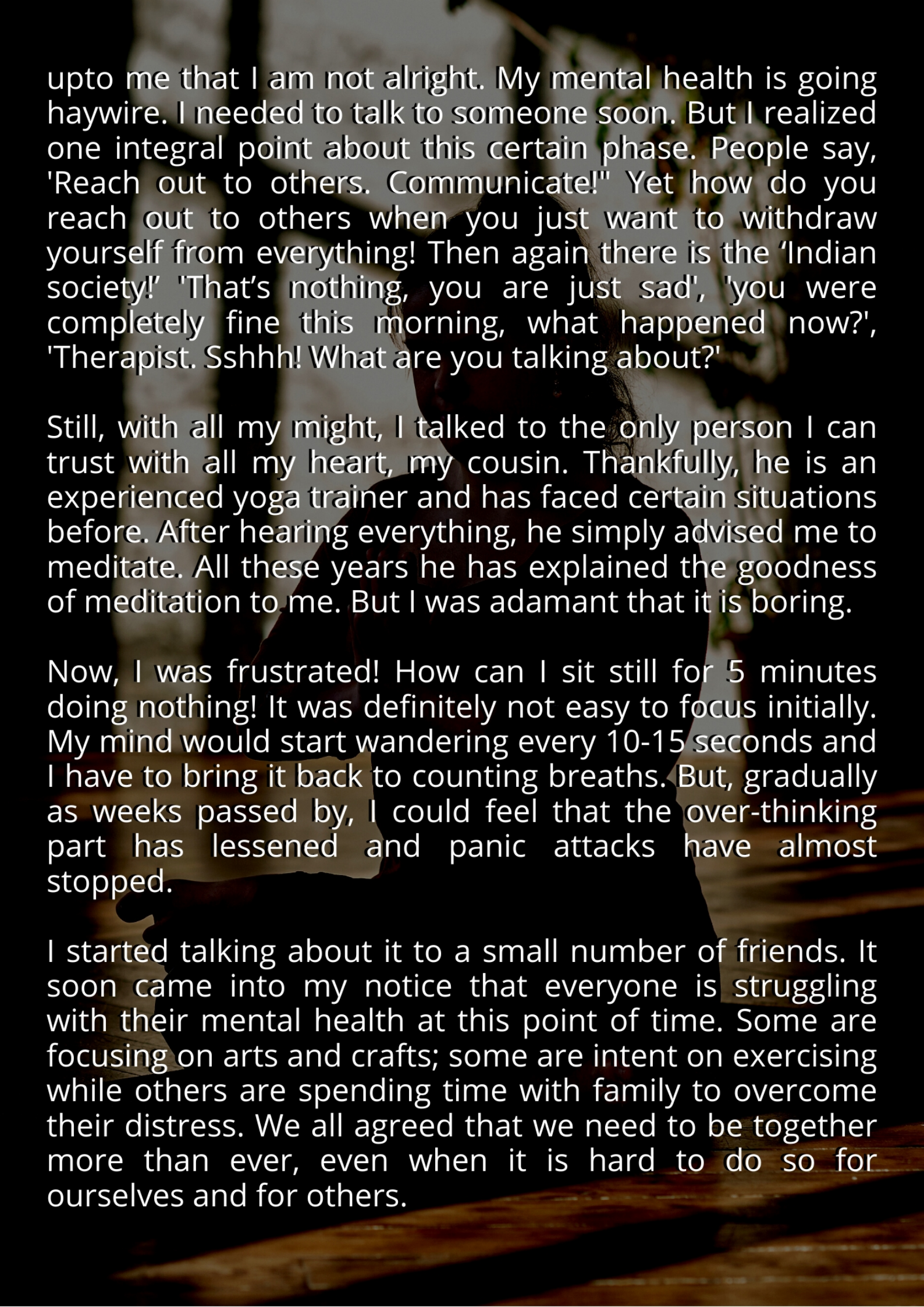
**By Shreyasee Kundu
2017-2020 Batch**

COVID-19. A new respiratory disease made its way to India after affecting countries like China, the United States and many more. Spreading like wildfire among people, COVID-19 is termed as one of the dangerous pandemics of the era. In this emergency situation government decided to follow complete lockdown or isolation with limited access to reduce the spread.

My reverie broke with maa's cell phone's ringing. I looked down into my diary and started scribbling and did not stop till I felt the tension seep out of my body.

“It's 11:30 am. I got another panic attack. Third time when I completely zoned out. Third time of feeling scarily restless. The painful feeling of air being sucked out of your body, leaving you breathless.”

'Why is this happening?' I asked myself after closing the diary. Is it because there is too much time available for my mind to conjure up impossible things? What was the thought that triggered the attack? Was it something about the future? I hurriedly opened my diary to check why it happened the last time. No such details. 'I need to stop over-thinking!'. Discarding all thoughts, I played some music. Days passed by with online classes and long conference calls. Some days are all sunshine while some are depressing. Meanwhile, slowly the realization crept



upto me that I am not alright. My mental health is going haywire. I needed to talk to someone soon. But I realized one integral point about this certain phase. People say, 'Reach out to others. Communicate!' Yet how do you reach out to others when you just want to withdraw yourself from everything! Then again there is the 'Indian society!' 'That's nothing, you are just sad', 'you were completely fine this morning, what happened now?', 'Therapist. Sshhh! What are you talking about?'

Still, with all my might, I talked to the only person I can trust with all my heart, my cousin. Thankfully, he is an experienced yoga trainer and has faced certain situations before. After hearing everything, he simply advised me to meditate. All these years he has explained the goodness of meditation to me. But I was adamant that it is boring.

Now, I was frustrated! How can I sit still for 5 minutes doing nothing! It was definitely not easy to focus initially. My mind would start wandering every 10-15 seconds and I have to bring it back to counting breaths. But, gradually as weeks passed by, I could feel that the over-thinking part has lessened and panic attacks have almost stopped.

I started talking about it to a small number of friends. It soon came into my notice that everyone is struggling with their mental health at this point of time. Some are focusing on arts and crafts; some are intent on exercising while others are spending time with family to overcome their distress. We all agreed that we need to be together more than ever, even when it is hard to do so for ourselves and for others.

*Art by Aishika Dutta
Semester VI*



**Around the mask from
everywhere**

Online classes during the pandemic- a way ahead for the determined or a centre of distraction for the weak-willed!

**-ART BY ANKITA DAN ;
SEMESTER: VI**

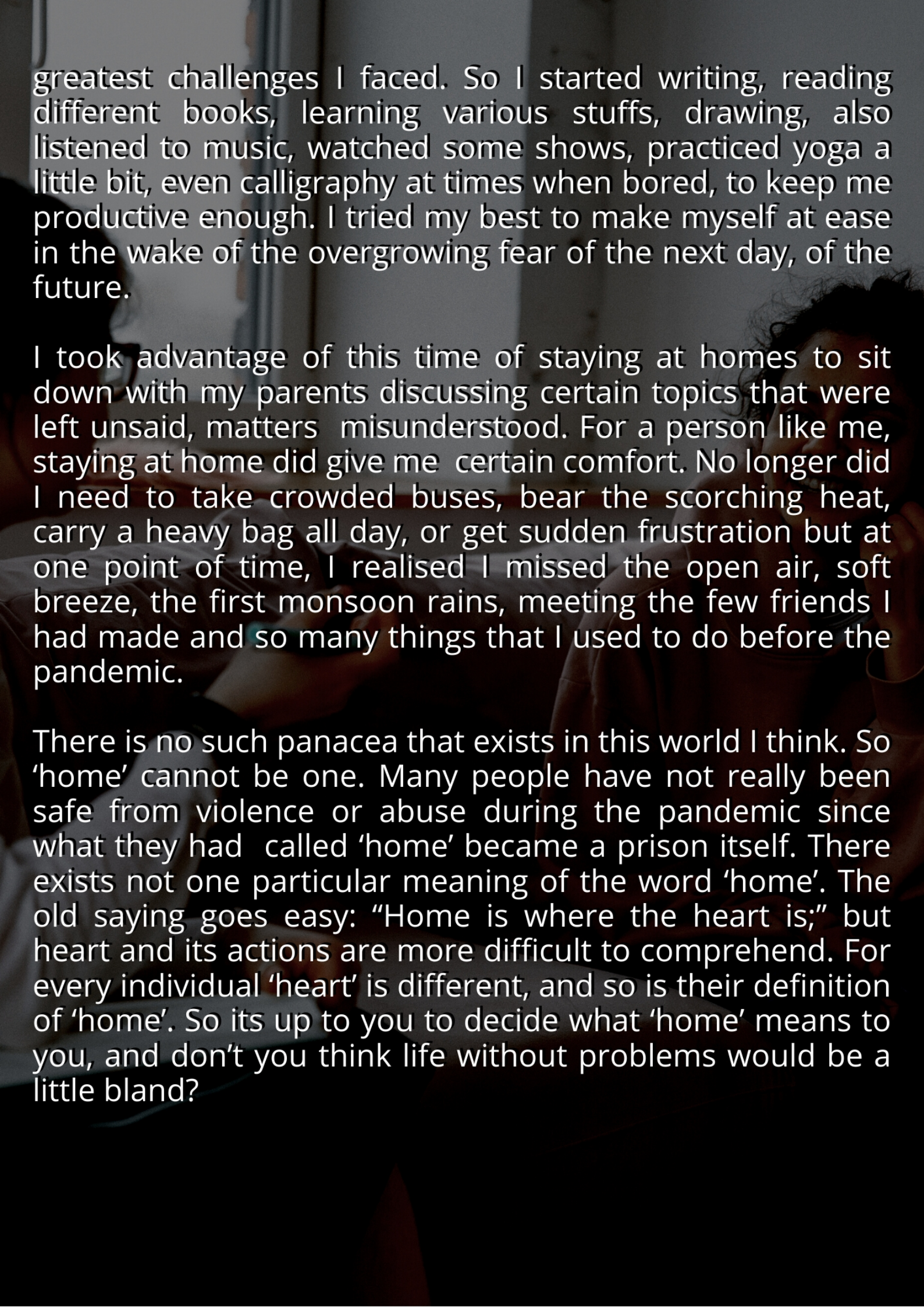


The Pandemic: Some Ramblings

By Shatanti Ghosh
2017-2020 Batch

There was a sudden notice proclaiming "Classes suspended" in March 2020 that set the beginning for me. It all started with 'how much this holiday was needed,' then quickly accelerating to a 'prolonged work-holiday.' From facing network issues during online classes or assignment submissions, missing important classes or notes to exhausted data pack, glitches, swollen eyes, uncertainty of the future – these bothered every student. I am no exception. Being a final-semester student during pandemic, 'what's next' made me really anxious. Concentrating on the studies was a challenge everyday with everything going on around. My constant companion, the smart-phone, genuinely helped me to maintain the status of a student. From attending online classes, accessing e-books and notes to, providing news, enough entertainment during pandemic, it did it all though also troubled at times due to constant workload.

Problems are bound to come no matter what and cannot really be avoided either. Pandemic affected us all physiologically as well as psychologically bringing numerous problems, fear, anxiety and stress. Writing can be considered as a great medicine, a self-healing one. It takes the mind away from fear, anxiety or stress. Journal writing was therefore one of my coping strategies during the pandemic to let the repressed emotions, fear and stress out. Thinking is said to lead to productive actions and to stay productive during pandemic was one of the



greatest challenges I faced. So I started writing, reading different books, learning various stuffs, drawing, also listened to music, watched some shows, practiced yoga a little bit, even calligraphy at times when bored, to keep me productive enough. I tried my best to make myself at ease in the wake of the overgrowing fear of the next day, of the future.

I took advantage of this time of staying at homes to sit down with my parents discussing certain topics that were left unsaid, matters misunderstood. For a person like me, staying at home did give me certain comfort. No longer did I need to take crowded buses, bear the scorching heat, carry a heavy bag all day, or get sudden frustration but at one point of time, I realised I missed the open air, soft breeze, the first monsoon rains, meeting the few friends I had made and so many things that I used to do before the pandemic.

There is no such panacea that exists in this world I think. So 'home' cannot be one. Many people have not really been safe from violence or abuse during the pandemic since what they had called 'home' became a prison itself. There exists not one particular meaning of the word 'home'. The old saying goes easy: "Home is where the heart is;" but heart and its actions are more difficult to comprehend. For every individual 'heart' is different, and so is their definition of 'home'. So its up to you to decide what 'home' means to you, and don't you think life without problems would be a little bland?

COLOURS OF SILENCE



-Art by PAYEL BANERJEE;
2016-2019 Batch

Hoping Hands



- ART BY
ANISHA MONDAL

2016-2019 Batch

Messenger

By Payel Banerjee
2016-2019 Batch

Occupied as we are in loss and success and in woe and smiles, we may at times wonder whether anyone is silently viewing us. Who?...God?...Not sure. However, there is one who is seeing us with head held high, covered with snow and ice but is firmly rooted in soil. The Himalayan Mountains! The tallest mountains of the world. He can see everything around him. He is watching in absolute silence. What is he thinking?

Himalaya- "I can hear nothing but shrieks and cries of hunger and poverty and grief of losing the near and dear ones. Mothers struggling to feed their children after losing the only earning member of the family. The grounds are silent and empty as the children are prisoned in their houses for 'good'. The veil of silence and death is fallen everywhere. The rivers even holy Ganga is carrying thousands of dead-bodies everyday."

The silent thoughts of Himalaya are disturbed by the cold winds which began to blow on approach of the clouds.

Cloud- "Giriraj, what are you thinking?"

Himalaya- "Nothing much, Jaladhar. Jaladhar, so you have finally come here all the way from the ocean. So tell me what you see all the way. Please say, my messenger, your silence is unbearable."

Cloud- "What more shall I describe, Giriraj? People are dying in thousands due to virus and due to hunger. They are not getting proper treatment due to lack of oxygen and lack of space in hospitals. The price of all necessary goods and medicines is rising to the sky day by day. This is profit for a few but lives of most are at stake due to this."

Himalaya- "Jaladhar, is there no humanity left in the world?"

Cloud- "Giriraj, I cover the whole sky black but still cannot stop the Sun's rays from reaching the soil. Same way, inhumanity in most is facing obstruction from humanity in some. Humanity has come in shape of doctors, medical agents and social workers."

Himalaya- "I agree with you but these people are there in numbers counted in fingers. I doubt that they would not be able to stop the approaching disaster which would be worse than this, which may perhaps lead to the end of life on earth."

Cloud- "What a pity!"

Himalaya- "Man is the most wonderful part of all creation. It is man who is the most intelligent of all living beings. Alas! They have proved themselves to be the most foolish of all. The history of thousands of years stand as a witness to this. They became advanced and civilised but they forgot that they are not omnipotent. They have built great buildings but they forgot that they need air as oxygen and freshwater to live. They could have saved greenery amidst their hard cities to save air and water."

Cloud- "Giriraj, they are still not understanding that they are destroying themselves."

Himalaya- "Yes, Jaladhar, Man has used most of his brains in gaining power and dominance. They fought among themselves killing thousands, even their near and dear ones. They spent most of their strength and resources in making dangerous deadly weapons and chemicals. They did not stop here. They have also made several disease carrying equipments and germs. Men are destroying their surroundings and themselves."

Cloud- "Giriraj, is there not a single way to stop them?"

Himalaya- "Man's greed of power and wealth is not letting him listen to his heart which is asking him to stop. They forgot that if nature turns around then they would be finished completely. I had shown a little anger through avalanches and flash-floods especially in Kedarnath but I could not come in my angry avatar as I took pity on mankind. Jaladhar, now it is your turn. Spread throughout and turn the sky as dark as hell and your thunder and lightening should not stop for a moment. Show up more fierce and terrible than Rudra."

Cloud- "Giriraj, this is too destructive. This storm and flood will engulf numerous lives. Is it right?"

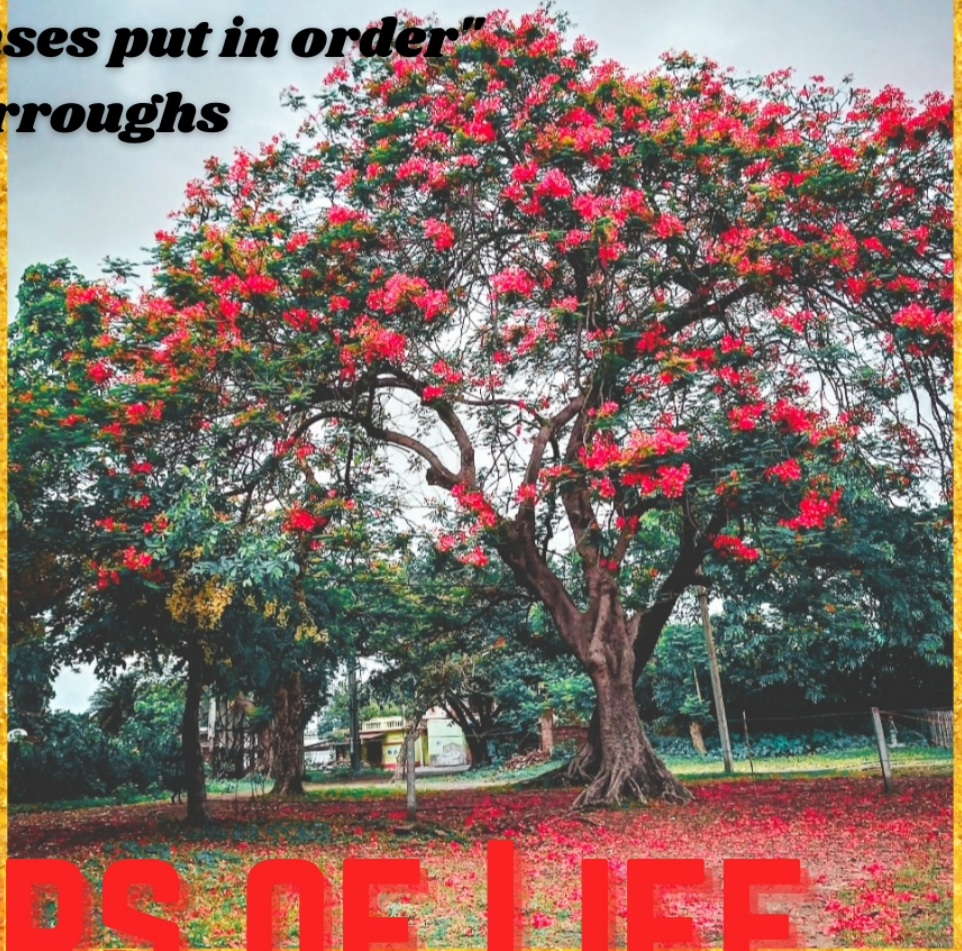
Himalaya- "No, Jaladhar, destruction is needed. It is man himself who had began to sow the seeds of destruction through their greed. Now, they should see their ruin before them. Moreover, what I have asked you to do is very minute compared to what Nature can actually show.

What man has done, has affected their surroundings and themselves. If Nature begins to reconstruct himself through destruction then man, himself will become extinct. So, Jaladhar, go ahead. I am sending you to do this as I want to warn them of the destruction they are calling by making Nature angry. Be my messenger, Jaladhar, as I consider these foolish creatures my children. Moreover, the destruction your fierceness would cause will make man build up new thoughts. Destruction makes way for creation. Creation begins from absolute emptiness. Perhaps, ugliness would end up in beauty. So, go ahead, Jaladhar."

Cloud- "As you wish, Giriraj."



***"I go to nature to be soothed and healed
and to have my senses put in order"
- John Burroughs***

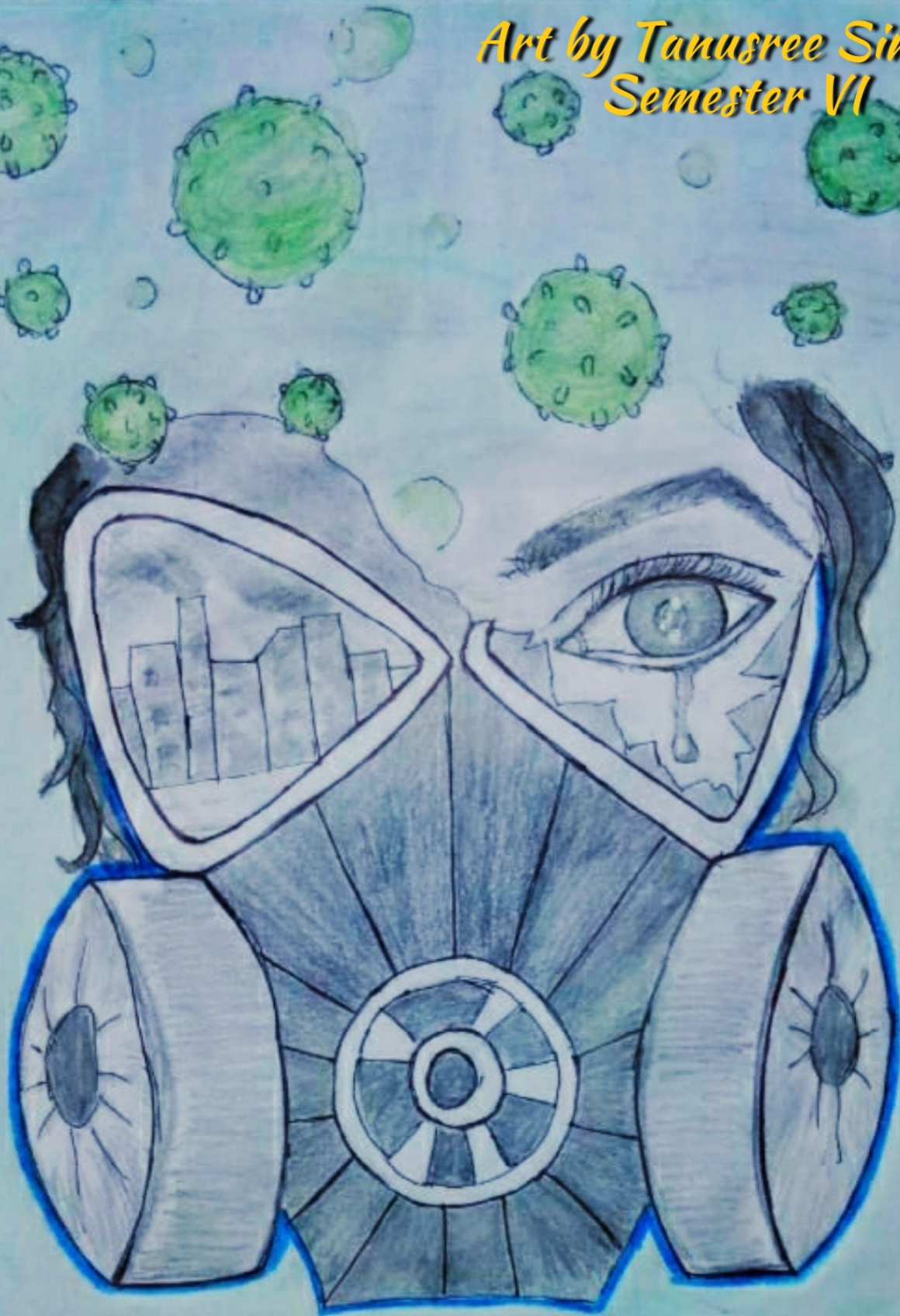


COLOURS OF LIFE



**- Clicked by PALLABI MONDAL;
Semester: VI**

Art by Tanusree Singha
Semester VI



“**COVID-19** will reshape our world. we don't yet know when the crisis will end. But we can be sure that by the time it does, our world will look very different.”

SOCIAL MEDIA

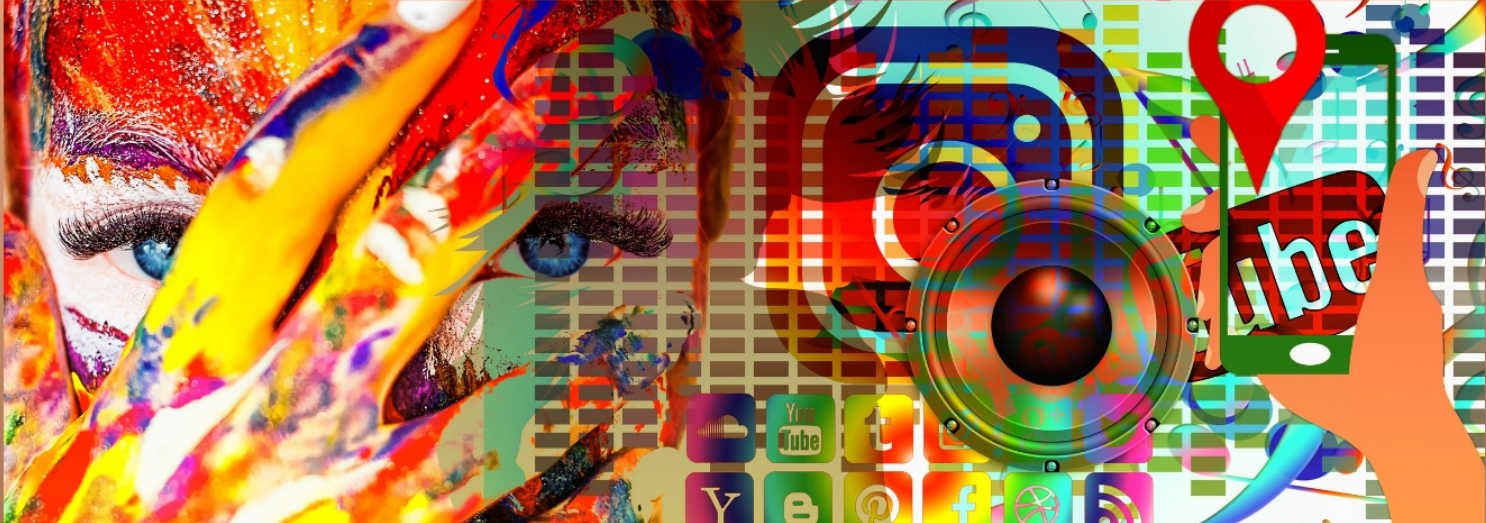
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USES

And

ABUSES



Social Media: Few thoughts

**By Puja Paul
Semester VI**

Social media is the biggest platform for communication nowadays. It has become an important part of our lives. Its usage has increased by leaps and bounds during this pandemic. The platform is made by Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram etc. By using social media people can connect with their friends and families from any part of the world. In this platform a person can freely express her/his opinions. A person can give her/his opinion in any topic which she/he wants. Social media helps us gain information. It helps us know the latest news. Social media is the biggest platform for growing business. Also, we can show our talents freely in this platform.

Nevertheless, there are many disadvantages of social media. It is very addictive; we always run the risk of getting obsessed with social media ignoring regular conversations. The negative aspects of social media like cyber-bullying, fake peoples, scams, fake news etc. often trouble us. In social media we can't trust people easily. Nowadays we see lots of hackings in this platform. People use others' personal information. I feel that ultimately we may choose to 'use' social media carefully avoiding its 'abuses'.

Essay on Social Media

By Ishika Gorai
Semester VI

World's biggest and the best platform for increasing the capacity of human beings is to increase communication and stay in connection with other people and relatives for business development and for education purpose. It is a tool that is becoming quite popular these days because of its user friendly features, for example – facebook, instagram , twitter which are such platforms which give people a good chance to connect with each other across distance.

As we know that every coin has two sides, the same way we can also say that social media also has two sides –positive and negative. It is all upon us in which way we use it , if we use it in a positive way then it would be great and most beneficial networking site. The purpose of which social media has made is gone and people have changed the purpose and also the meaning of social media. People are getting very addicted and have started overusing and misusing it. Some people those who overuse it simply waste a whole day which is not correct. From its positivity , we would like to tell that it is the way to connect the whole world and also provide our information to others in any corner of the world. Basically for education purpose , this medium is excellent because through this we get a concept clarity of the topic. Now –a – days shopping from home can be easily done due

to this medium. It becomes easy to buy clothes , grocery and other essential things as it consumes less time ,which is essential in these days. Business development is increasing day by day.

As we know that the whole world is at our finger tip for which we are thankful to social media , but this makes us wonder that something so powerful and with such massive reach cannot be all good. It is considered to be one of the most harmful elements of society. It is not only beneficial but also harmful as much as it is beneficial and addictive too. We all have observed that from many days people are used to play the game called PUBG, which is very harmful to the human as it is very addictive, if once we start playing we can't leave it and many people have died also. Now-a -days, hacking of accounts have started which is a serious and big problem as due to this people might go to depression. This leads to cyber bullying. As we know that the youth are the most dominant users of social media and their addiction hampers the academic performance of the student as they waste full time on social media by posting images, videos and clippings in facebook , instagram. Recently, before covid there was a huge publicity of tik tok , where people could feel themselves as an actress which is very addictive.

In short, social media has both uses and abuses. But it depends upon the user at the end. Excess use of anything is harmful and the same thing applies for all media.

"Content is fire, Social media is gasoline!"

- Jay Baer

*- Art by ISHIKA GORAI;
Semester: VI*



Abuses of Social Media

By Shuvra Mondal
Semester IV

Social Media is a very powerful tool in today's digital era. Not only has it helped people from across the globe connect with each other, but has become a massive tool for running the global economy. It is changing the way we communicate, run businesses, conduct electoral campaigns and impart education.

However, with great power, comes the risk of abuse. Over the past few decades, big corporates like Facebook, Twitter, Google etc have managed to capture the lion's share of the digital market. Every one of us, directly or indirectly, have shared our personal details and data with them. However, that is not the problem. The real question arises here: What do these companies actually do with our data?

The concerns of social media users in recent years have spiked up massively after hacker groups stole data and put them up for sale on the dark web. The most recent example would be the Facebook data leak where personal data of over 60 lakhs Indians was compromised. However, the greatest fear is not about data getting stolen or leaked; it is about how this stolen data is used. The infamous Cambridge Analytica scandal is probably the greatest example. This firm exploited the data of over 87 million Facebook users to influence the 2016 USA Presidential Elections. The social issue that has come up is minors having unrestricted and

unsupervised access to social media. This often leads them to become victims of cybercrimes like cyberbullying, digital eve-teasing and child pornography. The pandemic, accompanied by prolonged lockdowns have exposed children to far greater screen times than they would have got in normal times. All of this leads to social media addiction, wherein they waste time scrolling instead of indulging in creative or physical tasks. Further, the negative social trends of today affect young brains the most. This often serves to endanger productive learning and mental growth, steering them to wrong paths.

There have been cases where cameras of users were used to snoop upon them and click private pictures, which were later leaked on adult sites. It cannot be entirely ruled out that in the near future, uncontrolled power and access to critical data might be used to manipulate the democratic affairs of various nations. In fact, this had already begun in our country, which has led to a long-drawn battle between Twitter Inc. and the Central Government.

So the solution? Unfortunately, we live in times where social media has become a part and parcel of our daily life. However, there are some basic netiquettes we can follow to save ourselves from lurking cybercriminals: Limiting shared information, choosing the right privacy settings and reporting suspicious activities. The key point with social media is that once you disclose information, it remains there forever. So it is the responsibility of the user to act cautiously and use these applications properly. So the next time you tweet, share

pictures, chat or put likes, beware! Because in this evolving world, digital privacy is a myth.

References

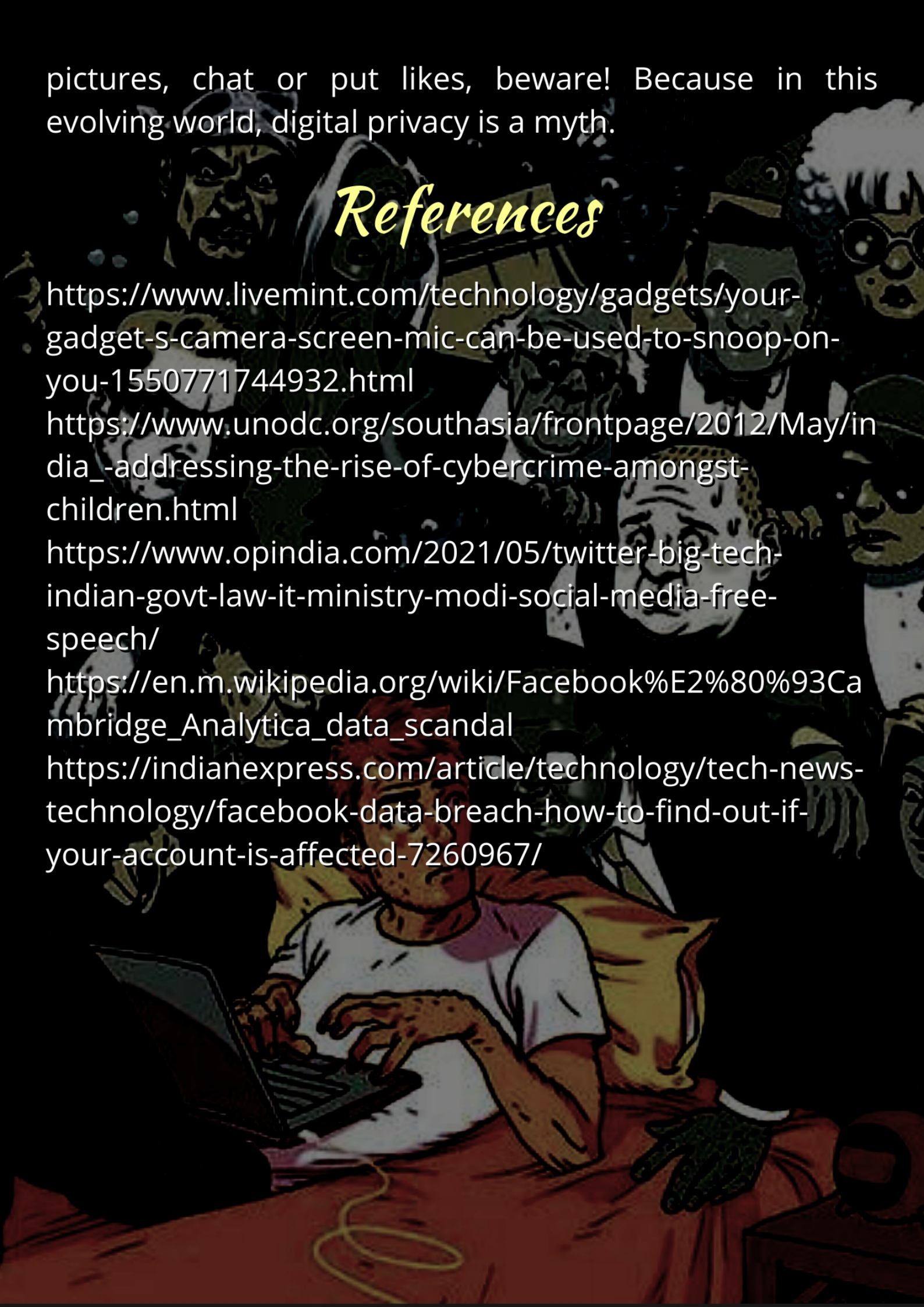
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It's Social Media: Handle with care!

**By Sonal Mahanti
Semester VI**

We all get to hear things like “put that phone down for a moment” or “what keeps you busy on the phone the whole day?” from our parents and elders numerous times on a daily basis. These remarks have become a part of our everyday life. And the reaction is always the same- we leave the phone for a few minutes, listen (or at least pretend to do so) to whatever they are saying and then pick up the phone again to check the messages or the number of likes on our recent post. Admit that this happens with you as well.

We all have also heard statements like ‘social media has more disadvantages than advantages’. What I have realised is that positive or negative, social media definitely has a significant impact on our lives on an everyday basis. It changes your thought process, mindset and maybe even the way you dress and the way you behave. With so much being said and written about, it has become such a mundane and ignored topic that people don't pay much attention to it anymore. I must admit that I also tend to avoid reading articles on social media and quickly scroll down through the “don't use too much social media because...” posts on Instagram. So why am I writing this piece? Because there are some aspects that I want you to think (if you haven't already) about how social media has an influence on our lives, so that we all can act accordingly for our own good.

All of us have at least one account on either Facebook or Instagram or both. I am sure you all have wondered at some point in time why we waste our precious time scrolling our timeline for hours at a stretch, reading and thinking about things that do not concern us or would not benefit us in any way and we know the answer, right? Simply because it is entertaining- it takes our mind off the real life issues and problems. Also, of course we all love memes and watching reels. There can be many reasons you all would come up with as to why we feel the need to be on the social networking sites, but the crux of the matter as explained by a few social scientists is that we, as humans, feel the need to connect and to belong to this virtual space with possibilities of developing bonds much like it happens in the real world. We want to put ourselves out there and be liked and admired just like we want it to happen in real life. And there is absolutely nothing absurd or wrong with this, right?

But the problem arises when we forget to interact with people in the real world because of this virtual space, when it becomes difficult or awkward for us to talk to a stranger or give a compliment or even to communicate with our own people properly for that matter. I was very surprised and disturbed by the fact when I realised that I have started forgetting or losing track of what I was saying and that the long hours of continuous texting is definitely to be blamed for this, where you do not get to see how the other person is reacting to your words (and vice versa) and hence there is a lack of connection between the two people. As Dr. Sherry Turkle in her 2012 Ted Talk 'Connected, yet alone?'

talks about how we do not want to be left alone and we do not feel like ourselves if we do not get to share our lives with other people. And it's not difficult to understand why technology is a preferred medium for this sharing to take place— simply because we have a control on our choice of words as well as the display of emotions, which is not possible in a face to face interaction. Dr. Sherry describes this tendency using the epigram "I share therefore, I am" which echoes the famous Cartesian statement "I think, therefore I am".

Social networking sites make it easier to hide behind an image created by the photos and captions shared, which is somehow a result of the expectations we think others might have from us. This image is many times unrealistic and too idealistic, which might disappoint others as well as your own self for not meeting their expectations. Though hiding one's identity can be quite advantageous in the way that we do not really care about the other person's physical aspects. We all speak of how inner beauty is more important, but we are not really able to overlook someone's outer appearance while meeting them in person. We tend to get judgmental. But on social media, when we interact with any random person having the same interests, opinions and ambitions as we do, we are least bothered about how they look. We appreciate the other person's thought process.

It's no secret how manipulative and 'likeable' the content of social media is, but what's also true is that we do fall in the traps of those photo-shopped pictures and the "interesting" stories our friends or the people we follow share on their profiles. As a result of comparing our

life with the highlights they share, the vicious cycle of jealousy along with an inferiority complex gets started. The 'Fear of Missing Out' or FOMO as it is popularly known, creates a feeling that we are missing out on important and exciting things and that leads to anxiety, lack of self-esteem and might promote longer duration of social media usage. This FOMO is the reason why most of us cannot do without checking on our phones every few minutes for updates and the root cause of psychological conditions like 'Nomophobia' (fear of being detached from mobile phone connectivity) or 'Phantom vibration syndrome' (the perception that one's mobile phone is vibrating or ringing when it is not). Not just that, it might also compel us to answer calls or reply to text messages while we are driving or we are in situations where it might prove to be extremely risky for us as well as our dear ones. Quite scary, right?

Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat were created to bring people closer and help them communicate with each other better and more often so that they stay connected with each other and do not feel lonely. But quite ironically, a study at the University of Pennsylvania found that high usage of social media increases the feeling of loneliness. It is no wonder because while we all remain glued to our screens for hours at a stretch trying to stay connected with a long lost friend we found on Facebook recently, we actually forget to pay attention to the stories our parents, siblings and grandparents might have to share with us. This makes us distant, while living under the

same roof. One must realise, and I say this from personal observation and experience that even if we spend half the time spent on social media with real people around us, the effect would be ten times more positive and fulfilling because social media interaction cannot replace real world relationships after all. Nothing can reduce your stress and boost your mood than seeing your loved ones laughing uncontrollably watching a funny scene on television or while remembering a hilarious incident from the past. Don't believe me? Try planning a movie night with your family instead of scrolling through your Instagram feed or stalking random people!

One of the most harmful effects of social media is faced by the people who experience cyberbullying and severe trolling. Everyone has got a Smartphone, so everyone has the liberty to comment on anything and anyone they wish to and in any kind of language. Moreover, social media allows you to be anonymous which only makes things worse. People usually do not feel responsible for whatever they say while hiding behind any random username and it becomes all the more easier for them to target someone and say all sorts of things, which perhaps they would not have been able to say in person. Social media platforms like Twitter are hotspots for spreading hatred, hurtful rumours, abusive and derogatory remarks etc. which might leave lasting emotional scars on people. It's really high time now that people learn to handle social media in a more appropriate and mature way and try to be sensitive and empathetic enough to understand the effect of their words on other people.

Not to forget, while these social networking sites are a medium through which people can voice their opinions, it is often observed that too many people speaking on a particular subject, sometimes even without proper knowledge of the whole matter, shifts the attention from the actual topic and creates a lot of chaos with no fruitful result in the end. On the other hand, movements like the #MeToo movement is proof of how powerful and useful social media can be.

Another extremely scary aspect of social media is the spreading of fake news and false information, which is increasing at an alarming rate. Especially during the present times when the whole world is suffering and is in a state of paranoia, it is extremely important to share the right information and prevent others from getting misguided. While social media has proved to be extremely beneficial in providing help to those in need, the number of daily forwards on WhatsApp consisting of some or the other method to prevent ourselves from getting affected by the virus was too high and almost impossible to ignore. (I mean, you are really smart if you haven't tried at least one of those methods suggested in those forwards!) While various social media companies are taking significant steps to reduce the spread of false information, we all need to understand the damage and chaos that can be caused by a single post or forward and act responsibly.

Apart from the harm caused at the communal level, social media affects us at a very personal level too. Long durations of social media usage might result in teens and young adults becoming extremely self-

centred. Social media decreases the feeling of loneliness, but over use and too much involvement might lead to a point where people stop seeking companionship because they do not feel lonely at any point of time. They become too concerned about the number of likes and comments their selfies receive and hence end up spending hours trying to click the “perfect” selfie. In this way they are also looking for constant validation where they want to be liked and admired by as many people as possible. They are not bothered much about the number of friends they have in the real world but they care a lot about the number of friends they have on Facebook. And when they do not get as many likes or followers as desired, chances are very high that one would observe lack of confidence and self-esteem in those young individuals.

Social media can be a wonderful asset if used wisely. There is a very thin line difference between those sites being a source of infotainment and those harming your life in various ways. Because social media not only harms one’s mental health, it has severe effects on one’s physical health as well. We all have the habit of checking the phone before going to bed and we are all aware of the consequences. We don’t realise when those five minutes turn into two to three hours and sometimes we even stay up the whole night only to fall asleep at four o’ clock in the morning. We all are probably aware of the scientific reasons, how the blue light emitted from the phone can disrupt our sleep cycle which might in turn cause a lot of other problems in the body. But in spite of knowing all this, we still do it –apologetically or sometimes even unapologetically.

Now, for those who seriously want to do something about it, (those who still don't feel the need to do anything, please think again) the question is what can we do? The answer is simple and is perhaps known to most of us already. This is just a recapitulation. We need to be more mindful of our social media use- the amount of time spent as well as our manner of using it. This is important now more than ever because we are locked up inside our homes and do not have very many alternatives to using our phone, be it for work, studies or connecting with friends.

First and foremost we need to reduce our time online as much as possible and since deleting social media apps straightaway might not be a good option because it will not only make you more anxious about not having any idea of what's happening in the world, one might also end up getting frustrated and use it more than before to compensate the hiatus. So a practical and effective solution would be gradually reducing the usage and finding other alternatives for our leisure time. For this, we can download apps which keep a track of the time we spend on social media each day. When we look at the exact duration of hours getting wasted, we might stop checking the phone every five minutes. We also need to stop using the phone while we are sitting with our family during meals. It becomes hard to resist the constant buzzing or beeping of the phone, so we can just turn off the notifications and check those apps only once or twice a day.

The next step is to understand the reason why exactly we log into those apps and if there is a need to change

our focus. The reason can be talking to friends, reading the news or for entertainment- whatever it is, we must try and concentrate on the positive aspects and avoid the negative aspects or mindlessly killing time. We should also think of finding healthier and probably more productive substitutes for social media like talking to a friend when we feel lonely or going for a walk while listening to music when we feel restless or finding a hobby and doing what we like when we are bored. It may not sound very alluring but believe it or not, the satisfaction of creating something on your own and spending your time wisely has an immense positive impact on your mental health. And I am sure you all know that reading and writing are therapeutic.

I have observed a lot of teens and young adults do not use social media actively. Perhaps because they are extremely shy and introverted or maybe they are afraid that they might embarrass themselves in front of others. Whatever the reason might be, passive scrolling through posts or simply following other people's conversations does not prove to be meaningful and does not provide the sense of connection which is one of the primary reasons we all want to be on those sites in the first place. Instead, it might even increase a feeling of restlessness, lower self-esteem and isolation. So do not let your shyness stand in the way.

Of course social networking sites are not all about the negative things. People are finding numerous job opportunities and skill development courses on social networking sites. During a time when we cannot step outside our homes, social media is making it possible for

us to hone our skills and prepare ourselves for the uncertain future. Thanks to Facebook and Instagram for making it a cakewalk for people to find one another and reconnect, even after decades of being apart.

But we all must remember it is important to take out the time to reflect on ourselves- our thoughts, words, actions, desires and goals. It's important to be grateful for the people we have in our lives, the good things that happen to us and the lessons we learn from our experiences to maintain the peace of our minds. And no, it's not simply about reading the gratitude posts on Instagram. It's about actually being grateful. And for that, we need to listen to our parents and stay away from our phones for a good amount of time. Studies have shown that taking breaks from social media boosts psychological well being. It is evident that it is not possible for us to totally remove social networking sites from our lives and hence the influence that they have on us- be it negative or positive, will also be there. But we can start with taking short breaks if you feel you can manage without those apps for a few days, and if not, try using them in moderation so that it does not jeopardize your work, studies or your mental health!

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EVERYDAY

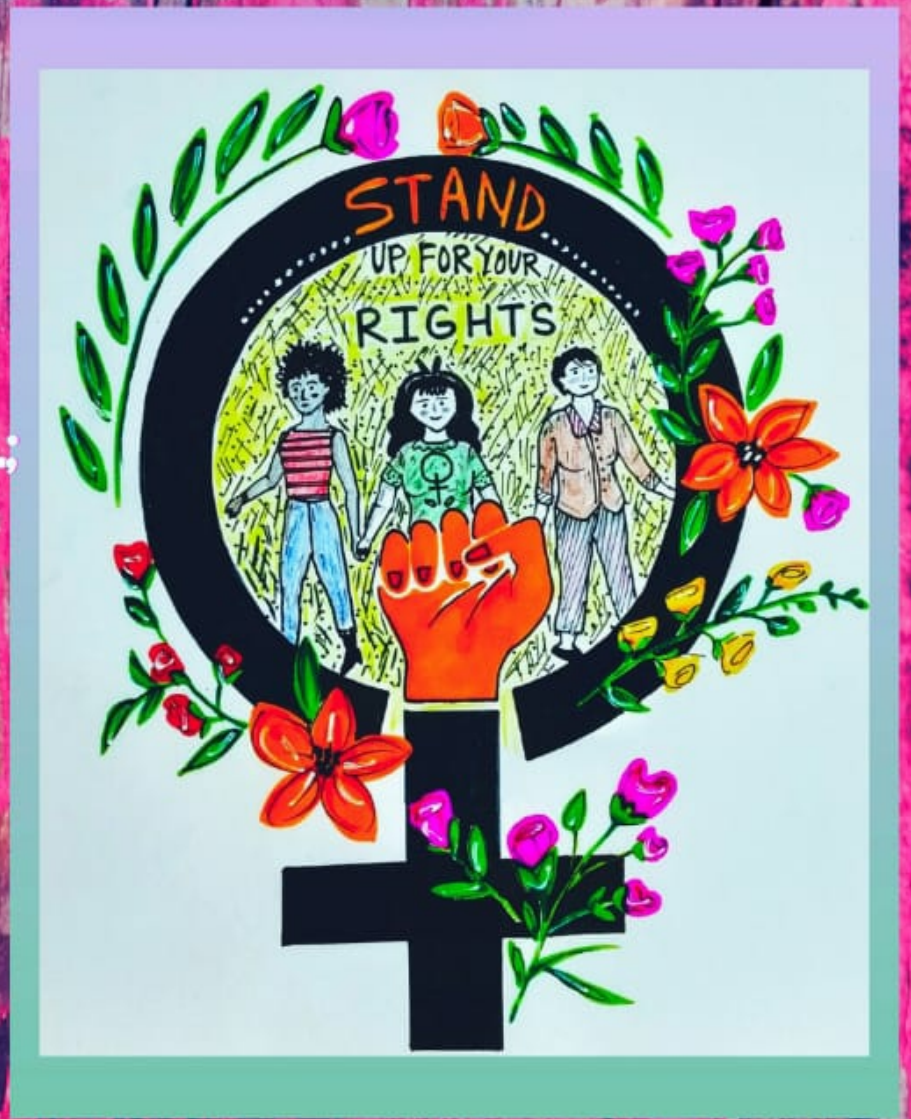
F E M I N I S M



-Praxis AND Gnosis

She was her own Muse

ART BY PALLABI MONDAL;
SEMESTER: VI



A woman's body, a woman's rights!



Drapetomania

**By Shreya Das
Semester II**

*At night she wakes up, trembling she reaches for the
glass,
shattered from the mirror that questions her image,
Deep in her veins; blood.*

*Blood that boils in anger,
Deep down the skin,
dark and dusky.*

He faints.

*Pale body, weak, scarred, middle of nowhere, harassed
—dead.*

Dead, an identity—

*A face who doesn't know, how to be addressed, he or she,
how to dress, how to love.*

Unconventional!

*Something the (loyal?) partner never thought would
happen to them.*

*After years of "happily married"...Now a victim.
Unfaithful or unfortunate?*

Just as their kid, a childhood trauma.

*Now finds escape in coloured powders, bottles—glass.
Glass that cuts through their nightmares of never being
loved...*

An Illustration for Christina Rossetti's "An Artist's Studio"



IN AN ARTIST'S STUDIO

One face looks out from all his canvases,
One selfsame figure sits or walks or lens:
We found her hidden just behind those screens
That mirror gave back all her loveliness.
A queen in opal or in ruby dress,
A nameless girl in freshest summer-greens,
A saint, an angle-every canvas means
The same one meaning; neither more or less
He feeds upon her face by day and night,
And she with true kind eyes looks back on him,
Fair as the moon and joyful as the light:
Not wan with waiting, not with sorrow dim;
Not as she is, but was when hope shone bright,
Not as she is, but as she fills his dream.

Art by Udita Roy
Semester VI



*Art by Tanusree Singha
Semester VI*

Strengthen the female
mind by enlarging it,
and there will be an end to blind
Obedience.

— Mary Wollstonecraft.

Does the society need a Feminist movement again?

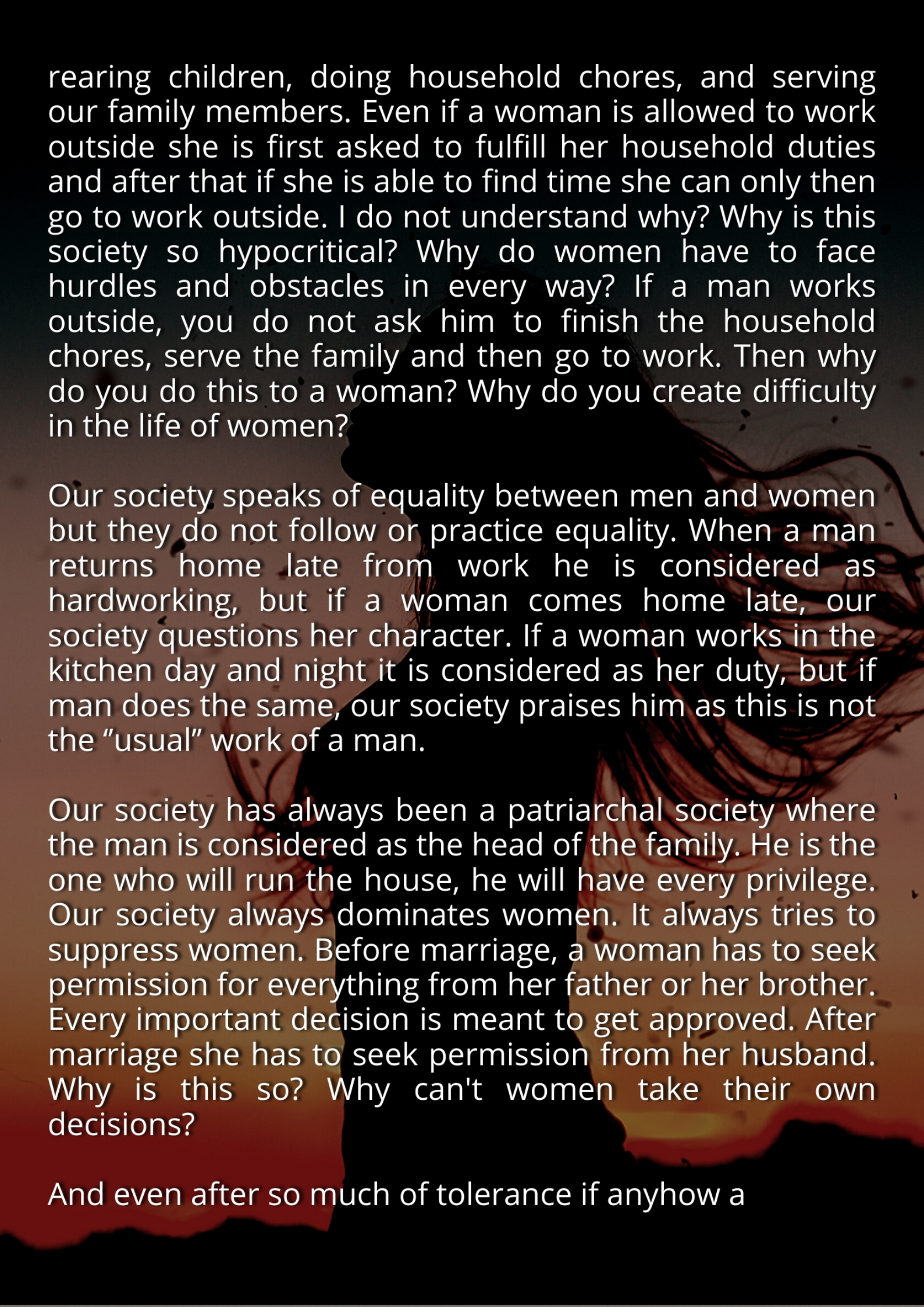
**By Suravi Banerjee
Semester VI**

Women have struggled a lot to be equal to men for centuries. Feminism is the feeling of independence and freedom of women. It is the equality of a woman with a man. This struggle has brought change in the society to some extent but not totally. We can say that just a minor part of the society has progressed. Our society has always dominated us, considering us as a burden, weak, incapable, inferior to men. Whenever it came to equality, our society has suppressed us by saying "She is a woman she can't do it" or "she should not do it".

This discrimination begins from our own house where a girl is considered as some one's property that has to be sent to her in-laws house after marriage. As if the main purpose of a girl is to get married and have kids. They always desire a boy child more than a girl child.

We often have to hear from the society that the main responsibility and a duty of a woman is to take care of family and the household. Career, passion are the terms that are only applicable to girls of a younger age. It is the enthusiasm of young age, because after a certain time she has to take care of her family only. But why is our life pre scheduled by the society? Why can't we live our life in our own ways?

Our in-laws expect us to be homemakers engaged in

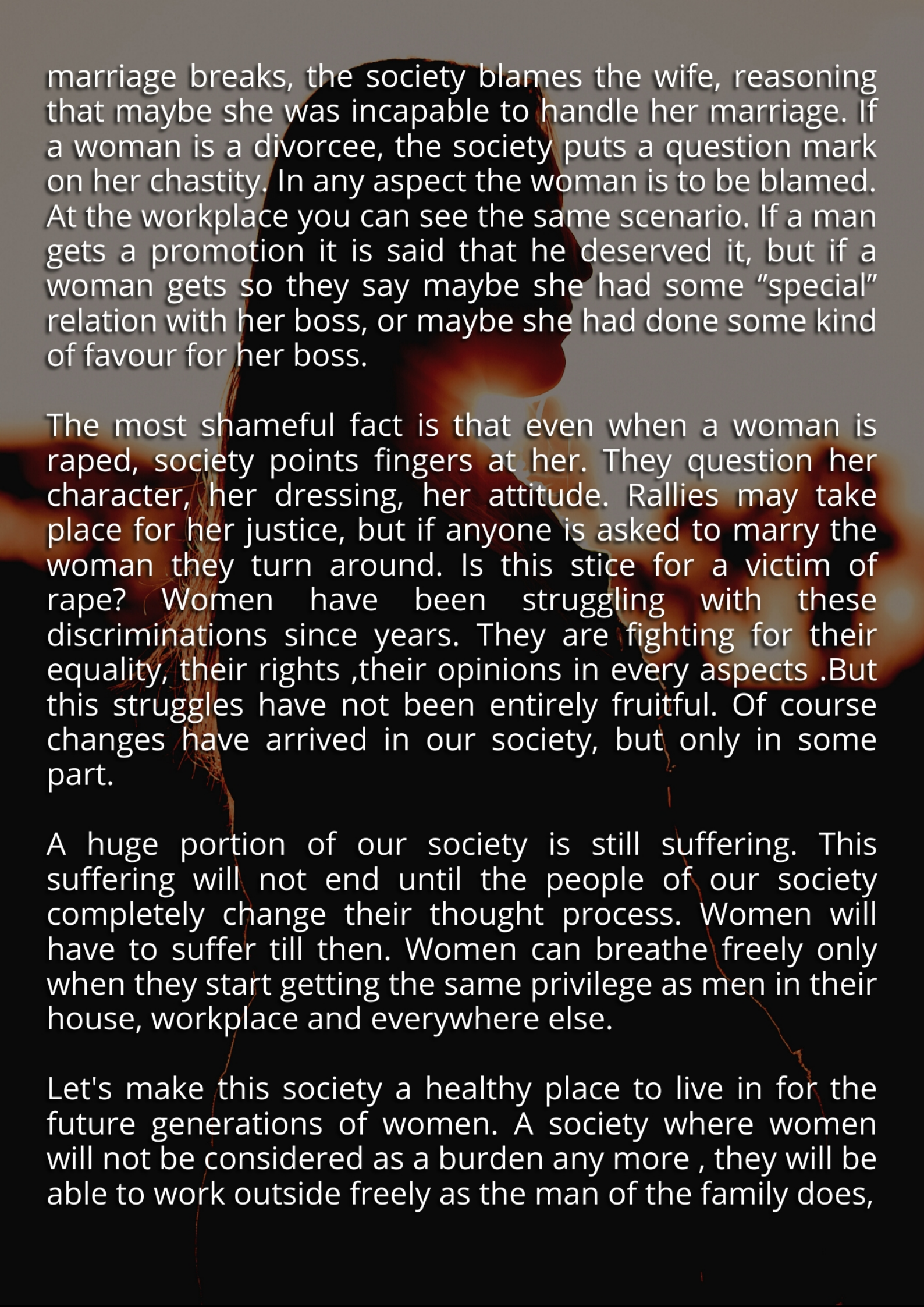


rearing children, doing household chores, and serving our family members. Even if a woman is allowed to work outside she is first asked to fulfill her household duties and after that if she is able to find time she can only then go to work outside. I do not understand why? Why is this society so hypocritical? Why do women have to face hurdles and obstacles in every way? If a man works outside, you do not ask him to finish the household chores, serve the family and then go to work. Then why do you do this to a woman? Why do you create difficulty in the life of women?

Our society speaks of equality between men and women but they do not follow or practice equality. When a man returns home late from work he is considered as hardworking, but if a woman comes home late, our society questions her character. If a woman works in the kitchen day and night it is considered as her duty, but if man does the same, our society praises him as this is not the "usual" work of a man.

Our society has always been a patriarchal society where the man is considered as the head of the family. He is the one who will run the house, he will have every privilege. Our society always dominates women. It always tries to suppress women. Before marriage, a woman has to seek permission for everything from her father or her brother. Every important decision is meant to get approved. After marriage she has to seek permission from her husband. Why is this so? Why can't women take their own decisions?

And even after so much of tolerance if anyhow a

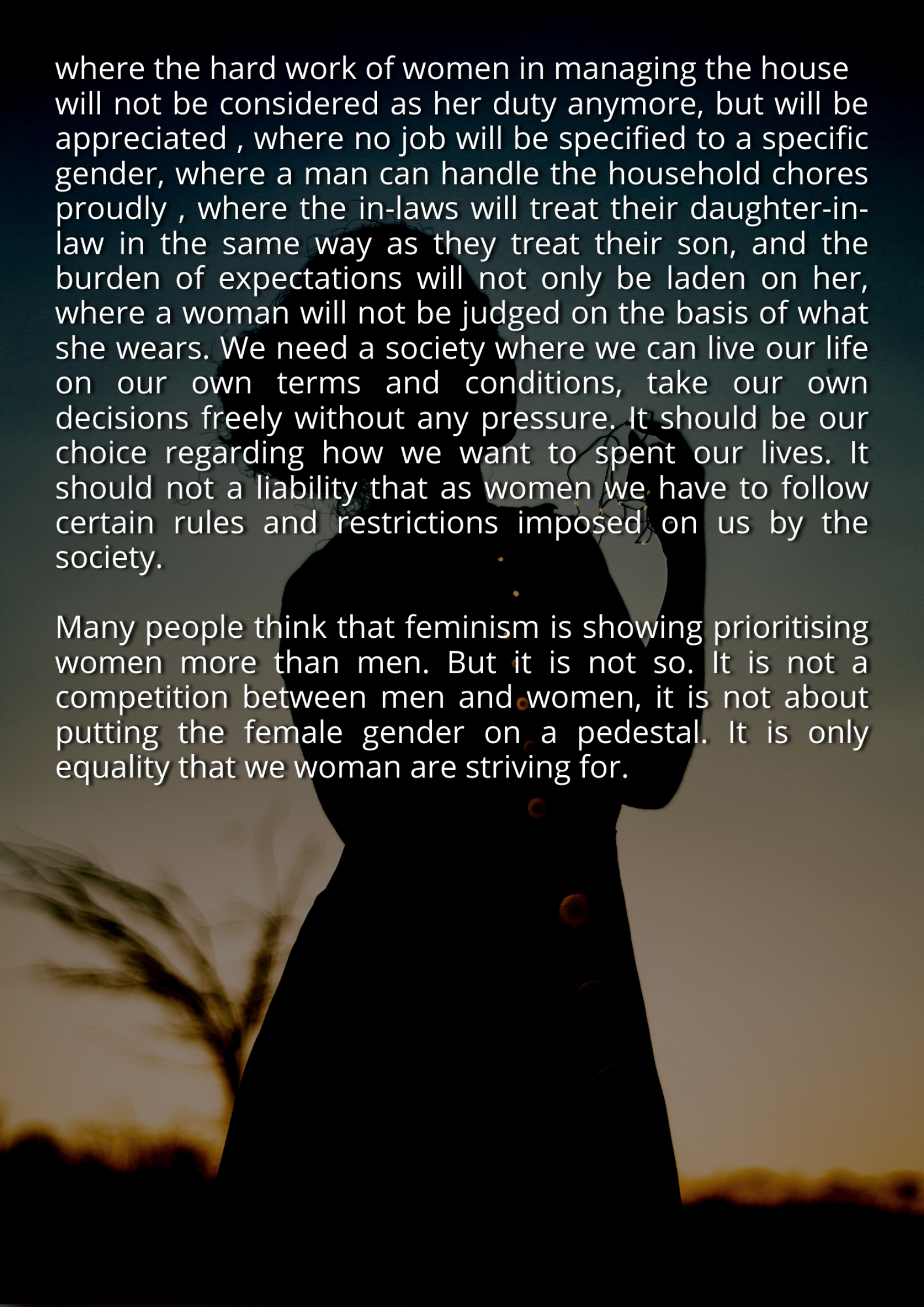


marriage breaks, the society blames the wife, reasoning that maybe she was incapable to handle her marriage. If a woman is a divorcee, the society puts a question mark on her chastity. In any aspect the woman is to be blamed. At the workplace you can see the same scenario. If a man gets a promotion it is said that he deserved it, but if a woman gets so they say maybe she had some "special" relation with her boss, or maybe she had done some kind of favour for her boss.

The most shameful fact is that even when a woman is raped, society points fingers at her. They question her character, her dressing, her attitude. Rallies may take place for her justice, but if anyone is asked to marry the woman they turn around. Is this stice for a victim of rape? Women have been struggling with these discriminations since years. They are fighting for their equality, their rights ,their opinions in every aspects .But this struggles have not been entirely fruitful. Of course changes have arrived in our society, but only in some part.

A huge portion of our society is still suffering. This suffering will not end until the people of our society completely change their thought process. Women will have to suffer till then. Women can breathe freely only when they start getting the same privilege as men in their house, workplace and everywhere else.

Let's make this society a healthy place to live in for the future generations of women. A society where women will not be considered as a burden any more , they will be able to work outside freely as the man of the family does,

A silhouette of a woman in a black, long-sleeved, button-down dress stands against a sunset background. She is holding a pair of glasses in her hands. The background shows a warm, orange and yellow sky with a palm tree silhouette on the left.

where the hard work of women in managing the house will not be considered as her duty anymore, but will be appreciated , where no job will be specified to a specific gender, where a man can handle the household chores proudly , where the in-laws will treat their daughter-in-law in the same way as they treat their son, and the burden of expectations will not only be laden on her, where a woman will not be judged on the basis of what she wears. We need a society where we can live our life on our own terms and conditions, take our own decisions freely without any pressure. It should be our choice regarding how we want to spent our lives. It should not a liability that as women we have to follow certain rules and restrictions imposed on us by the society.

Many people think that feminism is showing prioritising women more than men. But it is not so. It is not a competition between men and women, it is not about putting the female gender on a pedestal. It is only equality that we woman are striving for.

*“ You educate a man; you educate a man. You educate a woman ; you educate a generation ”
-Brigham Young*



*Digital Art by Tithi Konar
Semester IV*

Secret Superstar: Film Review

**By Aishika Dutta
Semester VI**

Advait Chandan's directorial debut Hindi film *Secret Superstar* deals with the story of a girl's dreams, disappointments and the painful problems that come out on being a female child in a patriarchal society. Her journey of becoming a singer was by no means a smooth ride. Her inseparable bond with her mother and their indomitable spirits makes *secret superstar* an endearing film. The film deals with the social issues including feminism, gender equality and domestic violence. The film represents the two characters Najma (the mother) and Insia (the daughter) and vividly foreshadows the painful emotions of the two generations.

The story is based in Vadodara (Gujarat) where a fifteen-year old teenage girl Insia Malik (Zaira Wasim) lives with her mother Najma (Meher Vij), her father Farookh (Raj Arjun) and her brother Guddu (Kabir Sajid). Insia loves strumming her guitar and she sings like a Rockstar. She is very passionate about her singing but her stereotypical dominating father is against her dream of becoming a singer. He brutally beats up Insia's mother and does not even acknowledge the emotions of his daughter. But Najma keeps encouraging Insia. She gifts her a laptop by selling her jewellery and also buys a guitar for her. Insia records a song wearing a Niquab, so that her father cannot find her identity. She uploads the video on Youtube channel under the name "Secret Superstar". She

becomes an overnight sensation and grabs the attention of Shakti Kumar (Aamir Khan), a talented but pretentious music director in Mumbai. He requests Insia to record a song but she refuses as she hears a lot of negative reviews of him. In spite of facing the restrictions made by her father, but through the constant support from her best friend, Chintan, Insia agrees to record a song in Kumar's studio. In Mumbai she is unable to sing a party song, as she feels the song like a remix of another song. So, she decides to sing the original version which moves everyone to tears. After singing the song, she becomes famous through social media and is nominated as the Best Female Singer. But things worsen when Farookh is offered a the job in Riyadh and he intends to move the entire family to Saudi Arabia. Farookh also plans to arrange his daughter's marriage with his friend's son. Devastated Insia gives up her dream of singing and deletes her Youtube channel.

In spite of being humiliated and tortured violently by her husband, Najma finally stands up for herself and boldly protests against him and signs the divorce paper. She shows her maturity by exposing her husband in public and subverting his plans for setting in Saudi Arabia. Najma takes her daughter along with her son at the Award ceremony where Insia has been nominated for the best female singer. Unfortunately Insia does not win the award. But the winner Monali Thakur graciously offers Insia her award believing that she deserves it. Insia finally moves towards the stage and removes her Niquab to reveal herself in front of the whole world. Lastly Insia dedicates her award to her mother and proclaims her the "True Secret Superstar" since Najma

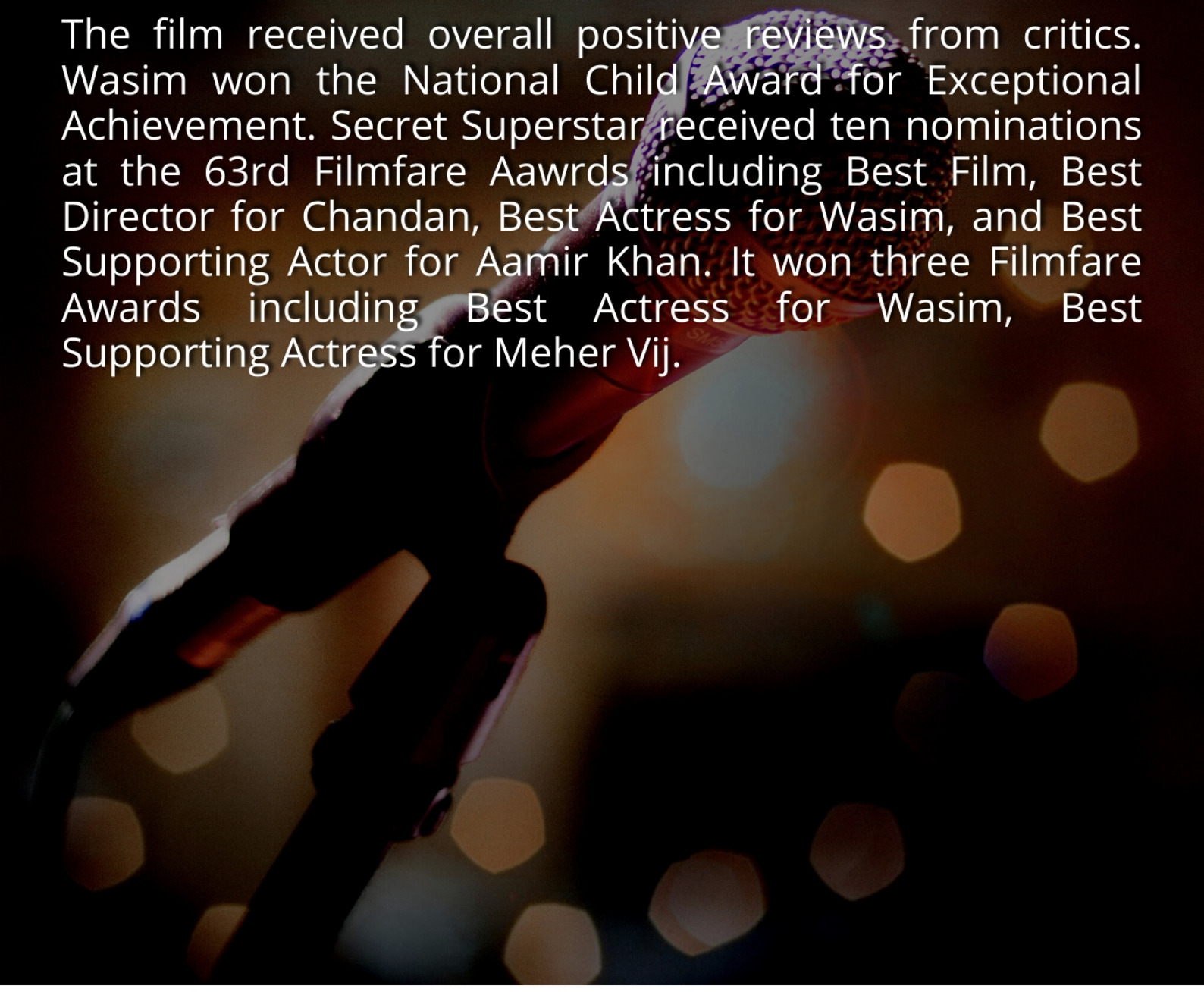
supported and fought for Insia. The word secret in the title of the film is very symbolic. The film ends with a dedicated message among the audience to “mothers and motherhood” for all women who are mothers and who face all kinds of suppression and violence throughout their lives but stand strong against all odds when it comes for the betterment of their children. Thus, through the role of Insia and Najma the director shows struggle and perseverance which are worth mentioning. He also shows the friendly relations through Chintan and Insia which takes the story to a new path.

The film points out Insia’s revolts against her father and bravely protecting her mother from harsh beating. She helps Najma to rescue her from pain and arranges a lawyer for her mother’s divorce case. Insia wants Najma to leave the male dominated household ruled by her cruel father Farookh. On the other hand, Najma supports Insia by secretly allowing her to follow her passion despite her husband’s strong dislike. She tries to give her daughter the same things she never had in her life. The film proves that a mother can reach to any extent for fulfilling the dreams of her children. Even Insia’s little brother used his innocence and love to try and make their lives better in whatever small ways he could. In a heart-breaking scene he tries to fix her broken laptop with tape and glue. The film also shows the pathetic condition of women which can be inferred by the dialogue between Insia and her grandmother.

Secret Superstar has the kind of emotional depth and heart-breaking scenes that steals the heart of audiences. It is an inspiring film towards achievement and it shows

a beautiful bond between a mother and a daughter and exposes the harsh reality and barriers of a conservative middle class family. The film portrays the realistic picture of women who are the victims of patriarchy and domestic violence. The film teaches a lesson to the orthodox families and societies that men should not think women to be weak and no girl child should be restricted from fulfilling her dreams. Through the character of Shakti Kumar, the film takes good humoured swipes at the ways of music industry's award shows and the entertainment media. The songs of the film deserve a special mention as the heart-touching music gives a sweet flavour to the audience.

The film received overall positive reviews from critics. Wasim won the National Child Award for Exceptional Achievement. Secret Superstar received ten nominations at the 63rd Filmfare Awards including Best Film, Best Director for Chandan, Best Actress for Wasim, and Best Supporting Actor for Aamir Khan. It won three Filmfare Awards including Best Actress for Wasim, Best Supporting Actress for Meher Vij.





Art by Tanusree Singha
Semester VI

“There is no modernity and
no justice without the talents,
the passion and the steely
intelligence of women.”

— Toni Morrison

She

By Sonal Mahanti
Semester VI

*She is strong,
yet her strength is undermined.*

*She is wise,
yet her wisdom is questioned.*

*She is often told she is not
what she really is..*

*She is told she cannot,
when she believes she can.*

*She has been told this is not her world,
but she knows it surely is.*

*She has been told she is unwanted,
But she's aware that she's ineludible.*

A blessing she is, purest of the pure

Fierce she is, the bravest of all

She is a melody, soft and sweet

A death knell she is, harsh and raucous

She is kindness personified— caring & empathizing

She is destructive, wrecking havoc & terrifying

Not a half that needs completion, she is but a whole

For she's also the creator— a divine soul.

So why not just let her be and become..

Why not simply adorn her with love and freedom?



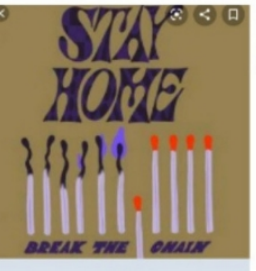
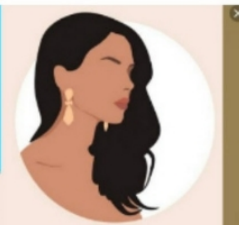
WOMEN'S RIGHTS
ARE
HUMAN RIGHTS

Art by Tanusree Singha
Semester VI

WE RISE BY LIFTING OTHERS.

BREAK THE CHAIN

- T • IS IT TRUE?
- H • IS IT HELPFUL?
- I • IS IT INSPIRING?
- N • IS IT NECESSARY?
- K • IS IT KIND?



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