

Happy Pride Month!

Love Is Too Beautiful To Be Hidden In a Closet

LGBTQ+ refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, with the plus sign signifying the remaining people who identify with a different sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression that they were assigned at birth by the heteronormative society. Although the word "Queer" was used as a derogatory term by queerphobic people, the word has now been reclaimed by the community as a symbol of strength. The LGBTQ+ community widely agrees that a spectrum exists between masculinity and femininity, and a person may fall anywhere on that spectrum.

Pride Month started as a riot i.e. 'The Stonewall Riot', held on June 28, 1969. The march was held to shed light on the violent abuse faced by the queer community by police and state officials. The march eventually turned into Pride Week and then evolved into what is known today as Pride Month. Events have become more specialized, offering different types of celebrations

for specific aspects of the LGBTQ+ community.

Pride Month is a celebration of the LGBTQ+ community and all that they have endured by the heteronormative society. The month-long occasion brings awareness, acceptance, and appreciation for the queer community globally. For the entire month of June, LGBTQ+ individuals and their allies wear rainbows, host pride parades, and hold a variety of events to honour those in the community. Allies are non-queer folks that love and support the queer community. The month can also be a time to celebrate individual's successes within the community, offering them encouragement, hope, and support in their journey through life.

Who better to learn from, than a member of the community itself. In a conversation with Aaron Christopher Nayagam, currently pursuing SYBAMMC at Don Bosco, Kurla, and an alumni of St Andrews College, agreed to an exclusive interview with us to elaborate his journey so far. He is a Singer, Makeup Artist and Influencer.

Aaron was 13 when he came to terms with his sexuality. He researched about it on the internet and finally found

himself relating to something. He understood why he was different. Along with the euphoria also came the fear of coming out to those close to him.

At a Science class, when his hand accidentally brushed his lab partner, his partner called him a homophobic slur. Shocked by his situation, with tears in his eyes, he reported it to the school principal, who in turn suspended him under the guise of helping him. After that particularly disappointing incident, he came out to a friend who saw him crying in a classroom. Even a closeted male teacher comforted him and offered advice when he had heard about the incident.

He always knew that there were homophobic people but least expected it from some close friends who began avoiding him when word spread about his coming out. All this made him suppress who he was.

One day upon returning from his class, he saw his mother crying in the building. When they reached home she told him that she heard something about him but later brushed it off. He always dreaded telling his mother the truth but she knew something was up. Some days later she finally confronted him and said that she heard that he was gay but avoided using the word “gay” instead she said “that”. He just told her he was confused. Her response, much like many regressive people, was to take him for counselling. He pretended that it worked and began suppressing his feelings. He had read about this sort of thing online and hence he was prepared for it.

At St. Andrew's he found friends who never judged him for who he was and accepted him. He began living a different life in front of his family which harmed his mental health. He secretly began applying makeup on himself when everyone was asleep as a way of expressing himself and started sharing it on his Instagram page- @aaristopher.

Sometimes, a person's biggest supporter is a total stranger and Aaron knew exactly that, therefore he joined Don Bosco with hopes of meeting new people who were more open-minded. He is now surrounded by a loving circle that not only encourages him to live up to his true identity but also accepts him just the way he is.

Then the pandemic hit and he couldn't use college as an escape anymore. So on 19th August 2020 he finally came out to his mother again but this time her response was far from what he had expected. She accepted him and told him she would try her best to have a broader perspective. He is glad to live his truth and not hide it anymore and even shows his family his makeup looks @makeup_byaaron and commenced makeup classes for those interested.

Struggles faced by the LGBTQ+ community in India include-

- Discrimination:** Workplace discrimination hinders the financial and mental growth of an individual and is abuse in the name of personal beliefs. The group focus culture not only encourages abuse and harassment but deems such ill-treatment as a normal

workplace environment policy. Education and healthcare are often denied to the third gender under the pretext of political and religious beliefs.

- Law enforcement: The police often mishandles people who are homosexual, transgender, asexual, etc.
- Conversion therapies, collective molestation and harassment demonstrating violence and aggression towards queer people and locking them up in jail cells.
- Violence: Murder, street harassment like stalking yelling queerphobic slurs in a public setting or gaslighting them in a private setting under the pretext of “it’s just a joke!” Familial oppression and intimidation in the name of love are pretty common in the desi culture. Admission to mental health facilities that treat people with psychological disorders wrongly include the LGBTQ+ community and this reality is not far from a twisted sci-fi horror.

Reader’s discretion: Your participation or silence in an environment where such abuse prevails, makes you queerphobic. Please stand up for anyone from the community not only during the pride month using social media but also by educating your near ones (No, don’t just post a rainbow sticker and call it a day.)

How to be an Ally:

- Always wait for a person to come out, do not assume or pressurize someone to come out of the closet or out them against their knowledge and wishes.

- Use the right pronouns and be open to corrections. Do not assume a person’s pronouns. For example, your friend Saraswati is a female but she may not use she/her but she /they or they could be non-binary and use they/them or ze/zir.

- Call out people who stereotype. Not every man with feminine traits is gay and not every woman with short hair is a lesbian. Educate and be educated. Be open to review and accept corrections.

“Always remember Love has no gender, compassion has no religion and character has no race” – Abhijit Naskar.

-Written by Cliff Coutinho, Jazlynn Mathias, and Stephanie Cardoz.

This article was written in collaboration with Aaron Nayagam, former student at St. Andrew’s College of Arts, Science and Commerce.

Featured Photograph



Joshua Pereira
SYJC

Keeping Up With Your Mental Health

The human brain is extremely intricate and works round the clock. Mental health encapsulates our emotional and psychological well-being. It not only impacts how we think, feel, and behave, but also handle stress-inducing situations. Needless to say, we need to prioritize it and it's about time we destigmatize the topic. Mental health is important in every stage of one's life. If one's mental health degenerates, it can cause short term mental health issues or lifelong mental illnesses. It can negatively impact one's educational outcome, productivity, personal relationships, personal growth and development resulting in substance abuse. Mental health is as important as one's physical health; poor mental health has directly been linked to chronic conditions such as stroke, type 2 diabetes, and heart diseases.

Numerous factors contribute to mental health problems. Biological factors such as genes or brain chemistry and life experiences such as trauma, assault, or abuse, or a family history of mental health problems. The World Health Organization (WHO) gives a comprehensive definition for mental



health, it is “Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”

We are living in a time when it is an incredible achievement to feel mentally stable. The current challenges brought about by COVID-19 for people all around the globe are unmatched and have caused fear, anxiety and ambivalence for so many of us. We are all going through this together, it's important to understand that you're not alone in how you're feeling right now and that there are practical, healthy ways to cope with these emotions.

Emotions can be a roller coaster ride that can either bring us up to heights we never thought we could reach or they can drag us down into the depths of despair. There are many different emotions and while it may seem like some are good and some are bad, this is not always the case. Bottling our emotions up only leads to future feelings of guilt or resentment towards others as well as issues with mental stability. Instead, try getting those feelings out when you start feeling those negative emotions by expressing yourself in a way that you feel comfortable; whether it be writing an essay, singing your heart out at the top of your lungs, or sharing your thoughts on social media.

We all are going through some kind of stress and some of us even feel alienated. It's hard to feel good when you're stressed, have low self-esteem, or are feeling down in the dumps. Here are some early warning signs of degenerating mental health: Eating or sleeping too much, pushing away people and usual activities, having low or no energy, feeling numb or like nothing matters, having unexpected aches and pains, feeling helpless or hopeless, excess consumption of harmful substances. Other signs may include feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared, yelling or fighting with family and friends, experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships. In addition to having persistent thoughts and memories you can't get out of your head, hearing voices or believing things that are not true, thinking of harming yourself or others, you may be unable

to perform daily tasks like taking care of your kids or getting to work or school.

Whether you're struggling with anxiety, depression, or any other condition, exercise plays an important role in your life. Eat well, have a good sleep cycle, and get some exercise done. Exercise can improve your sleep, make you feel more relaxed and increase your body's production of endorphins, which can improve your mood.

Maintain Healthy Relationships:

Loneliness is an epidemic, and now more than ever, people are feeling lonely and isolated, resulting in increased levels of anxiety and depression. One of the best ways to guard your mental health is by prioritizing your relationships. Having strong interpersonal relationships helps us feel like we're part of a community, gives our life meaning, makes us feel accepted, and reinforces that we have people we can rely on during times of trouble.

Rely on your Support System:

Don't hesitate to use your support system - friends, family, therapy, etc. when needed. It's crucial to remember that asking family members or friends for help if you're struggling isn't a sign of weakness, but rather strength. There should be no guilt or embarrassment in asking for help. After all, being open and honest with your loved ones can help you begin the process of healing.

Associate with Positive People:

Being around positive and like-minded people can do wonders for your mental health. Suppressing your emotions is

notably harmful to your mental health, hence surrounding yourself with positive people can help tremendously with your mental wellbeing.

Healthy Mindset:

Don't chase after happiness, instead focus on what gives your life meaning rather than chasing fleeting happiness. Stop comparing your life to other people's social media highlights instead, try meditating or listening to instrumental music. Be grateful for the positive things in your life, may it be friends, family, or a stable source of income. Avoid burnouts, don't take on major projects unless they're important.



It is important to note that each person and their mindset is different, and hence there are numerous ways one can become more mentally stable. It's also important to recognize when you need to get help. If your condition is more serious than mentioned above, and you feel numb and disconnected, get in touch with a therapist. Talk therapy and medicines can help treat mental disorders. If you don't know where to get treatment, start by contacting your primary care provider or contact the toll-free government mental health line number @08046110007

-Written by: Cliff Coutinho, SYJC.

All You Need To Know

Women's

Development

Cell

For a country like India, where women face atrocities at all stages in life, comprehending the issues women face are extremely important. Educating students about it and spreading the word is something that CWDC does. It came into form after the Vishakha guidelines came into effect in 1997, CWDC stands for College Women's Development Cell. It works to give students an idea to create safe spaces for women and fight patriarchal norms. It helps sensitize issues related to gender, minorities and sexualities. Gender Sensitization is a primary requirement to acknowledge the sensitive requirements of a particular gender. It helps us to study our unique attitudes and beliefs and question the 'realities' that we believed we knew. The need for this sensitivity has been observed and noticed through times ancient and in almost all styles of human existence, across the planet. Recent conversations focus upon the need to sensitize gender issues on campus as a lot of people accept that education is the motivation for change. Educational spaces inculcate thought

and make one have a perception that they have confidence in.

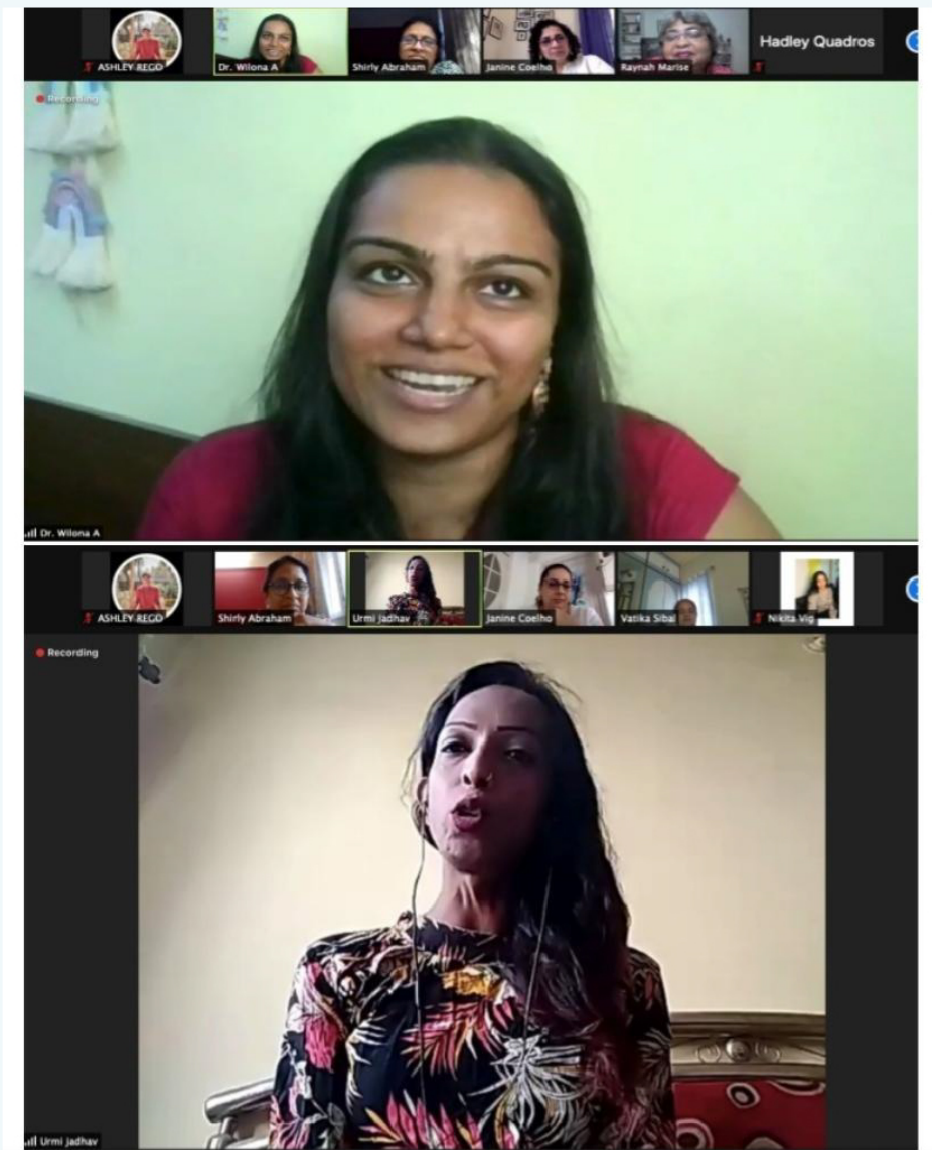
College students and educators can bridge the gap in subject matter capability around the affirmative consent paradigm by bringing in experts. Sexuality and consent are topics that many educators hesitate to bring up because of a lack of resources and understanding of how to address these deeply complex topics appropriately with, tweens, and teens. We need to train all teachers and administrators on sexual misconduct, consent, dating violence, and reporting and response obligations. We then need to infuse these conversations across the curriculum so that students receive these messages consistently throughout their school and college years.

Many activities take place in the CWDC like several talks based on Masculinity, Feminism, Trends in Feminism, Black Feminism, How to be a queer ally and many more. These talks educate students on serious topics and push them forward to share their views. Feminism means a trillion things to a million people. The term feminism can be used to describe a political, cultural or economic movement aimed at establishing equal rights and legal

protection for women. However, individuals look at feminists in a different light and assume there is already equality among men and women. Our specific views are based on our personal experiences. The CWDC helps us step in others' shoes and stand for what is right. The CWDC also provides certificate courses and collaborates with numerous NGOs. During the lockdown last year, A National Webinar on Gender Equity and Covid 19 and the Impact and Role of Religious minorities were held. Such educational and informational talks help students to get in touch with the outside world and have a broader perspective. It encourages students to be open and approach CWDC if they face any instances regarding Sexism and Homophobia in college, it urges students to not tolerate such behaviour.



10 June 2020. Webinar on Gender Equity and COVID-19: Impact and Role of religious minorities.



28-29 January 2021. Two day National Webinar on Crossroad Identity Series- Demystifying Gender Praxis in Literature, Art and Media

They would also like students to attend more sessions and actively participate to build a better environment and bring about a change. Talking about sexual harassment and issues like homophobia and sexism is supported by CDWC and it helps create a safe space on the college campus. Students are free to talk to anyone from the team regarding any issues they face on campus.

-Glynis.A. Fernandes. FYBAMMC A
This article was written in collaboration with Hrithik Laxman Lalan, SYBA B from the CWDC Cell.

Book Review

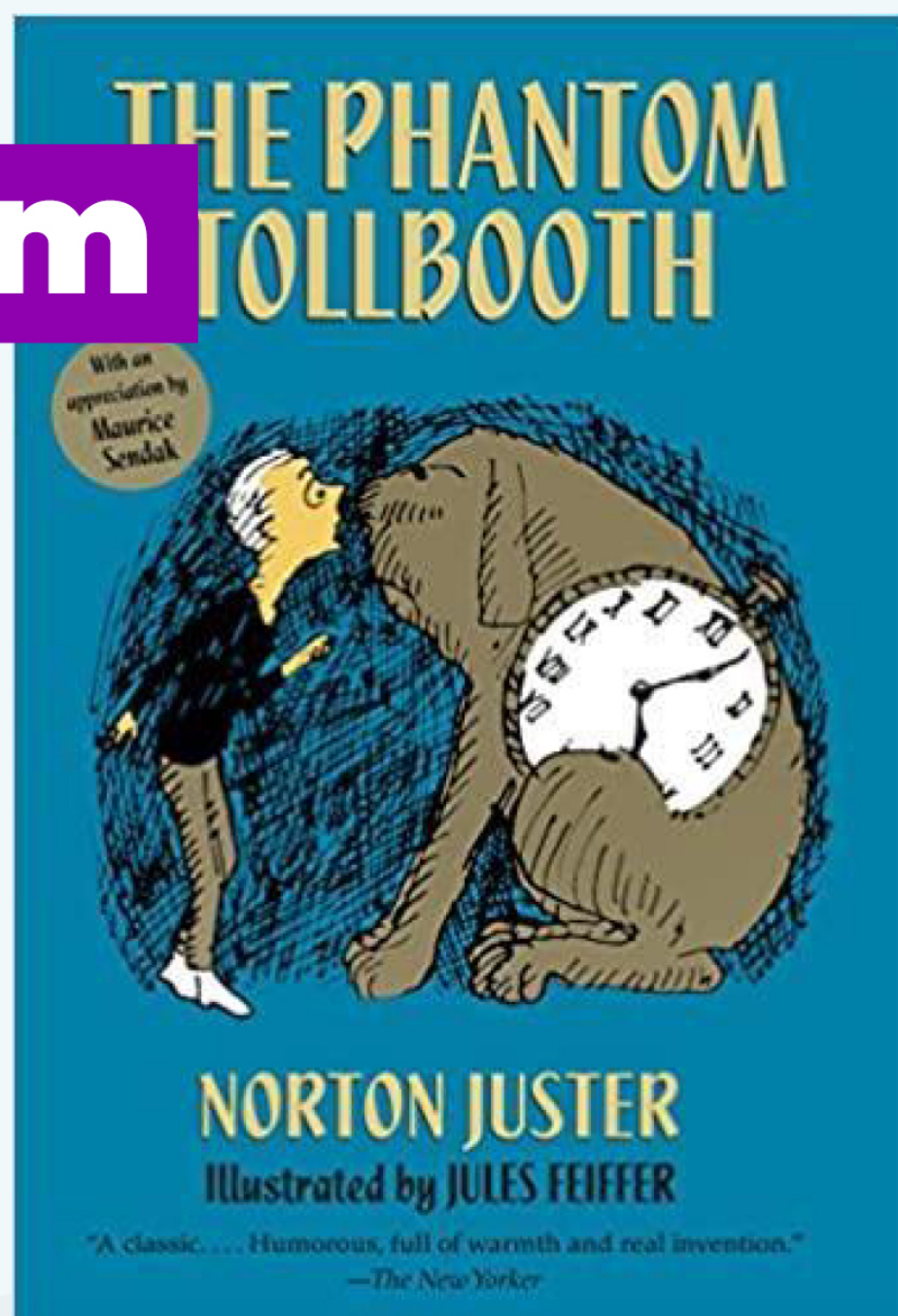
The Phantom

Tollbooth

“For you often learn more by being wrong for the right reason than you do by being right for the wrong reasons.”

A quest to find Rhyme and Reason past the Valley of sound, through the Mountains of Ignorance and against the Kings of Dictionopolis and Digitopolis. Sure this sentence is utter chaos, but the journey is worth the hour. The Phantom Tollbooth is a spectacular novel written by Norton Juster and illustrated by Jules Feiffer. It tells a story of a young boy with a desire to experience the unexpected; stuck in a dull, dreary world. What a stroke of luck when he finds a strange and peculiar package in his room. A bright blue envelope addressed to him “FOR MILO, WHO HAS PLENTY OF TIME” and an unusually large box. I would tell you what was inside but I would be ruining the surprise.

Milo finds himself racing down a road past the Doldrums - a place you reach without thinking - in an electric car. He meets Tock the WatchDog who has an eye for detail and is quite a punctual fellow. They tour the humanly undiscovered lands where letters grow on trees and taste the way they're spelt. Milo travels through a marketplace where you can buy your own words and the rarest words are the most expensive. Can you choose your words wisely? Either trekking through the Hills of



Confusion or swimming across the Sea of Knowledge, Juster was able to create a world of distant fantasy full of fun and peculiar experiences. Not only does this book tell of adventure and saving the princesses, Rhyme and Reason, it finds its foundations in comical irony through the characters and their dialogues. As direct as this novel may seem, it includes valuable perspectives for a mature audience such as the difference between reality and illusions; it questions the morality of humans and pokes at the heart of all problems; the purpose of life. It truly is the perfect read across different generations with values and principles woven into humour; resulting in the reader losing their sense of their surroundings while finding comfort in these pages.

-Written by – David Jayaprakash TYBA

Teaching Virtually

A Perspective

With lectures shifting online due to the ongoing situation, one thing that made me happy, was the fact that I didn't have to travel all the way to college. But one challenge, not just me, but my colleagues also strive to overcome is - creating an interactive and engaging experience for students attending our lectures. Teaching virtually has its own set of pros and cons. My personal opinion is, virtual knowledge transmission can never completely replace traditional lectures.

I must admit, adapting to this method of teaching, has been a learning journey for me as well. Through my experience, I've been able to point out a few hindrances in the online teaching environment -

Classroom Activities: Having lectures online limits the number of activities / role-plays we can conduct in class, to better explain concepts.

Attention Span: I totally understand how boring it can get to continuously stare at a screen and grasp all that knowledge.

Lack of a "Knowledge sharing atmosphere": I've had students logging in to lectures at 7.30 am sharp, while they've just woken up at 7.29 am. Your professors know it. Trust me.

Equally Taxing: Just as students may find sitting in front of a screen taxing, us lecturers have to even speak for that duration. As a visiting faculty, I deliver just one lecture on a weekend. I know my



full-time colleagues, find it equally taxing to continuously speak in back to back lectures.

While these challenges are there, lecturers are finding innovative ways to overcome them. Here are some things I incorporate in my online lectures to keep students engaged.

- Conducting role-plays/group discussions using break-out rooms. Discussions always help stimulate the mind and increase knowledge retention.
- Regular mini breaks in the lecture - may be a minute or two, not more. It's been effective so far for me.
- I insist that my students have their videos on during some parts of the lecture. It's important to create that connection not just with your professors, but also with your classmates.
- Mini quizzes/games. These help in revising the concepts just taught during the lectures.
- Roll-call for attendance. You may wonder why attendance, when the software automatically records

attendance. We do it a little differently in my class - we decide a theme for the attendance - and everyone answers accordingly when their name's called out. This just helps to build a healthy bond and keeps everyone's attention in the class. (some themes - favourite series, favourite cuisine , favourite song, etc.)

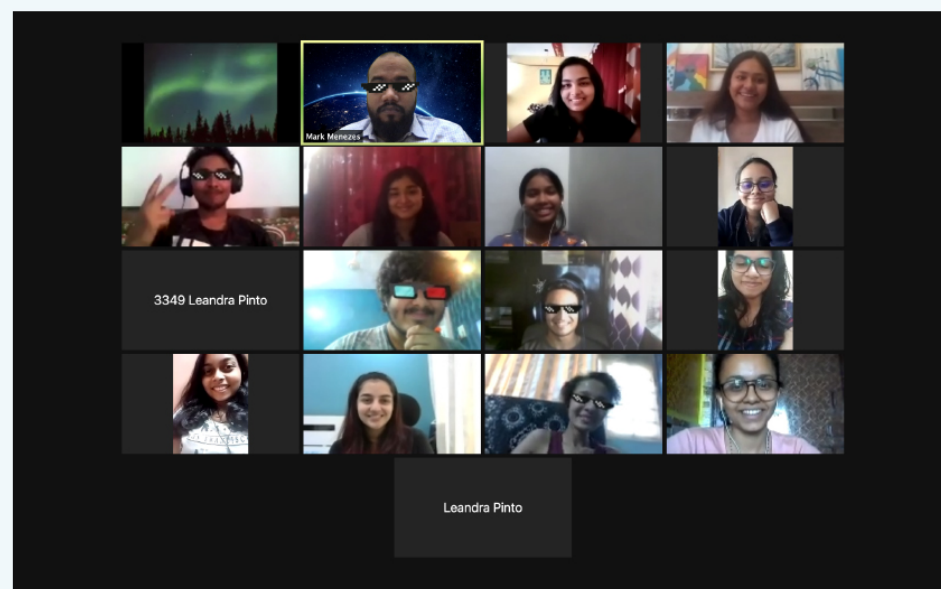
- Streaming relevant videos, giving students mini google-search tasks related to the concept we're learning , and then asking them to present it to the class right then and there- some of the things that make it interesting.
A little humour goes a long way.

No class is complete without it's students. The main motivation for professors is their students. So we're always looking to make the class more beneficial for you and that's possible with your support. Here's some things you can do, as students, to make the class more interesting -

- Participate.** When the professor asks questions, don't be afraid to be the first one to answer. No one is judging you for the answers. (Except in a viva or an exam :P). Smash that un-mute button and put your point across.

- Give examples.** You're listening to a concept that a professor is explaining. An example of a recent industry event that is relatable pops up in your mind. Ask your professor if you can share it. 9/10 times they will allow you to do so.

- Ask questions.** If you don't understand something, please ask. Your question will benefit your classmates.



Honestly, I can't wait to get back to a classroom and teach! I miss the interactions and knowledge sharing that happens in a physical classroom. But we're all doing our best in the circumstances that we're in. Let's stay focused. Stay safe, Get vaccinated and see you soon !

- Prof Mark Menezes,
Visiting Faculty, department of B.M.S

Balushahi

Recipe

Balushahi is a traditional dessert that originates from the Indian subcontinent that looks like a glazed donut. The outer layer of Balushahi is crispy and the inside soft and flaky. It's one of the best desserts to serve at any festive occasion.

This recipe will make 10-12 Balushahis.

INGREDIENTS:

Flour: 500gm
Ghee: 250gm
Baking powder: 1 pinch
Sugar: 500gm
Oil: 500 ml
Chopped pistachios
Chopped almonds
Sliver (warak)
Saffron
Water 250ml



SUGAR SYRUP:

Take the sugar and 250 ml of water in a saucepan

Boil it until the sugar has completely dissolved

Add a pinch of saffron to the syrup

The syrup should not be too thick; it should have a liquid consistency.

METHOD:

Take the flour in a bowl, add baking powder, ghee and water and give it a mix.

Use all the ingredients to make a hard dough.

Let the dough rest for 15 minutes.

Divide the dough into small pieces to form a doughnut-like shape.

Heat oil in a deep pot and fry them over low heat until they're golden brown.

Remove them from the oil and soak in the hot sugar syrup.

Garnish with chopped pistachios and almonds and then stick the Warak.

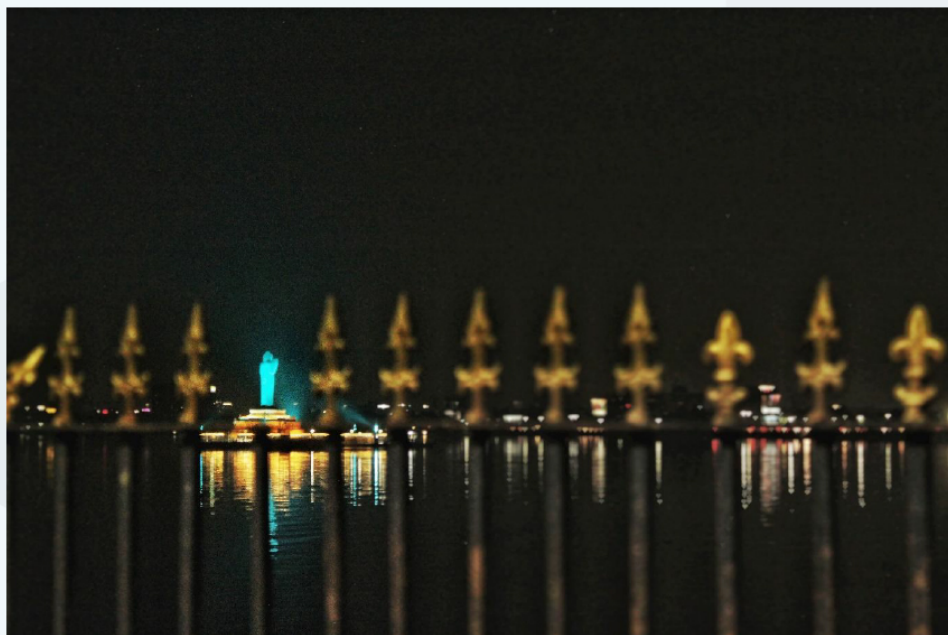
This article was written by Pearl Dsouza in collaboration with Mohd Rehan Shakil Khan from TYBSC HS

Travelogue

Hyderabad

Cradled in the heart of India, the city of Hyderabad lies on the banks of the River Musi. The capital of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, the City of Gardens and the homeland of the Kohinoor. Baghnagar came to be known as Hyderabad inspired by the love of Muhammad Quli for Rani Bhagmati later known as Begum Haidar Mahal.

We travelled to one of the world's largest man made lakes : The Hussain Sagar Lake . A beautiful and enormous statue of Buddha cradled in its heart. It is the largest monolithic statue of Buddha in the whole world and was carved by over 200 sculptures over the course of two years. The view during the night feels ethereal and has an aura indescribable through words alone.



We also visited the Mecca Masjid which is over 400 years old and is built from the soil from Mecca. The beautiful architecture and designs really captured my heart, especially the arched farçade that is carved from a single granite stone. Over 10,000 worshippers could be accommodated at once here!



The rich history of the Golconda fort stood out to me. A tour around the fort left us absolutely mesmerised. It was the capital of the Qutub Shahi dynasty. We also found out that there possibly could be a secret tunnel that started from the Durbar hall to the ends of the hill that also led to Charminar, which really piqued my curiosity. The Golconda Fort was originally built with mud and then later rebuilt.

Even though Hyderabad is a city smallest in terms of area, it has the highest human density. I wouldn't be surprised as I would love to live in a city full of tourist attractions that have a rich cultural background. Once The City of Pearls and Diamonds housed the most beautiful and one of the greatest diamonds in the world – Kohinoor. Other diamonds include the Nassak Diamond, the Blue Hope (United States), the pink Daria-i-Noor (Iran), the White Regent (France), the Dresden Green (Germany), and the colourless Orlov (Russia), Nizam and Jacob(India), as well as the now lost diamonds Florentine Yellow, Akbar Shah and Great Mogul.

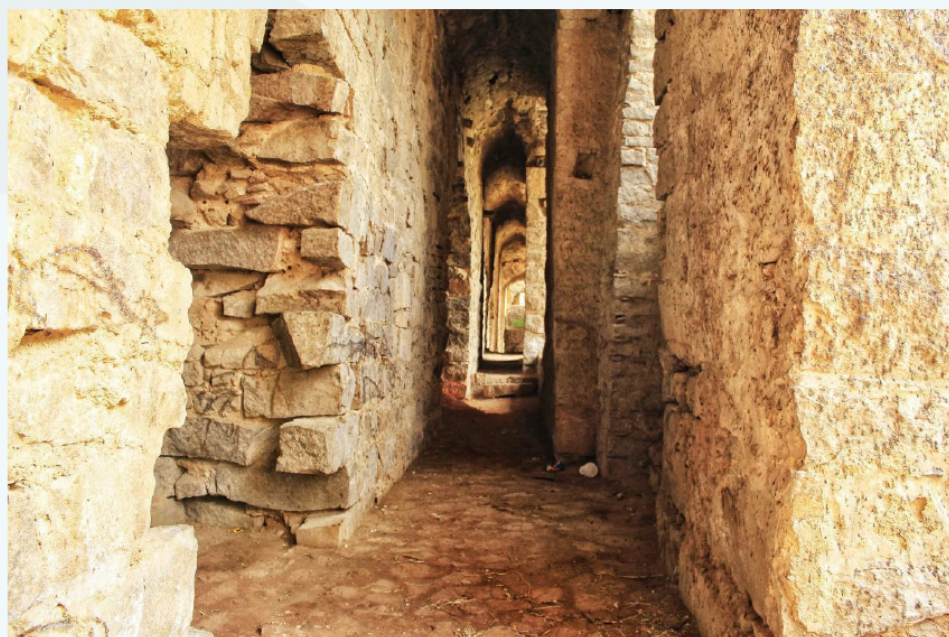
We also visited many restaurants and ate the world famous Hyderabadi

Biryani. We tried the famous Khubani ka Meetha dessert as well. The heavy Hyderabad-Hindi accent was a delight to my ears. It may sometimes be a little difficult to communicate with the locals if not understood.

We passed by many top Indian elite schools and technology centres.

There are still many ancient markets that still stand strong.

We drove over the lengthiest flyover in India, the P V Narasimha Rao Elevated Expressway Corridor. It is over 11 kilometres long and connects us directly to the airport.



Hyderabad is one of the safest cities in India, especially for women which makes it an even better place to live.



Hyderabad is also home to the richest Indian ever who was the last Nizam of India. The word across town was that he owned a diamond paperweight worth £50 million!



-Stephanie Cardoz.
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