


...and willingly, & solemnly of those who assist  
off decent, regular & orderly manner, the  
my dear departed brother in the end of  
the last office was performed, to the  
solemn procession from thence to the grave  
in these, delivered suitable to the occa-  
sion, the solemnity of the funeral, &  
to the meeting house, the afflic-  
tion, the affliction, the affliction  
by the affliction, the affliction  
the affliction, the affliction, the affliction  
a little subsided, returned  
affliction, and the  
taken. The  
But here  
by the  
affliction  
affliction  
affliction

# Verbivore

July 2023-March 2024

...by the  
But here  
taken. The  
affliction, and  
a little subsided, returned  
the affliction, the affliction, the affliction  
appeared in distress  
by the affliction, the affliction  
other circumstances, the  
the solemnity of the funeral, &  
to the meeting house, the afflic-  
in these, delivered suitable to the occa-  
solemn procession from thence to the  
the last office was performed, to the  
my dear departed brother in the end of  
off decent, regular & orderly manner,  
and willingly, & solemnly of those who assist



Department of Languages,  
Literatures and Cultural Studies



MANIPAL UNIVERSITY  
JAIPUR

*(University under Section 2(f) of the UGC Act)*

**Editors:**

**Dr. Sneha Thakur (Chief Editor)**  
**Anushka Gurha & Lakshita Kalra**  
**(Associate Editors)**

**Chaitanya Kirthy, Kavya Bhalotia, Mohak  
Mahicha, Aditi Pareek (Student Editors)**

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# HON'BLE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am glad that the Departments in the Faculty of Arts, with this inaugural issue, are venturing to bring out a quarterly/biannual Newsletter on a regular basis.

Besides showcasing the vital, vibrant, and eventful presence and role of the Faculty of Arts, with its multifarious Departments at MUJ, I believe, the Newsletter would also be the site for students' creative talents and expressions. If a human is defined as one who walks on earth under the sky joyfully and creatively, the contribution of humanities to such an endeavor can never be minimized. MUJ has always recognized and promoted this dimension from its very start, and the phenomenal growth of humanistic studies at the Faculty of Arts with its vibrant faculty and exuberant students stand a glad witness to this.



**DR. G.K PRABHU**  
**President, MUJ**

I congratulate all those who have contributed to the events, activities, and achievements that the Newsletter encapsulates, and I would like to specially appreciate the creative involvement of students in the production of the Newsletter, which I am sure, will have a formative value in their lives.

I offer my greetings to all the members of the Department.

# HON'BLE PRO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**CMDE. (DR) JAWAHAR M. JANGIR**  
**Pro-President, MUJ**

I am pleased to note that the Faculty of Arts (FoA) is bringing out the Newsletter covering various activities happening in the vibrant environment of MUJ.

I am sure the Newsletter would indeed be a repository of memories and achievements, bringing at the same time a great visibility to the various departments in the Faculty of Arts.

My appreciation for all those who have contributed various articles in the Newsletter, especially the exuberant students.

My heartiest congratulations to the editorial team for their efforts in bringing out the Newsletter.

# REGISTRAR'S MESSAGE

It gives me immense pleasure to note that the Faculty of Arts (FOA), Manipal University Jaipur, is launching its quarterly/biannual Newsletter.

On this occasion, I wish to convey my heartiest congratulations to the faculty members, and dedicated students of Faculty of Arts, Manipal University Jaipur, for their collective effort and dedication to the launch of their Newsletter.

I believe this newsletter will play a significant role in showcasing the mission, vision, and achievements of the Faculty of Arts, and will provide the stakeholders all the information to keep them connected to their Faculty.

I extend my best wishes to the entire team. I wish this would be a grand success.

Best Wishes!



**DR. NITU BHATNAGAR**  
**Registrar, MUJ**



# DEAN'S MESSAGE



**PROF. (DR) KOMAL AUDICHYA**  
**Professor & Dean, Faculty of Arts**

I am immensely happy to learn that Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Arts, Manipal University Jaipur, is publishing its first Newsletter. I feel proud that Faculty of Arts has been successfully disseminating knowledge to prepare young minds to meet the challenges of 21st century at national as well as at international level. Since its inception in 2011, it has always strived to impart quality education and provide perfect space to the students for their holistic development. The dynamics of our programmes and the visionary curriculum have been designed meticulously to get students industry ready and make them reach the zenith of their career.

I am sure that this Newsletter will provide ample opportunities to the students of Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies, to explore and articulate their different aspects of creativity as it encompasses publication of various events and activities held in the department, achievements of the students, creative writings, photography, poems etc. Also, it will enhance their knowledge, hone their skills, and nurture their minds for innovation.

I wish the entire team of students and their mentors the very best and hope they work hard to transcend their potential through this Newsletter.

Best wishes!

# HOD'S MESSAGE

A creative mind is one that can grasp the happenings around it and express them impeccably. With immense pleasure, the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies presents *Verbivore*— a convergence of thoughts, ideas, creative insights, arguments, and events. The Department constantly aspires and aims to fulfil the vision and mission of MUJ by inculcating creative and critical thinking among students, be it academics, research, or extra-curricular activities.



**DR. RABINDRA KUMAR VERMA**  
**HoD (I/C), DoLLCS**

The learners' creative insights are also identified and fostered through individual guidance, mentorship, research-orientation (through guest lectures, invited talks, industry lectures and workshops), and the different teaching-learning activities including discussions, debates, presentations, and outreach and extension activities organised as part of the club activities to give the students platforms and avenues to express their ideas and showcase their talent and skills.

To accomplish this, the department offers a variety of courses to hone skills of the UG and PG students and provides them an opportunity to enhance their communication skills, intellectual curiosity, analytical abilities, and interpretive thinking. The Department thrives in the pursuit of academic excellence, skill enhancement, and personality development continue with the same vigour. Apart from providing a space for the students to share their views and perspectives, this newsletter will also give an insight into meaningful activities. The highly qualified faculty members of the department are committed to impart quality education, hone the skills of the 21st century learners, and meet their expectations. I am thankful to the contributors for their articles, poems, literary insights, and other achievements which have significantly added to the quality of the newsletter.

On this occasion, I convey my best wishes and sincerely congratulate to the Editorial Team for the relentless effort, and enthusiasm to bring out the Newsletter of the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies. It is really a splendid work. Many heartfelt thanks to Leadership, Manipal University Jaipur, and Dean, Faculty of Arts, for allowing the Department to initiate and bring out the inaugural issue of the Newsletter.

Best wishes!



# EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Readers,

With immense pride and thrill to have the opportunity to extend our first ever newsletter *Verbivore* – Newsletter of Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultural studies. Before you, lies a testament to the incessant effort, commitment, vibrant spirit, creativity, and intellect that thrives within the Department. *Verbivore* means the one who has an enjoyment of words and wordplay; as people of literature, we cannot relate to any other adjective any more. Words, are indeed our favorite toys to play!

In these pages, you shall find kaleidoscopic experience of the semester that we've had- our events, achievements, new additions, articles by students ranging from thought-provoking essays to captivating poems that transport you to different worlds; there is something here for everyone.

This semester has been a rollercoaster of challenges and triumphs, and our aim was to capture the essence of this journey. It has served as a platform for our students to express themselves, share their experiences, and showcase their achievements. It is a celebration of the hard work, passion, and dedication that permeates every corner of our department.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the contributors, student editors, and faculty members who have poured their time and energy into making this newsletter a reality - Your commitment and enthusiasm have been instrumental in bringing these pages to life.

We hope that you will find a part of yourselves in the pages that follow. We encourage you to read, reflect, and join the conversation in the upcoming issues of the same.

Happy reading!

Dr. Sneha Thakur (Chief Editor)



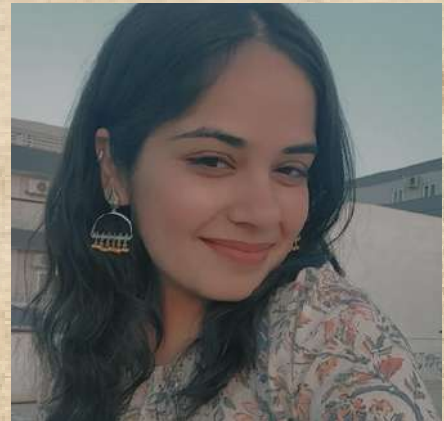
# EDITORIAL BOARD



**Dr. Sneha Thakur**  
(Chief Editor)



**Anushka Gurha**  
(Associate Editor)



**Lakshita Kalra**  
(Associate Editor)

## STUDENT EDITORS



**Kavya Bhalotia**



**Chaitanya Kirthy**



**Mohak Mahicha**



**Aditi Pareek**

# VISION AND MISSION

"To promote holistic development, foster the spirit of nationalism and universal brotherhood by promoting studies in Literatures and Languages, Culture, and Ethnology."

To develop academic excellence through teaching and research, to offer advanced, career-oriented programmes that provide professional knowledge, employability skills, and life skills while fostering community growth.

To provide innovative pedagogies and interdisciplinary approaches in new literatures, cultural and gender studies, translation, sociolinguistics, and film.

To cultivate a solid foundation in literary sensibilities and language competence by promoting transdisciplinary collaborations.





**The Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies heartily welcomes its newly joined faculty members: Dr. Sneha Thakur, Ms. Navami T. S. Dr. Rajlaxmi Ghosh, Dr. Divyajyot Kaur, Dr. Vidisha Gupta, and Dr. Abinash Mohapatra.**

# NEWS AND EVENTS ORGANIZED:

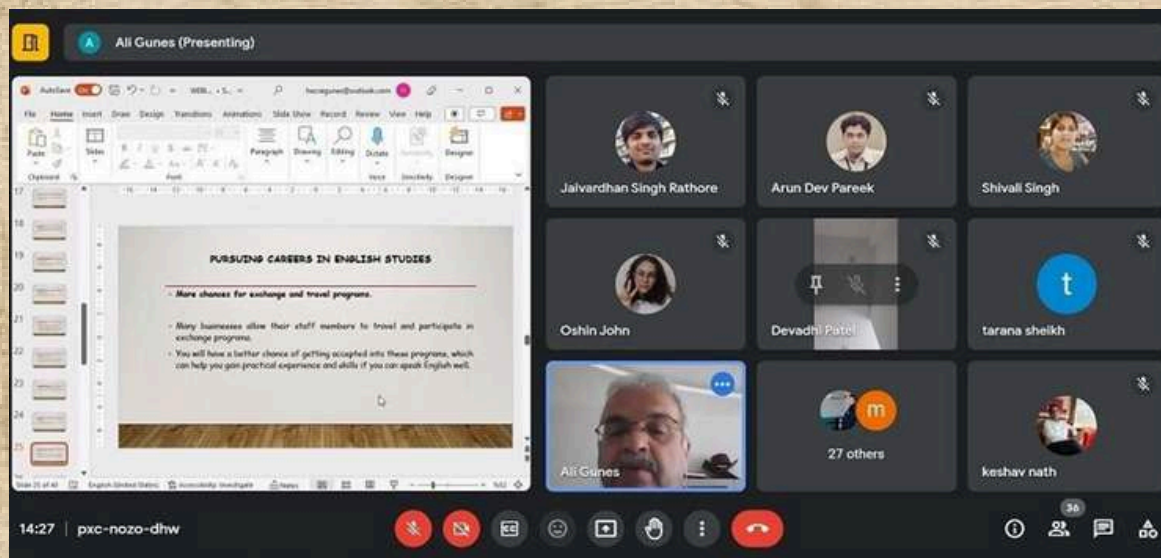
## *A Webinar*

On

*Crafting Your Destiny: Pursuing Careers in English Studies?*

The Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultural Studies, within the Faculty of Arts, hosted a webinar titled "Crafting Your Destiny: Pursuing Careers in English Studies" on July 28, 2023, from 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM. Professor Ali Gunes, Professor and Chair of English at Bolu Abant Izzet Baysal University, Turkey, served as the speaker. The webinar focused on the importance of transferable skills gained through English Studies and their relevance across various industries.

It provided information on education and certifications to enhance job prospects in the field. Professor Ali emphasized the significance of English in the 21st century, highlighting its role in business, education, technology, and international organizations. Various career paths for English majors were discussed, including teaching, writing, publishing, law, and business. Practical tips were provided for students interested in pursuing a career in English, such as obtaining a good education, gaining practical experience, networking, and continuing education.

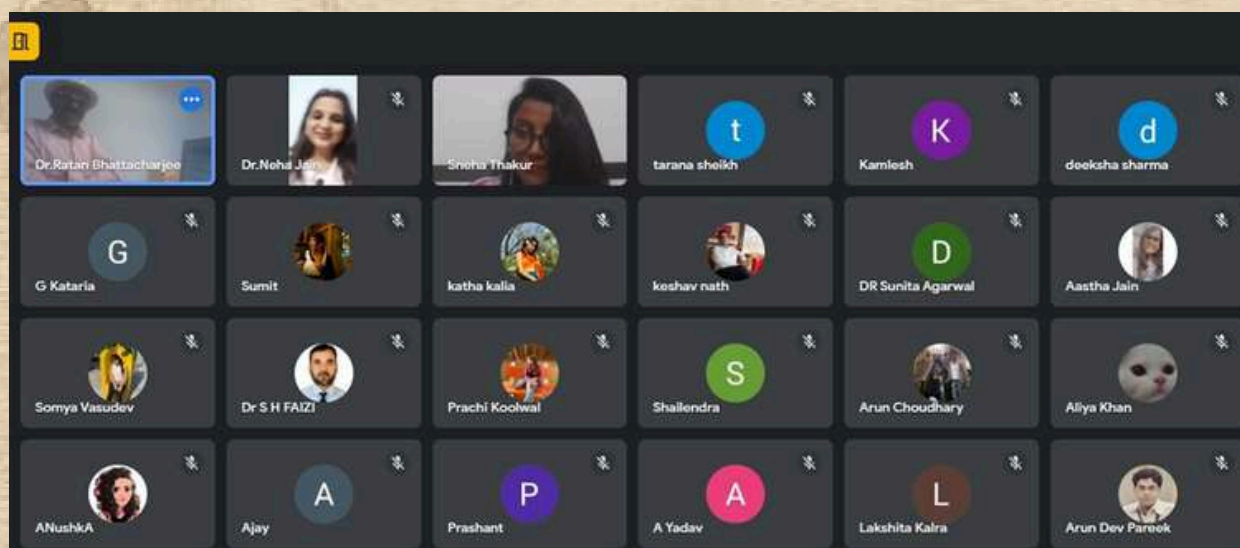


Professor Ali encouraged students to pursue their dreams in the field, emphasizing its versatility and rewarding nature. The webinar concluded with a vote of thanks offered by Professor Neha Jain to the speaker, faculty members, and attendees.



# Webinar

*Deliberation on the emerging career trends and academic prospects in English: How and where can it take you?*



The Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultural Studies, within the Faculty of Arts, hosted a webinar titled "Deliberations on the Emerging Career Trends and Academic Prospects in English: How and Where Can It Take You?" on August 14, 2023, from 8:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee, an Affiliate Faculty of English at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, served as the speaker. The webinar highlighted the significance of English in contemporary society and provided information on career opportunities within the field. It was open to both internal and external participants and was facilitated by Dr. Sneha Thakur, an Assistant Professor at the department.

The session began with a welcome from Dr. Neha Jain Gupta, the Head of the department, followed by Dr. Bhattacharjee's detailed presentation on English and its career trends, emphasizing its versatility across various traditional and non-traditional fields of work. Dr. Bhattacharjee also discussed avenues for employment, research, competitive exams, scholarships, and opportunities for international study. The webinar received praise for its informative content from Dr. Neha Jain and other faculty members. Dr. Keshav Nath, a professor at the department, delivered the vote of thanks, highlighting the key points of the session. Despite its late scheduling, the webinar attracted participants not only from Manipal University but also from other institutions, reflecting the organizers' efforts to reach a wider audience.

# One Day Workshop

*Contemporary Challenges in Research: Identifying Predatory Journals and Publishing in High Impact Indexed Journals (Web of Science and Scopus)*

*BY*

*Prof. Dr. Sumit Narula*

*Director, Amity School of Communications, Gurgaon*

*Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Content Community and Communication*



The session started with a warm welcome to the Guest Prof. Dr. Sumit Narula, Dean FoA Prof. Dr. Komal Audichya, Directors, HoDs, Faculty Members, Research Scholars and Students by Dr. Jaivardhan Singh Rathore, who was the MC of the Event. Dr. Rathore introduced the Event by emphasizing the initiatives undertaken by Research Cell, FoA to promote and strengthen Research Activities at FoA. This was followed by the Lamp Lighting Ceremony by the Dignitaries along with the Felicitation of the Guest by the Dean, FoA. This was followed by the welcome address by Dean, FoA wherein the context for Research and Development was set and the need to strengthen the Research in FoA was emphasized by Prof. Audichya. Then the session began with the Workshop by the Guest Prof. Dr. Sumit Narula who talked to the audience about the important themes of publishing in High-Impact journals

and Identifying predatory Journals. Prof. Narula gave a live session on identifying true vs fake journals by providing hands-on training to the participants by browsing the website and identifying certain parameters for understanding the Impactful and Ethical approach of publishing. The session was highly interactive as there were questions from the Faculty Members and Research scholars in the audience. A vote of thanks was proposed to the Guest and other concerned persons by Prof. Dr. Geetika Tankha, Chairperson, Research Cell, FoA. The Expert Prof. Narula was highly impressed by the enthusiasm and active participation of the audience in the Research Domain. The event was coordinated by the Research Cell, FoA under the Guidance of the Dean, FoA, Prof. Dr. Komal Audichya along with Prof. Geetika Tankha, Dr. V. Vineeth Kumar, Dr. Shilpi Gupta and Dr. Jaivardhan Singh Rathore.



# One Day Young Entrepreneurs Meet

On  
*The Golden Era of Indian Economy: Opportunities and Challenges Ahead*

*(Resource Person)*  
*Sh. Vishwanath Bhat*  
*Economist and Ex-Banker*



The young entrepreneur's meet, themed "The Golden Era of Indian Economy: Opportunities and Challenges Ahead," aimed to discuss the current state and future trends of the Indian economy. Organized by the Faculty of Arts, the event targeted faculty members, research scholars, and students. Guest speaker Prof. Vishwanath Bhat highlighted India's potential as an economy, focusing on themes like "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" and the country's role as a global power. He discussed the significance of start-ups, entrepreneurship, and initiatives like Make in India, particularly in light of the challenges posed by the Covid pandemic. Prof. Bhat outlined future trends such as digital transformation and green economy, stressing India's potential as a hub for innovation and talent.

The session featured interactive discussions with faculty members and research scholars. Prof. Geetika Tankha, Chairperson of the Research Cell, Faculty of Arts, extended gratitude to the guest and participants, highlighting the event's success in fostering engagement and dialogue. Overall, the event was organized under the guidance of Dean Prof. Dr. Komal Audichya and faculty members including Prof. Geetika Tankha, Dr. V. Vineeth Kumar, Dr. Shilpi Gupta, and Dr. Jaivardhan Singh Rathore.

# International Guest Lecture

On  
*Art & Music: Unlocking the Emotional and Critical Approach  
towards Life*

By  
*Mr. Tyler Thom (Ethnomusicologist  
University of Denver, US)*  
&  
*Mr. Jude Booker (Art Critic  
University of London, UK)*



The International Guest Lecture emphasized the significance of music and literature in enriching human culture and shaping identities. Mr. Tyler Thom and Mr. Jude Booker shared insights on the emotional and critical aspects of art, encouraging contemplation and reflective thinking among attendees.

The event, coordinated by Dr. Sneha Thakur and Dr. Jaivardhan Singh Rathore, aimed to orient faculty members, research scholars, and students towards fostering an emotional and critical approach in life. Through interactive sessions, attendees gained valuable perspectives on the transformative power of music and literature in society.



# An Interactive Session

On  
Traditional methods of water conservation  
By  
Sh. Laxman Singh ji  
(water conservationist)  
Awarded padma shri by the president of india  
&

Felicitation of faculty members and Ph.D. Scholars of FoA for  
research publications

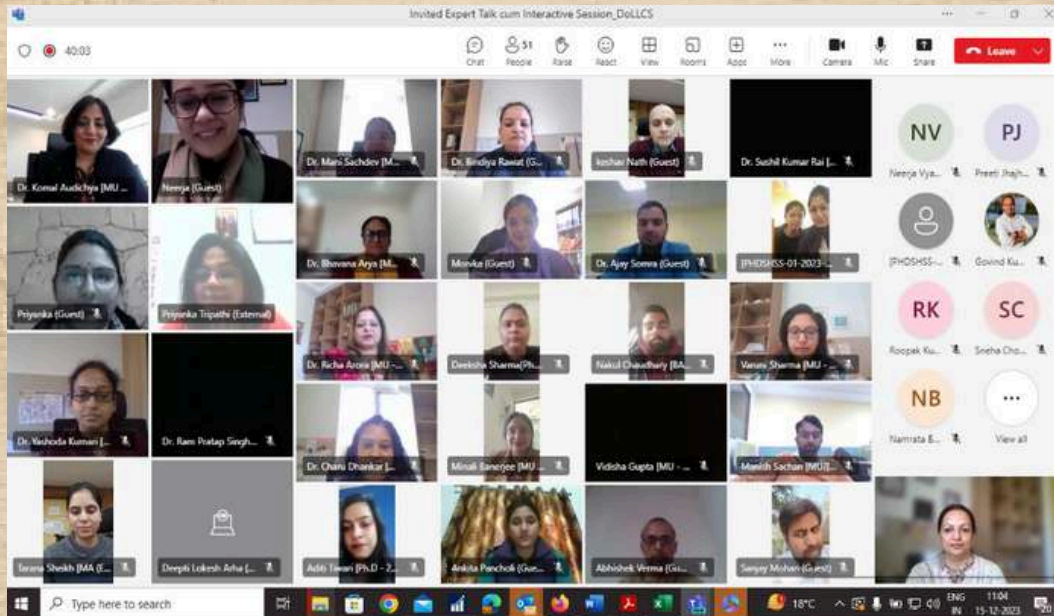


The session commenced with Dr. Jaivardhan Singh Rathore extending a warm welcome to Guest Shri Laxman Singh Ji, Dean Prof. Dr. Komal Audichya, faculty, and students. Dr. Rathore highlighted the FoA Research Cell's initiatives to bolster research activities. This was followed by a Lamp Lighting Ceremony and felicitation of the Guest by President Prof. (Dr.) G.K. Prabhu and Dean Prof. (Dr.) Komal Audichya. Dean Prof. Audichya contextualized water conservation and Sh. Laxman Singh's work in Laporiya Village. Sh. Laxman Singh shared insights on water conservation and the Chowka system, having founded the NGO Gram Vikas Navyuvak Mandal Laporiya (GVNML), impacting Lapodiya village.

He emphasized the importance of staying connected to nature and leading a simplistic lifestyle. Moderated by Dr. Appoor Saxena, the session was interactive, with faculty and research scholars posing questions. Prof. (Dr.) Geetika Tankha extended a vote of thanks. The event, coordinated by the Research Cell, FoA, under Dean Prof. (Dr.) Komal Audichya's guidance, left Sh. Laxman Singh impressed with the audience's enthusiasm and active participation.

# Interactive Expert Talk

On  
*Qualitative and Ethnographic Research Methods*



The event started with a brief introduction of the resource person- Dr Priyanka Tripathi by Dr Neerja Vyas, Asst. Prof. of English. A warm welcome extended by Prof. Komal Audichya; Dean, Faculty of Arts. She also advised the speaker for more collaborations in terms of Research and conferences collaborations. Dr Tripathi spoke on varied perspectives and aspects of qualitative research.

Then she illustrated her presentation of Ethnographic methods- its types, case studies and nuances and ethics of the field work, rapport building, data collection and report writing. She also took examples for elaboration from her own research and funded projects (completed and ongoing). The session was followed by the question-answer session. Thus, the event ended with vote of thanks proposed by Dr Priyanka Chaudhary, Professor of English. Participants found it an informative and insightful session.



# Delegation visit of Ms. Harpreet Bhatia

*(Student Recruitment Officer) University of Melbourne, Australia*



The meeting with the delegation from University of Melbourne, Ms. Harpreet Bhatia, on **13th February 2024**, was a dynamic exchange of ideas and collaboration prospects, engaged in discussions ranging from academic partnerships and joint research initiatives to cultural exchange programs.

Interaction with **Prof. Komal Audichya (Dean, Faculty of Arts, MUJ)** explored avenues for enhancing mutual understanding and establishing a framework for sustained collaboration.

The atmosphere was characterized by enthusiasm, shared goals, and a commitment to fostering a strong relationship between our universities. Key areas of interest included [Management Administration, Faculty of Arts & Faculty of Literature], paving the way for potential projects that align with the academic and cultural values of both institutions.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, setting the stage for future endeavors aimed at deepening the ties between our universities, solidifying the bonds of Academic cooperation and mutual learning between MUJ & University of Melbourne.

# Information Seminar

## *On Study Opportunities in Europe*



The Directorate of International Collaborations, in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts, organized an information seminar on study opportunities in Europe on 29th February 2024. Keynote speakers included Prof Dr. Neeta Inamdar and Dr. Priya Poojari from the Manipal Centre for European Studies at MAHE. The seminar aimed to provide an overview of MA European Studies and MA European Literature and Culture programs at MAHE, emphasizing their interdisciplinary approach to understanding the EU's political, economic, and educational dimensions. Students of DOLLC Manipal University, Jaipur, were the primary beneficiaries of the event, which highlighted promising educational prospects in Europe and explored the significance of European literature in contemporary society.



# PhD Awarded

1. Ms. Archana Katariya successfully completed her PhD in English under the supervision of Dr. Priyanka Chaudhary, with her final viva held on April 17, 2023.
2. Ms. Charu Tak successfully completed her PhD in English under the supervision of Dr. Richa Arora, with her final viva held on September 22, 2023.
3. Mr. Deepak Sharma successfully completed her PhD in French under the supervision of Dr. Tanuja Yadav, with her final viva held on October 4, 2023.
4. Ms. Shalini Sharma successfully completed her PhD in English under the supervision of Dr. Rabindra Kumar Verma, with her final viva held on October 9, 2023.
5. Ms. Atika Srivastava successfully completed her PhD in English under the supervision of Dr. Tanuja Yadav, with her final viva held on October 20, 2023.
6. Ms. Purobi Sen successfully completed her PhD in English under the supervision of Dr. Priyanka Chaudhary & Dr. Meena Baindur, with her final viva held on October 25, 2023.



# Top Research Awardees



Top researcher of the month October 2023- Dr. Rabindra Kumar Verma, Assistant Professor (Selection Grade)



Top researcher for the months November 2023 & January 2024 - Prof. (Dr.) Priyanka Chaudhary



# Paper Presentations



Dr. Arun Kumar Poonia & Ms. Sherin Stanley (M.A II Semester) presented a paper entitled *"Going Beyond What we Think about Saudi Arabia with Messi's Message Saudi Arabia's Attempt to Entice Global Tourists"* in the International Conference on Intersections of Knowledge Exploring Discourses and Beyond in Humanities and Social Sciences held in BITS Pilani on Feb 23-24, 2024.

Ms. Poorvi Thiyagu (B.A VI Semester) presented a paper entitled *"An Eco Narratological Examination of Nature, Culture and the human in Kantara"* in the International Conference on Intersections of Knowledge Exploring Discourses and Beyond in Humanities and Social Sciences held in BITS Pilani on Feb 23-24, 2024.



# Students' Corner





# Tales from the Tuk-Tuk: Raju's Reservations and Riddles

Priyanshi Vijayvargiya

*In a land of spicy treats and chai,  
Where old meets new, up in the sky,  
There lived Raju, a rickshaw guy,  
His jokes and wit made people sigh.*

*A tourist hopped in, all full of zest,  
Ready to explore, he couldn't rest,  
He asked Raju, with curious eyes,  
"Why's there a reservation surprise?"*

*Raju grinned, his words a jest,  
"It's like a Bollywood dance fest!  
Reservations, my friend, are like a show,  
Everyone hopes to be in the row.*

*It's a never-ending practice round,  
We spin and twirl, but no spotlight's found,  
Equality's the aim, that's true,  
But sometimes we feel stuck in a queue.*

*But in this vibrant, diverse nation,  
Where cultures blend, creating elation,  
We laugh and joke, with a playful heart,  
Finding humour in policies, it's an art.*

*So, hop on, friend, enjoy the trip,  
Through streets where dreams and laughter flip,  
India's spirit, shining so bright,  
Will keep you giggling day and night!"*

# Romanticizing life: mainstream or doom impending?

Lakshita Kalra

While scrolling the dark web that is, Instagram, I saw this post that said, "If you want motivation to study, just romanticize studying, consider yourself the main character." It pains me to ask, when did we become this narcissistic? Why do we need to be the center of attraction to do a task as bare minimum as studying? Why do we want the world to revolve around us? I think the generic thing to do would be to blame the media because of course who is going to retaliate, Mark Zuckerberg? But I will just put it out there, WHO IS THE MEDIA IF NOT US?

I would just go ahead and be like every other old dude and say that conference has become the most uncool thing to do these days. Nobody wants to talk things out even when it is their mental health in question. The idea that every great artist's mental health is destroyed has been propagandized. Alongside this is the notion that bad mental health gives a good sense of humor, which, is not humorous in the least.

Owing to this foolishness, it feels like the idea, or the meaning of Art and Expression has been lost along the way. Greatness is determined by the level of filters in it or if it is aesthetic enough for the gram.

Or should I say that it feels like WE have been lost along the way? I cannot recognize some of the people whose walk I had subconsciously memorized. We are competing to become something or a version of something. We are constantly chasing what seems like a silhouette of air itself. Maybe because reality is too harsh to bear but so was the math exam that we gave in 8th grade until we passed and then later in 9th grade found out that the previous exam was easy.

Maybe life can be like that too, if we give it a chance rather than give ourselves a chance. Instead of cowering under the obligations of fitting in the cool criteria, maybe we can start questioning the façade of reality presented to us.





# I WANT TO BE A CAT

Dhruv Garg

I want to be a cat  
Who laze and fun all around  
I don't want to be a wild one  
I want to be a comfy one  
Who stays at home all around

I want to be a cat  
Who is a hero in shiny black  
Can jump down from a building  
But is still safe on landing  
Who can fight back

I want to be a cat  
Who has nine lives  
Can learn and roam around  
Who struggles to strive

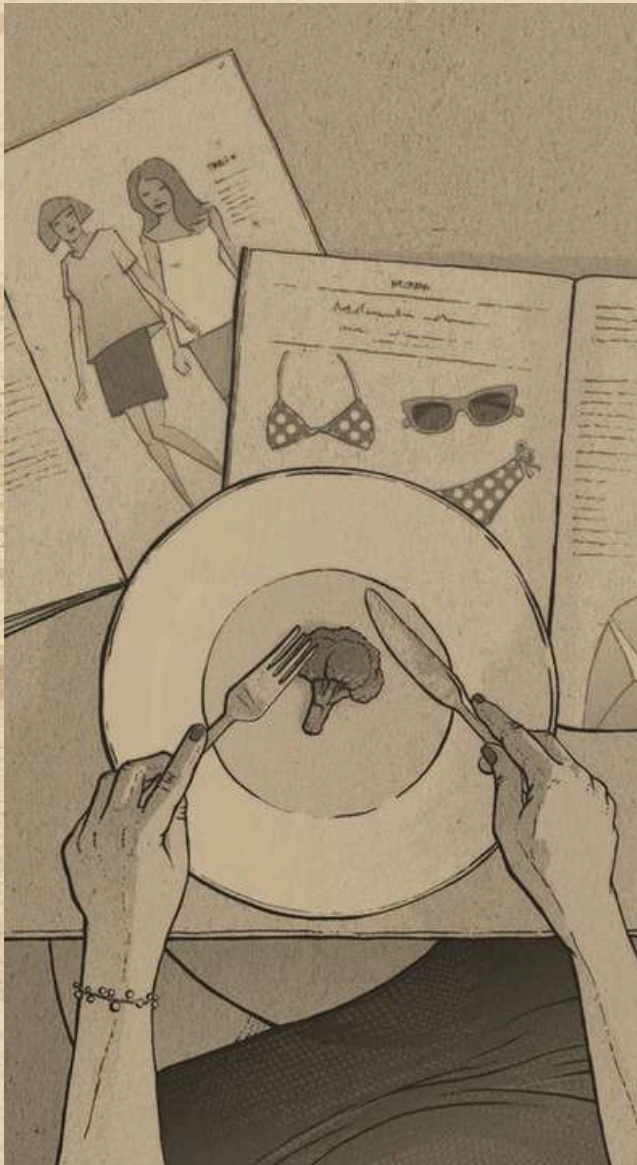
I want to be a cat  
Who can chase and kill a mouse  
Comfy all around  
Who lives in a house

I want to be a black cat  
I want to be a black cat



# FOOD OR FIEND?

Anushka Gurha



“A glass of ice is not dinner,  
neither is a bag of popcorn with a soda can.”

How many times have we scrolled through Instagram and watched a person with the “perfect body figure” announcing their diets with more calorie counting than taste? How many times have we fallen prey to the internal comparisons, silently resolving, “Tomorrow, I’ll definitely eat healthier!”—where “healthier” often translates to simply “eating less”? This gradual shift towards consuming fewer and fewer calories can transform from the occasional skipped meal into a deliberate pattern, inching closer towards what could eventually develop into a full-blown eating disorder.

Beauty standards in today’s age are vicious, young minds with increased exposure to social media and the entertainment industry are heavily prone to get swayed into developing unhealthy relationships with food because of the ‘diet trends’ and specific ‘body types of the year’.

A very well-known example that was seen throughout the media in shows, movies, and fashion vlogs was the ice diet. This diet involves eating many ice cubes to burn calories as eating ice causes your body to spend energy to heat the ice, which in turn helps you shed calories.

Another example is the hugely popular ‘Cotton ball diet’



that involves dipping cotton balls in liquids including juices and smoothies and then consuming them. The purpose of this is to cause the stomach to feel full while restricting calories to lose weight. The “diet” reportedly originated in the modeling and figure skating industries, but also appeared in online videos made by pre-teen and teenage girls who were recommending the behavior to lose weight.

A recent trend under the same category went radically viral in mid-2023 where women posted minimal-effort meals tagged as “girl dinner”. On the surface, there is nothing wrong with women enjoying a simple meal and posting about it. But once again here a disordered eating habit, that is, a dinner meal without any calories or nutrients is being featured as the normalized standard for women’s eating routine.

Other instances include Kate Moss's infamous declaration, "Nothing tastes as good as skinny feels," perpetuating the idea that thinness is paramount. Similarly, Kim Kardashian proudly endorsed losing "16 pounds in three weeks", celebrating her ability to fit into Marilyn Monroe's iconic dress. Similar numerous trends, diets, quotes, and behaviors are circling all through the entertainment businesses and social media just to round up in young minds as examples to be followed. All these disturbing trends and diets indirectly just promote unhealthy eating habits which often develop into eating disorders and other mental health issues.

Although trauma, depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and other mental illnesses can play significant roles in causing eating disorders, the main leading social cause is the ‘diet culture’ encouraged by the beauty industry, entertainment industries, and social media. Frequent dieting is a risk factor for an eating disorder, especially with a weight that is constantly going up and down when getting on and off new diets.

Let's commit to reshaping societal norms and fostering environments where self-worth isn't tied to the number on a scale or the latest diet trend. Instead, let's celebrate diversity, promote body positivity, and prioritize mental health support for all.

Up to 10% of people with anorexia die within 10 years of getting the disease, and up to 20% will die after 20 years. Eating disorders rank as the twelfth leading cause of disability in young women in industrialized countries.

The bigger question is not ‘how many people are going through this?’ but ‘Why are so many people going through this? What are the causes and how can we minimize the reasons?’

By acknowledging the alarming statistics and delving deeper into the root causes of eating disorders, we can begin to enact meaningful change. It's time to challenge the toxic narratives perpetuated by diet culture and advocate for systemic changes that prioritize mental and physical well-being. Together, let's build a future where everyone feels valued, accepted, and supported in their journey toward a healthier relationship with food and body image.



# THE JOYS OF HOLI

Dayita Kundu

The air feels wet, it looks dirty  
Its beauty ruined; the air smells murky  
Stained, corrupted faces of killers  
My eyes behind windows, my heart jerky.

I look at the pink, the green, the black  
Its not enough, they fail, they slack  
One whiff of those powders, though  
It drags me through time, back and back.

My heart relives the past I didn't want  
It drags images that only haunt  
That pool of bile beneath my bend  
The screech of disownment, it daunts.

The multiple stained hands that torment  
The red, bothered face with a dent  
With ugly liquids and burning powders  
With that stench, it makes me vent.

When every ring of the doorbell,  
Rips the warmth of ribbons of hell  
Of the humming, quite night before  
Tearing my heart with its shell.

The air dripping of sweets,  
Making me nauseous, down to my feet  
They say its comfort, I say no  
Its just a rotten, murky sleet.

The sleet that spills me in a folly  
That frays my soul, a worn down golly  
The words that excused all those assaults,  
"Bura na mano, its ....!"



# BATMAN & THE ABSURD

Chaitanya Kirthy

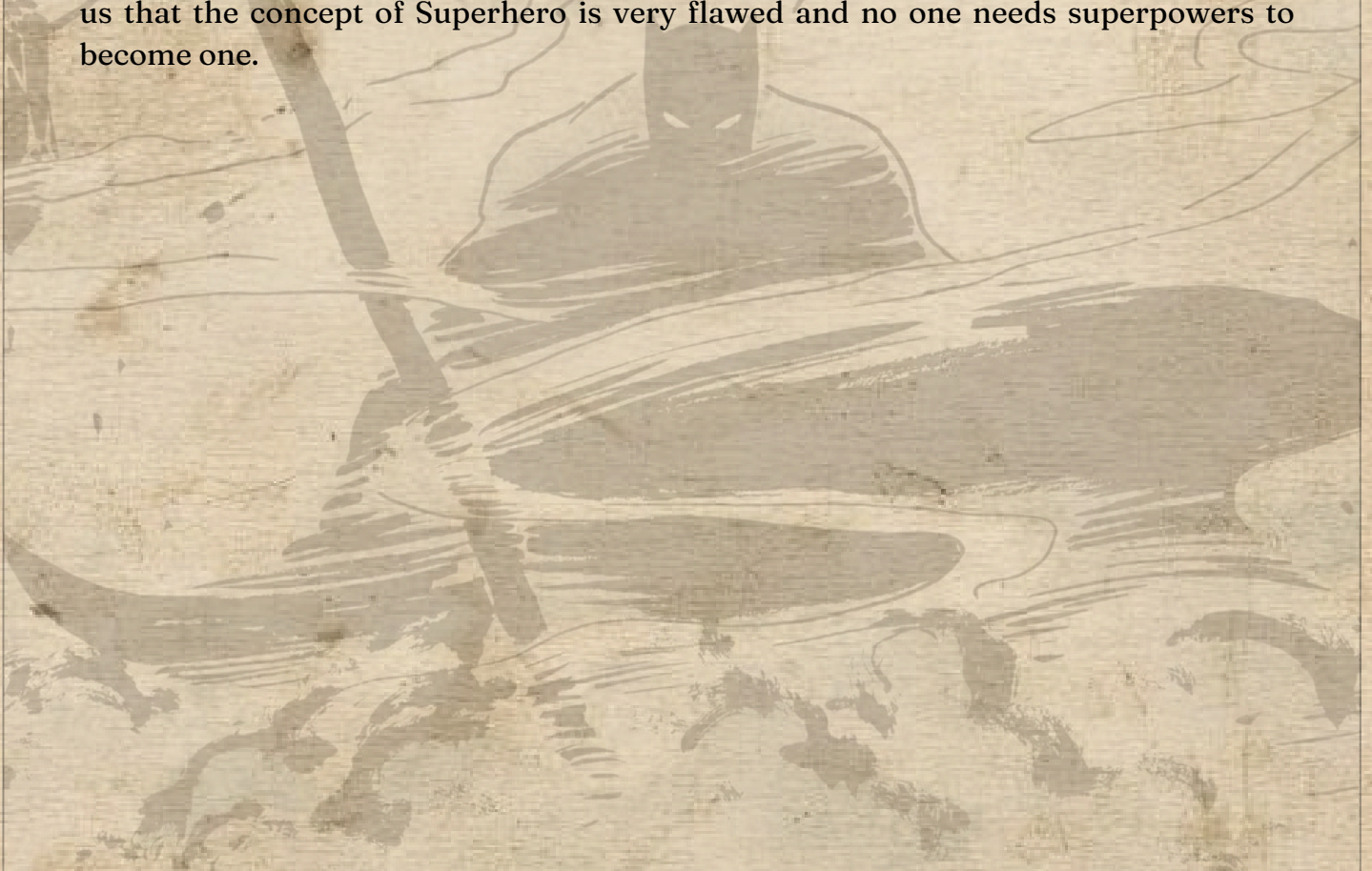
*“Did I do him good? Absolutely. The boy’s got to understand this city’s ruthlessness and wrath of its people. What did I ever do to feel so powerless and live in this filth that is Gotham City. An uproar is rising; they’ve been sucking the blood of my people. They must be destroyed! The Rich must die! I did my part. Now I feel a sense of fairness to life; I gave him a pain we’ve been suffering from generations. Now he’s got a life ahead to mourn, because there was no reason at all.”* thought Joe Chill as he washed his hands splattered with the blood of his city’s parasites, the Waynes. He disposes the revolver and disappears into oblivion. Just like that, there goes the pure blood of the corrupt.

*“What. Just. Happened. Was it fate? Was it bad luck? Was it destiny? Or was it just bad timing? I know the truth, there was no reason at all. He did it just for the thrill of it. I shall repay. The city’s filth is roaring, and I shall quiet them. Maybe this is all just a dream, but who cares. I might be making all this up but it doesn’t matter now because although we weren’t close and I never knew much about him but my father taught me one thing ‘The world only makes sense when you force it to’. Was I a good son? Maybe I need to add more years to my life to answer that, but until then I’ll be their worst nightmare; lurking in the shadows, they won’t see me coming; I will break and twist things within them. I’m not going to kill a single one of them but it’s the pain that’ll go on forever. I might become the strongest man on the planet but just brute strength won’t do the trick. I need to make them fear. Father, I shall become the Bat.”* thought the boy who had attained enlightenment in the most horrendous experience he ever had as he stared at his dead parents lying in a dark alley in Gotham. Bruce, Bruce Wayne, on his knees, was reborn as the greatest crime fighter mankind had ever known. He is the Batman.

Joker’s line *“Madness is like gravity, all it takes is a little push”* is very befitting in this situation. One bad night can turn a man into a killer or lead a boy into sacrificing his life for the sake of humanity. Unlike other superheroes, Batman’s origin tale is not set on a mythological scale but a very gritty and brooding anecdote of a night which makes it the most human story everyone can relate to.



Batman sacrificing the remainder of his life to crime-fighting arises the question of his philosophy. Some might argue that Batman is an existential nihilist because he perceives the world as either black or white, as good or bad. But in actuality, Batman might believe in Absurdism. In philosophy, the Absurd refers to the conflict between the human tendency to seek meaning in life, and the meaninglessness of the universe. Batman accepts the Absurd by sacrificing his life, which he doubts would ever make a change, but in doing so he's giving meaning to his existence so that no one in the future has the bad fortune to become Batman. But his one-man-war-against-crime can work against him by desensitizing him against humans and relationships, and turning him into a cold-blooded Murdering Monster, but Batman doesn't let that happen by using his consciousness and developing his famous No-Killing rule because he knows that if he even kills once, he would enter a very dark place in his subconscious and never be able to return. In conclusion, Batman teaches us that the concept of Superhero is very flawed and no one needs superpowers to become one.







# Autumn

Mohak Mahicha

*That golden being that sat up there,  
Stuck all alone between the bronze layers.  
She stared up at the pleasing blue sky,  
With her one and only dream to fly.*

*She wanted to chase the hummingbird,  
But afraid to leave just to end up in mud.  
Adoring all the bipedals living down,  
While she sat there like a gem on the crown.*

*And although it looked pretty to the others,  
She still envied the green and the colours.  
Wanting to have legs, wings or fins like a fish.  
Because she wanted to go where she wished.*

*But the deity made her beautiful yet helpless,  
Once lived with a family yet nameless.  
so she takes her last breath as the wind mumbles,  
She laughs at her dream as she falls and crumbles.*



# The Mannequin

Gauri Agarwal

I was painting the mannequin face in the empty room with empty chairs. Thankful to the rude customer I met before. Now, as the class had already left and I was all alone. I now had the glory of not thinking about competition or judgment and completing the stupid mannequin drawing that looks no different from the one yesterday.

As I was finishing the sketch with a few more strikes, someone spoke, "Do you want to kill yourself?" When I looked up, there was no one, except that mannequin face I was drawing that now looked like it was staring into my long-emptied soul. I stared right back at it for a few seconds, wondering why the question that a mannequin asked seemed more strange than the fact that it was a Mannequin, who asked me that question. I have always felt emptiness but never said that to anyone, nor did I admit to myself that I wanted to kill myself. And it's asking me That question just seemed like an answer to all of mine. Coming back into reality, I said, "Do I look like someone who wants to die?". It replied, "What does a person who wants to die look like?" after another round of staring contest, I said "I wonder if it looks like me." "Maybe" he replied.

The mannequin sounded like a robot, with no feelings, but his words felt like those of someone who has lived a hundred years. Or maybe he has lived fifty years at least; he was just a stone face, who knew how long he had been lying here. How many eyes he must have stared into, only to look at drawings that look like him. How would you know you have never lived? Have you?" I didn't mean to, but I sounded rude or offended, as if someone had just showed me what was poking me from behind.

Even though I said those words, I wondered, out of all the faces that he has seen, why ask me that question? Do I look that lonely, that tired and depressed. Flustered, I picked my bag up and walked off with the pencil still in my hand. I will think of it as a bad dream, or maybe I have not gotten my answer after all.



# SELF-DOUBT

Devadhi Patel

*In the depths of self-doubt, I once did ponder,  
Feeling inadequate, not quite like a wonder.  
"Maybe I wasn't enough," whispered my fears,  
"Not cool enough to conquer life's frontiers."*

*But then I realized, oh, what a waste,  
To let such worries dictate my haste.  
For life's true essence lies in joy untamed,  
In moments cherished, not accolades proclaimed.*

*So I cast off the shackles of doubt and strife,  
Embracing the rhythm, the dance of life.  
I vowed to be carefree, to let my spirit soar,  
To revel in the beauty that lies at my core.*

*No longer trapped in a realm of despair,  
I sought the pleasures that were mine to share.  
To make love, not just in the physical sense,  
But to embrace the world with love immense.*

*To have friends, true companions on this earthly ride,  
To laugh and cry with, side by side.  
Together we'd roam, on adventures grand,  
Capturing memories, hand in hand.*

*Clicking pictures, freezing time in a frame,  
Preserving moments, each with a name.  
For life's true treasures are not fame or wealth,  
But the stories we weave, the memories we stealth.*



# AUTUMN OF EMOTIONS

Vasudha Sharma

*i was walking down the align  
looked up in the sky  
the autumn leaves brushing my skin  
the roar of the clouds threatening the sky  
painted all gray and white  
that rain drop felt a hundred emotions  
like a mourning sign  
the gliding of the dribble felt like a teary emotion  
winds trying to escape the silence of the heaven  
these cherry blossoms falling down like the rebirth of a soul  
the sun trying to escape the clouds like a prisoner  
and the world's a little blurry for a while.*





