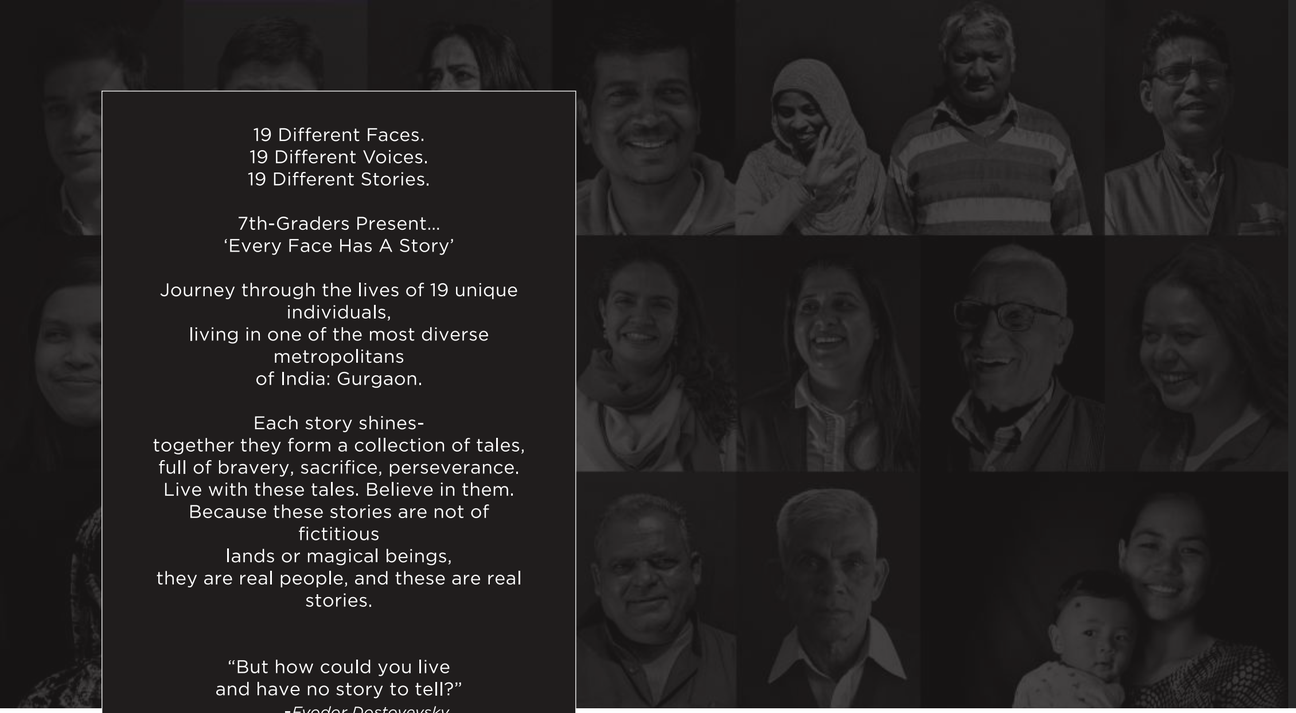


19 Different Faces.
19 Different Voices.
19 Different Stories.

7th-Graders Present...
'Every Face Has A Story'

Journey through the lives of 19 unique individuals,
living in one of the most diverse metropolitans
of India: Gurgaon.

Each story shines-
together they form a collection of tales,
full of bravery, sacrifice, perseverance.
Live with these tales. Believe in them.
Because these stories are not of fictitious
lands or magical beings,
they are real people, and these are real stories.

"But how could you live
and have no story to tell?"
-Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Heritage International Xperiential School
2019-20
www.hixs.org

XPERIENTIAL LEARNING SYSTEMS



The Seventh Grade International School Students Present

EVERY FACE HAS A STORY

HERITAGE INTERNATIONAL XPERIENTIAL SCHOOL

Cambridge Assessment International Education

An Introduction

A while ago, maybe six months, the students of 10th grade were unable to attend a talk by a certain non-profit organization reporting on Rural India. To ensure the opportunity did not go to waste, a certain grade was picked to attend instead. They displayed unforeseen enthusiasm towards working with them, leading to a change in plans. The grade was 7th standard, and the Non-profit is the People's Archive of Rural India, or PARI, for short. PARI is an online journal, archive, and learning tool in schools and colleges. Thus, commenced a project, 'Every Face has a Story'. We donned the hats of journalists, and flipped the original plans made by our teachers upside down. But they found a way to integrate everything into one beautiful plan.

19 different faces. 19 different voices. 19 different stories. Each and every one of them shines, and when woven together forms a tapestry of tales in tragedy, perseverance, and selflessness. And it can be assured that the weavers were all children, excited for a new experience. But the story of their journey isn't over yet...

And capturing life was indeed our goal. Three trips to the Museo Camera, curated by Mr. Aditya Arya, might not make us experts, but it took us long distances in a short time. We now understand different types of portraiture. We have learned how to use reflectors and set backdrops.

To emphasize how all must be viewed without biases to understand each person's truth, we used only black and white photography. As we met each individual, we attempted to break them down, to understand the basic essential components that make them who they are.

And that is what we have compiled for you. Read the stories. See the people. Smile at their moments of joy, and empathise with them in their moments of sadness. Because they are not stories of fictional characters. They are not stories of talking animals. They are real people, and these are their real stories.

"Photography is the beauty of life captured."

-Tara Chisholm

Insight into the project

It has been attempted to integrate every subject within our “Who is a Gurgaonean?” learning expedition. Many and nearly every subject studied turned out to be an integral part of the project. Here are the contributions made by some of them:

Science- The study of light, its properties and the movement of the same aided us in our attempts to create vivid and realistic portraits through the art of photography. We made many visits to The Museo Camera, and understood reflections to create better and masterful images. By understanding how the lens of cameras are similar to those in our eyes, we understood the way a camera is able to capture and re-assemble images. We also clicked images using film and developed them in the dark room, following the same procedures used by professional photographers.

English- Our studies into journalistic writing were what made this book possible. By identifying the exact type of article, we understood the criteria and different components required to paint a beautiful picture using words. This was accompanied by analysing the diverse lives of each respondent and representing each of them as a hero of his/her life. A close emphasis on an excerpt from Joseph Campbell's “The Hero with a Thousand Faces” was considered. Profoundly known for the 12 stages in the journey of a hero, it served as a great help in identifying the stages taken up by the heroes in their individual journeys. The book that you're currently holding has been one of our final products and an essential component from our new experience and insightful journey.

ICT- Similar to how this book would have been impossible without the contribution from English, ICT allowed us to create another final product- our websites. We had previously studied both coding languages such as HTML and software sites like Wix. This task allowed us to apply these abilities to their fullest extent and display all the information digitally.

Math- We had already done a unit on data analysis and compilation. One of our secondary objectives was to comprehend data which we had collected from our interviews, such as age, gender, family size and more. But most importantly, we tried to understand whether people in Gurgaon thought it was rural or urban. We also created charts and graphs to graphically depict the collected information.

GP- Global Perspectives was essentially the base upon which this entire undertaking was built. We learnt how to ask the right questions to get the most insightful answers. A developing skill of source analysis was used when we brought information about the homeland of our respondents. The very skill of interviewing in this project stemmed from GP. We cross-referenced all the information we could. This included research methodology, forming tools and transcripts, tabulations, etc. The main driving force was in an attempt to understand whether Gurgaon was perceived as rural or urban. We were also studying the topic of migration and how Gurgaon was essentially a city of migrants. The entire program succeeded thanks to the skills and ideas that were grown in Global Perspectives.

Hindi- Some of the respondents interviewed could not speak English. To ensure language issues did not hamper our task, we translated our questions into Hindi during our Hindi lessons. It cannot be denied that Hindi played an important role in our journey, so that we could communicate well with all of our respondents.

Arts- We expanded our horizons in arts to put forward an engaging culmination of our work. Performing arts turned out to be essential in determining the presentation of our journey. This included inculcating monologues, travel theatre, songs, dance and other such performances through which we presented the voices of our respondents and displayed their stories. Dance, music and singing were used to narrate the stories in a creative manner. We even composed a song, based on the theme 'Every Face has a Story', proudly presented at the start of the book.

Acknowledgements

“

If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together.

-African Proverb

And because this project indeed did go far, we have many people for whom we would sincerely like to give our gratitude:

We would like to thank Ms. Priti David and Ms. Vishakha George, rural reporters from PARI (People's Archive of Rural India), without whom this journey would have never begun.

We may have taken the first step, but the remaining thousand miles were covered by some of our teachers. We have immense gratitude towards Ms. Amy Marx and Mr. Christopher Charles Koerber for giving birth to a project as big as this and to their unwavering support throughout.

Additionally, our greatest gratitude goes to Ms. Preeti Saha, Dr. Ritu Sharma and Ms. Sumedha Goyal who gave wings to the project and took it to unforeseen heights by supporting us in finding and interviewing our respondents.

This book would have just been an unfulfilled dream if it were not for the guidance by Ms. Aashna Sarna, who has been an integral part of this expedition and has worked diligently with us towards making this book and its stories as perfect as they can be. Of course, we must also thank Ms. Poonam Kakkar, whose teachings in website creation allowed us to truly excel.

And thanks to our many other teachers who have given time from their subjects to support our integrated work on our end products. To Ms. Kausalya Vijayaraghavan for her work with us on the data analysis of whether people feel Gurgaon is urban or rural, to Ms. Shobha Kundliya and Ms. Kajal Upadhyay for their support in translating our questions into Hindi, and to Ms. Esha Jain and Ms. Dipti Budha for their flexibility in our French and Spanish class time as we worked to finalize everything for culmination.

We are grateful for the guidance given by Mr. Aditya Arya, curator of the Museo Camera, whose photography skills allowed us to create the photos of a thousand words. Thanks also to Ms. Priti Sehgal, Program Director at the Museo Camera, for her support of our visits and our creation of our photographs. Ms. Kevika Bali, our science teacher, has been a keen mentor in building our understanding on the concept of “light” and “lens” to take our project on photography forward.

We would also like to express gratefulness to Ms. Sundus Idrisi and Mr. Ramesh Jayaraman, who lent their experience in the art of photography to us, allowing us to create a portrait of a person in just one shot.

Ms. Sumedha Malhotra organized our culmination, supporting and inspiring our dancers, monologues, and musicians, and put in much work to support the display of our photographs in a wonderful show.

Our sincerest thanks to Ms. Aditi Misra, Head of Logistics, who coordinated logistics for all our fieldwork, allowing for it to be a success. And finally, we would like to thank key leaders of the Heritage Xperiential Learning School, Mr. Spokey Wheeler, our Director of the International School, Mr. Vishnu Karthik, CEO Xperiential Learning Systems and Director The Heritage Schools, for giving us this wonderful opportunity. And most importantly our gratitude to our school's co-founder, Mr. Manit Jain, for creating a school that supports learning through experiential learning and in real-world, authentic contexts.

Our 19 Respondents were one of the most important people in this journey. There are no bounds for the gratitude we have towards them for taking out their own time to share their stories and experiences.

“

If the only prayer said was 'Thank You',
that would be enough.

-Meister Eckhart

Making articles has been a wonderful experience. Although we did have arguments here and there about the title and decoration it is no secret that learning about journalistic writing was extremely fun.

- Harji

















Every time we do an expedition, we are expected to learn certain things or there is already everything planned by the teachers. This was exactly different about this expedition! I, being a part of this school for 9 long years have not seen anything more student-led than this.

~ Dheer











The introvert's perspective

Being the quiet kid at school isn't always easy, especially in expeditions and projects like this one. I wasn't a fan of the new topic at first; it took a couple of months for me to warm up to it. When I did, however, I put all my effort into it, and actually enjoyed myself.

The first interview with Mr. Lalchand, our respondent, was uncomfortable for me, as I am awkward around new people. Writing is where I like to shine through, where I have the time to think through my words, where I'm alone. Needless to say, it was quite the struggle, however, I and my partner were able to find a steady method to work with. And so we began. Interviews, recording, portraiture, journalistic writing, websites, we did it all, and I surprised myself by enjoying it. There were ups and downs along the way, and I fear it may continue to be a bumpy journey ahead, but if there's anything I've learned from this expedition, it's this; When life throws you down, you must fight to get back on top.

I've met such strong people throughout this journey, and their inspiring stories are something I will treasure. I shall pass to 8th grade the same quiet self, but with a bounce in my step as I hold my head up high.

~Anoushka





A while ago, perhaps 6 months, grade 7 embarked upon what would turn out to be an exciting, strenuous and thrilling journey, one that led all of us to hold the quill-like a writer, capture the moments like a photographer and to don the hats of a journalist. Thus commenced our project, 'Every Face has a Story'.

And how time has flown past since then! This expedition has definitely been one to remember.

I loved hearing the fascinating tales of our respondents, as they passionately shared their life's ups and downs, joyous days and bleak times, with us. But my favourite part was undoubtedly writing the stories, as me and my team members wove together our respondent's tale of bravery and sacrifice.

Above all, this expedition and all the tales I heard, taught me that there is always more to a person than what meets the eye. After all, everyone has a story. As it is said in Peter Pan, 'To live will be an awfully big adventure.'

~Vani













Every face has a story

(A Seventh-Grade Composition)

There is much more to us than you see
Every face has a story

No matter our religion
We all have rights that are given

We are one, we are equal
After all, we are just people

Being in a tribe does not mean we aren't individuals

Judging a book by its cover is judging a person by their looks
Don't you know? You have overlooked.

There is much more to us than you see
Every face has a story

We have stories behind our face
We have experience behind our grace

No matter our religion, no matter our beliefs
We are human too, with our own personalities

There is much more to us than you see
Every face has a story

No matter our religion
We all have rights that are given

We are one, we are equal
After all, we are just people

Being in a tribe does not mean we aren't individuals

There is much more to us than you see
Every face has a story



Justice is not given in isolation

“Until you treat everyone as an equal, you have no right to complain about the treatment you receive from anyone.”

Shruti Chandra is wearing a suit with her hair tied back. She looks fierce with the black suit, but deep down she is a caring person. A lawyer's life is tough and hectic, but Shruti Chandra finds her job exciting. Her job involves defending and fighting litigation. As a corporate lawyer, her job is to reduce the risk for her company. She thinks there is more to life than just sitting in her cabin all day. But she knows that sitting in her cabin and preparing for cases actually brings justice for people.

Shruti Chandra went to Maharani Gayatri Devi in Jaipur and Delhi Public School, R K Puram, Delhi. Although her favourite school was Maharani Gayatri Devi because of the fun activities conducted there, she faced many challenges academically while growing up. This was primarily because she felt like an average kid, and always sensed a lot of pressure around her when it came to academics.

A conversation is enough with her to gauge the strong educational background that Shruti possesses. Having pursued her education in law from Law Faculty Delhi University, she also completed her MBA in Foreign Trade. It is not surprising to see where she has reached now in life. It never even crossed Shruti Chandra's mind to become a lawyer. “I told you it was accidently, initially, but I enjoyed the fact that it gave me a platform to focus on justice.”



The craftsman on the move

Rajesh Ram, a 36-year-old cobbler, who works near Nirvana Courtyard in Gurgaon has braved a life of poverty to support his family. He sits on a street in Nirvana country, beside Courtyard, cleaning and mending old shoes in the cold winters of Gurgaon. After mending a pair of shoes, he slowly picks up the next one and starts over. He does this for about 6 - 9 hours a day, sweating profusely. For every pair of shoes, Rajesh earns less than 300 rupees, but still works hard and tirelessly to earn some money. On enquiring as to why he follows this work pattern, Rajesh is quick to reply

“Main kya karoon? Duniya aise hi toh chalti hai. Agar main kaam nahi karoonga, toh main jiyunga kaise?” (What should I do? This is how the world works, if I don't work how will I live?)

The living conditions for Rajesh are no better either as he lives in a room about 15 minutes from Nirvana Country. It has been about 7-8 years since Rajesh moved near Nirvana Country. He lives alone in his small room, as he has no money to bring his family here from his birthplace - Bihar. Before coming here, Rajesh had moved from Karol Bagh in Delhi and has otherwise lived in Bihar for more than 15 years.

As a child, Rajesh worked about 6-7 hours a day carrying bricks to help his family earn money and help them in their struggle against poverty. Being homeschooled, he can read, sign his name and do daily math, such as counting money. He goes home every 5 - 6 months to meet his family, from a train which takes about 2-3 hundred rupees. Rajesh has always had a great love for festivals and looks forward to celebrating them with his loved ones. He lives alone and cannot help but express the effects of loneliness in his life in his conversation. He says “Mujhe pehle ajeeb lagta tha ki main idhar poora akela hoon. Abhi bhi thoda bohot ajib lagta hi hai” (Earlier, it used to feel a little weird being alone here, it still feels a little weird.)



Stick around. Don’t lose your heart, Just keep going, keep at it.

“Kathinayi aapko neeche kheenchti hai lekin aap vaapas ladte hain”
(Hardships pull you down but you fight back.)

In an apartment in North Close, Nirvana Country, Gurgaon sits Renu Saru working as a house help. She is clad in a kurta pyjama doing household chores like- cleaning, cooking, dusting, etc. One look and anyone can make out her optimistic and enthusiastic personality. One might think that she lived a peaceful and a happy life but there's much more to it.

Renu was born in Tezpur, Assam in 1991. Her childhood was filled with turmoil and challenging moments. When Renu was 7 years old, her parents got separated. To make matters worse, her mother passed away when she was in grade 4. Since she was the eldest amongst her siblings, she had to leave school and earn for her family.

Post this incident, Renu and her siblings lived in their nani's (maternal grandmother) house. Her first job was in a tea garden, the same job her mother had taken when she got divorced. On her first day, Renu was very excited to work. She would pluck leaves in a fun competition with other children of her age. She knew she wasn't strong enough to do most of the work. She couldn't cut the branches or remove the roots. Renu could only pluck 24kg worth of leaves while the other people used to pluck up to 50kg. She only earned 25 INR a day. Renu would use the money earned for nothing but food.

Renu's attitude is something that kept her going. After having never given up and working in the tea garden for almost a decade, she decided to look for a more profitable job.



Sapna, a dream yet to be fulfilled

“Nepal is more accepting of people from different cultures than Gurgaon.”

As a young farmer, Sapna has sown the seeds of barley and wheat, but as a woman, she is yet to sow the seeds of her dreams.

Sapna can be seen sitting on the floor playing with her new-born baby. Her amiable eyes are filled with love and hope as she looks at her child. She is a woman with formidable features. Her striking face conveys both adversities, hope and light for the future. She is wearing an over washed dark-blue T-shirt paired with grey track pants. As she begins to narrate her story, the curtains over her untold journey unveil.

Normally, 28-year-old Sapna Lama's days are filled with washing her family's dishes, drying clothes on the bright, taut string in her balcony or babysitting her newborn son. However, her life hasn't always been like this.

Most people don't have to make major life decisions until the age of 30. Unfortunately, that wasn't the case for Sapna. She left behind her family, her friends and her beloved home to support her mother at the tender age of 8, only to migrate to the country's capital, Delhi. Sapna's mother had to migrate to Delhi to support her family economically. While she truly helped her grow, like wheat basking in the warm embrace of the sun, Sapna had to decide if she wanted to go with her mother or stay in Nepal. After living with her mother for many years, she decided it was time for her to take on the responsibilities of being the breadwinner for the family.



Moving past the past

Can you imagine growing up in Jammu and Kashmir? Can you ever move forward from the ghosts of your past? Amir Rashid is a man worthy of recognition. Sitting at his shop in Nirvana Courtyard, he appears like any other ordinary man. However, as he recalls growing up in Srinagar, one can see that he is not. He explains,

“We used to always live in fear as a child.”

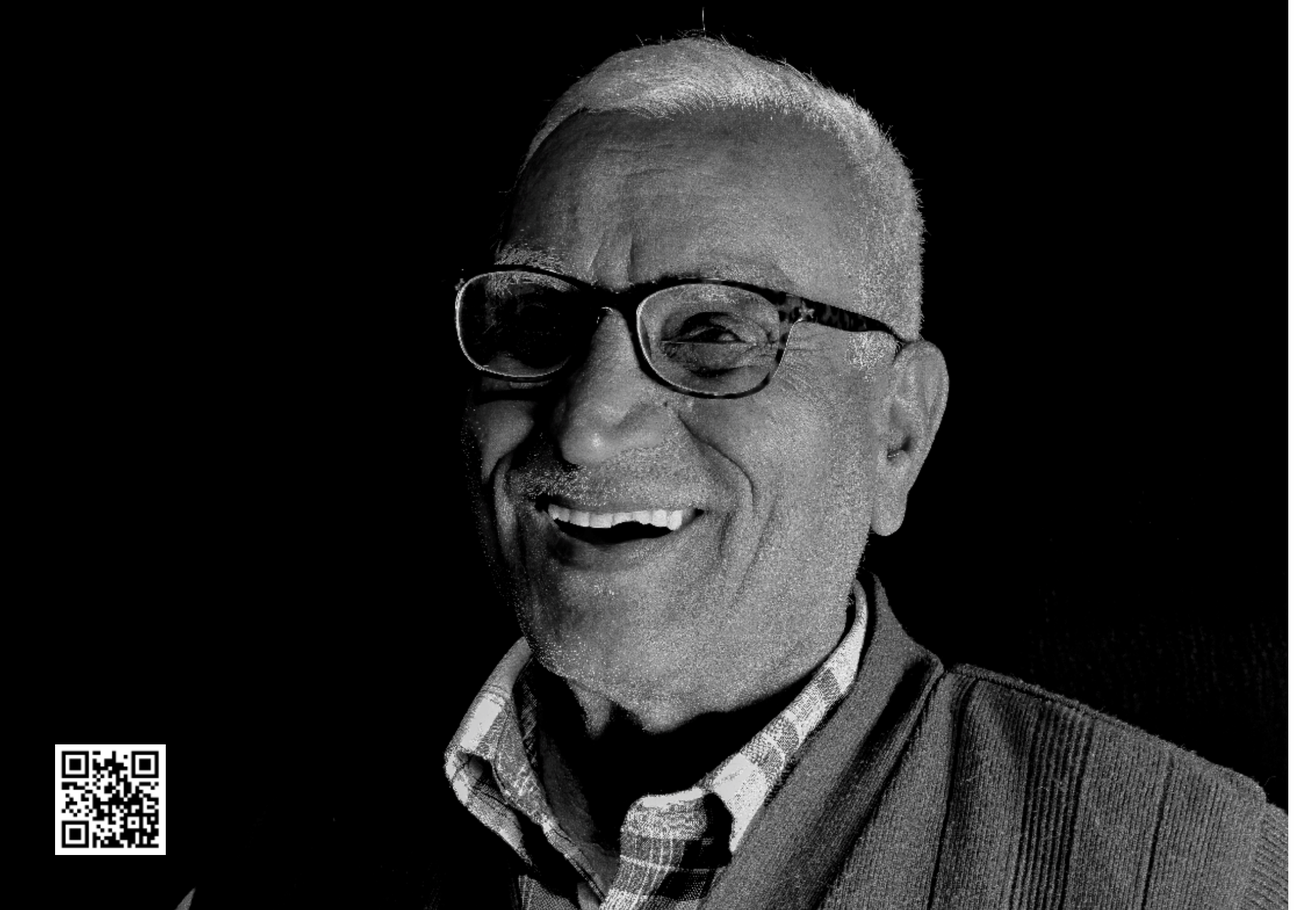
But for him it was normal. Amir talks about feeling as if life in Srinagar was 'normal' until he traveled outside and realized it

was not. Imagine growing up constantly scared and thinking that this feeling is right until you get older, start to travel and realize that in fact it is not. A distinct memory shared from his childhood was how he and his family had to wait to eat dinner until they heard the gunshots and knew that they were over, so they could eat in peace.

Growing up in Jammu and Kashmir was far from easy. He adds, “terrorism and militancy were at peak and we had restrictions of going out and playing and extracurricular activities were not there.” This could have to do with what he said about school being closed most of the time. Amir was shy because he was not exposed to children of his same age group. As a result, the conditions in which he grew up deprived him of many life skills.

Having a family member working for the government at such high stakes has an effect on a child. Amir's father was a civil officer and worked for the government. Because of his father's position, his family was offered security, but they had to give it away so people would not judge them. Often Amir's father would get calls from unknown people. “There were incidents where my father was contacted for money, or he was told that we know your son is standing here so we can pick him up from the store.” Often, these issues were not shared with Amir, but one can wonder for how long can this 'reality' be hidden from him.

They say, “Only I can change my life. No one can do it for me.” Amir's life is no exception. Amir left Jammu and Kashmir alone at the age of 16 for multiple reasons.



Flavourful smiles

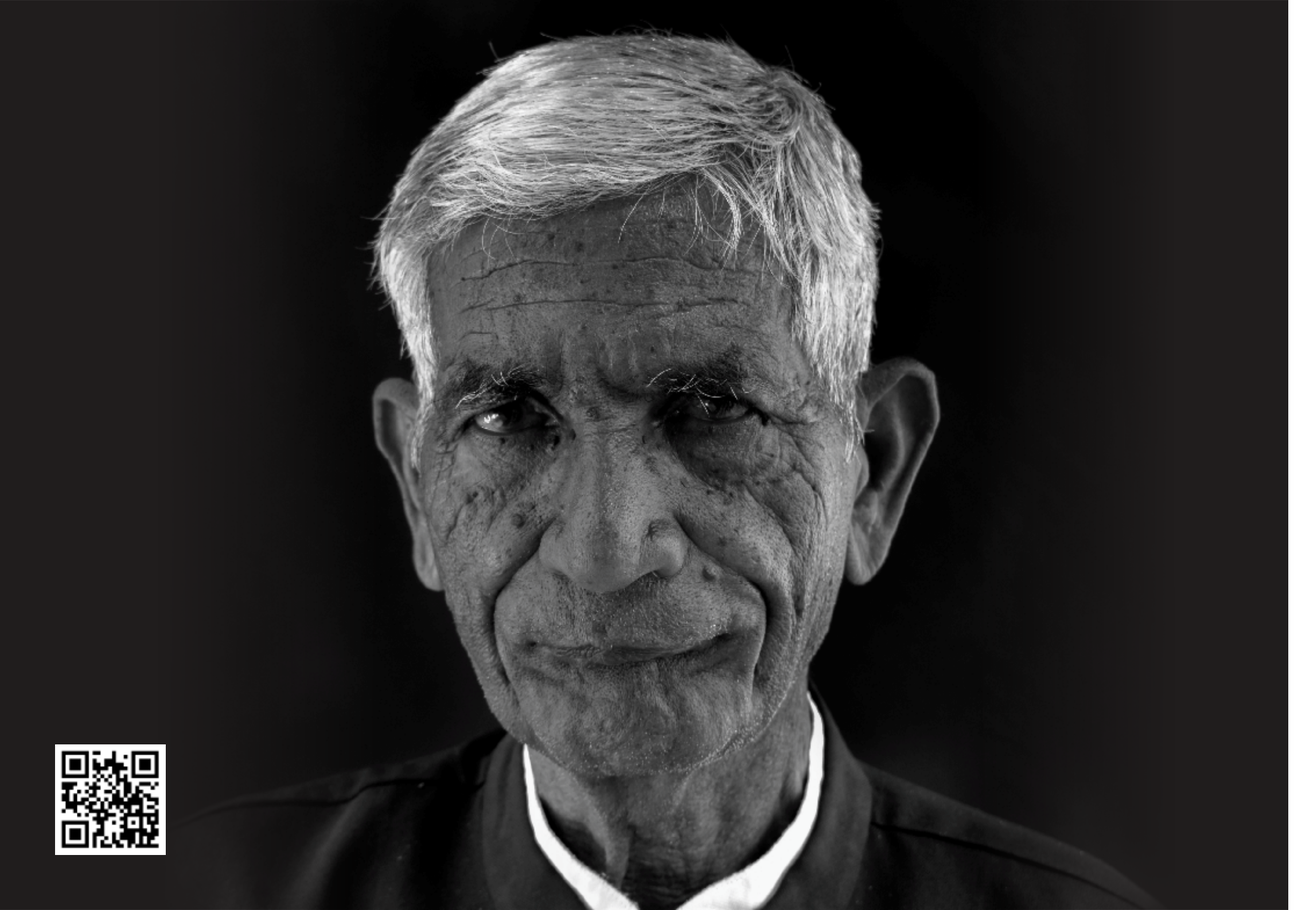
“Agar aap mehnat karenge, toh uska fal 101% milega”
(Working hard will always pay off and you will get the result, 101%.)

On a wet, cramped road in the heart of Old Gurgaon lies a shop full of sweetness and delight. The uplifting aura of this shop is brought by the owner, Mr. Ramlal Dhingra. He has a big, warm smile on his wrinkled face with deep, expressive eyes that seem to tell a thousand stories. Mr. Ramlal's life has been a bumpy, cacophonous ride, but he still stands smiling in his shop, waiting for his customers.

It all started when he and his family migrated to Gurgaon during the India-Pakistan partition, due to inevitable circumstances. The tremors of the partition devastated many lives, one of them being the Dhingras. This meant that a part of young Mr. Ramlal was left behind. His house may have originally been in Pakistan, but soon India became where he truly felt he belonged.

When the family arrived here, they had no support, no money, no house and no jobs. As fate would have it, Mr. Ramlal's father started selling kulfis (milk popsicles) in a cart. He would go around the street, attracting customers by calling out to them. Mr. Ramlal recalls “Hum awaaz bhi lagaya karte the,'Kulfi le lo! Kulfi le lo!'” (We used to call out, “Come buy kulfis! Come buy kulfis!”) As the family continued selling kulfis (milk popsicles), they realised that they could scrape just enough money for a living.

The Dhingras realised that it was essential that they expand their business in order to continue educating the three kids in the family and to live the life they had dreamt of. Mr. Ramlal, being one of the three Dhingra children, got the marvelous opportunity to go to school and learn.



The jack of all trades... the EXTRAordinary man

“Main har bachche ko bataata hoon ki eemandaar hona aur apne vichaaron ko baahar aane dena bahut zaroori hai”
(I tell every kid that being honest and expressing your thoughts is very important.)

On a bright sunny afternoon, it would be uncanny to spot a prosperous and respected senior citizen, sharing his wisdom with a passerby at a petrol pump owned by one of his sons. Mr. Natthimal, a former teacher, is always elated to see a new face. Even at the age of 75, he ensures his guests are always feeling comfortable and loves to share enlightening stories with people of all ages. Dressed in his 'kurta pyjamas' and carrying the world in his dreamy eyes, he has been a major influence in the lives of a lot of people.

After graduating from Punjab University with a degree in Bachelor of Arts (BA), Mr. Natthimal did a teacher training course in Faridabad. He doesn't believe in procrastination and tends to work in the very moment. After his assiduous work, he got the opportunity to be a middle school teacher (1st - 8th grade) at an elementary school. Every morning, he goes to a petrol pump and sits on a 'charpai' bordering it. The air is filled with fumes, but he doesn't seem to mind. Sometimes in the afternoon, he returns to his house to take care of his wife. A mere 3 years ago, you would have found him jogging next to the road with passion, though with old age, some problems clogged his way in his life and he had to stop. His eldest son is a highly ranked police officer. The second one owns the petrol pump he rests at. The third one is in charge of the staff at several schools. Growing up and living in Gurgaon his entire life, he has earned quite a reputation of helping people out.



Sometimes you have to be your own hero

“Susti nahin, furthi aati hai”
(There's no stress, I just feel the rush.)

Can a 16-year-old boy travel from Nepal to India all by himself to support his family? Can a boy turn from a dishwasher into a remarkable personality? We hear a lot about people like Warren Buffet and Bill Gates and other such prominent personalities, but they are not the only heroes in the world and not certainly the only people who made a difference.

Narendra Tamang is the head chef of one of the very few jazz clubs in India. He has shown perseverance and determination to support and aid his family in a time of crisis. Not only this, he sacrificed his education to make sure that his siblings got a better childhood and life.

Life was no different for Narendra Tamang while growing up. He grew up as an ordinary child, playing kabaddi (an indian sport) with his friends and going to school. He spent his childhood in a village in Kathmandu, Nepal. Life in the village wasn't quite posh all the time. Being the oldest sibling, he had to take care of all his other younger brothers and sisters while his father was busy protecting the country. Narendra sent them to school, made sure they were well fed and did everything his mother couldn't do because of his large family of nine members. This responsibility took a toll on Narendra, “Main school late pahunchta tha” (I used to reach school late most of the time.)

Soon enough, many working members of the family stopped sending money home, resulting in a financial crisis. Seeing the plight of his family, Narendra decided to take a stand.



Sugar and smiles

“Koi matlab nahi hai darne ka, waise bhi insaniyat baaki hai is duniya mei”
(There is no point in fearing anything, after all there is humanity in the world.)

Clad in a salwar kameez, with a chunni (scarf) draped around her neck and a twinkle in her eyes, an independent woman works in the narrow and twisted bylanes of old Gurgaon. She makes her living by baking in an old run-down clay oven since 1986. Ms. Kavita Arora has lived for 57 long years out of which she has spent 36 years in Gurgaon. She has seen the entire neighborhood of old Gurgaon built around her.

“Main yahaan bahut time se reh rahi hoon. Maine yeh saare makano ko khade hote huye dekha hai”
(I have lived here since a long time. I have seen all these buildings come up around me.)

Marriage became an important threshold in her life which made her move from Hisar to old Gurgaon at the age of 21. This began her journey into the then unknown world of baking. Kavita's husband owned a bakery in old Gurgaon called the “A-one Bakery”. Unlike most other bakers, he taught his wife how to bake and within two months she knew the ins and out of the art of baking. As fate has its own role to play in every story, this was no different. Quite sadly, her husband passed away two years after their marriage. This caused the entire responsibility of both managing the shop and raising their son to fall on her shoulders.

But she was unstoppable!!

“Every step of my career was hard work”-Virgil Van Dijk



Smashing biases-the real ace of our society

“There's nothing boys can do that girls can't!”

It's a sunny winter day, and Mr. Lalchand sits up straight on a hard park bench. There is a certain confident aura around him, but his gentle manners make you want to know more about him. There's a twinkle in his eye, as he shares his old fond memories, a slight smile fixed permanently to his face. He is a very unique man, and no one can help beaming a smile back at him.

Mr. Lalchand is a modest man living in Gurgaon with his three daughters, a son and a wife. He is a Lawn Tennis coach, a profession that was favoured in his family. “My grandfather was a marker, my father a player, my chacha (uncle) a blade marker and my other chacha (uncle) Sunil, a coach.” he says. Though Lalchand was 'encouraged' into this field of work, he takes pride in it. He has taught in renowned schools like DPS and has even played in the PM house!

However, life wasn't always easy for Lalchand. His family used to face financial problems which is why he was forced to drop out of school in 10th grade. Lalchand's career as a Tennis coach began when he was merely fifteen years old. He worked with his parents in order to earn money and support his family. Being the eldest of four children, Lalchand had a lot of responsibilities some of which included maintaining his job and taking care of his siblings.

Fortunately, his efforts paid off. In 1983, his family managed to move to Gurgaon, and as fate would have it, next to Lalchand's future wife!



The iron man

“Kaam jo bhi ho, izzat aur imaandari se Karna chahiye”
(It doesn't matter what job you do as long as you do it with respect and honesty)

These are the wise words of one of Gurgaon's many “Istriwalas” (a person who irons clothes.) He doesn't stand out at the first glance. But this man has a different tale to tell.

On a small temporary stand with a tin roof and wooden poles to hold the structure up, virtually nothing keeps out the elements, save a few flex boards advertising the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Here sits a man in his late 60s, wearing a kurta (shirt) with a blue vest over it. He adorns a sindoor tika (vermilion) on his forehead and wears metal-rimmed glasses standing behind a makeshift ironing board with a coal iron on the sidewalk near him. Nothing extraordinary for an 'istriwala' but for a politician? Not so much.

Mr. Suresh Kalsan is the OBC Morcha Zilla Adhyaksh (OBC Morcha District President) for the Bhartiya Janta Party. Not what you expected, was it? And how does an 'Istriwala' become a politician? Well, that is quite a story.

Mr Suresh was born into a poor family in Delhi. He has four brothers and one sister. The added pressure on his parents to feed so many mouths on a limited income caused him to immediately start working when he failed eighth grade. With a wistful look, he says *“Mai SD college jaana chahta tha” (He would have liked to go to SD college.)*

He helped his parents support his family but there were more challenges in store. His father passed away, possibly while he was still a child. Not long after his father passed away, he had to start to work as a truck mechanic at a bazaar (market) near Jama Masjid. He worked there for a while but was forced to quit when he received an electric shock on his head while working one day. When inquired about further details on the incident, he is quick to show the scar on the left side of his head.



With the grace of god...

How can a child deprived of education and a mother's love be a seeker of knowledge after reaching adulthood? How can one survive after tragedy upon tragedy in the family? How can one who has never studied start a famous band and lead it for more than 30 years?

Amidst multiple band shops where there ought to be a lot of competition, on a bustling street near the famous market 'Sadar Bazaar' in Old Gurgaon, an entirely self-made and healthy-looking man of 60 is seen running a striking shop by the name of 'Punjab Band'. To the right of it, clean, white horses are chomping grass and grains, and on both sides of the shop, two captivating marriage carts emblazoned with the name 'Punjab Band' stand still.

It is hard to imagine how somebody who lost his mother at the age of 4, whose father didn't give any support and was into excessive drinking, and who hasn't even been educated, can start one of the leading bands in that part of the city. Long before the advent of the nearby shops, cars on the street, and buildings, Satyavan moved to Gurgaon, which he prefers to call 'Gurugram'. Around 30 years ago, as a young man, he came from Jhajjar to find a job and opportunity.

“Gurgaon meh sab kuch tha. Bazaar bohot acche lagte the aur mujhe yaha aakar kaam karna tha”

(Gurgaon had everything. There were bazaars (markets), and I thought it was the best place to come and work), he says, with a smile creasing his face.

His mother passed away when he was just four, which was a shock and a difficult challenge for him. That was also one of the reasons for his lack of education. Though the city of Jhajjar has a male literacy rate of 90.41%, he is one of the unlucky ones.



Life is not as simple as a ‘cup of tea’

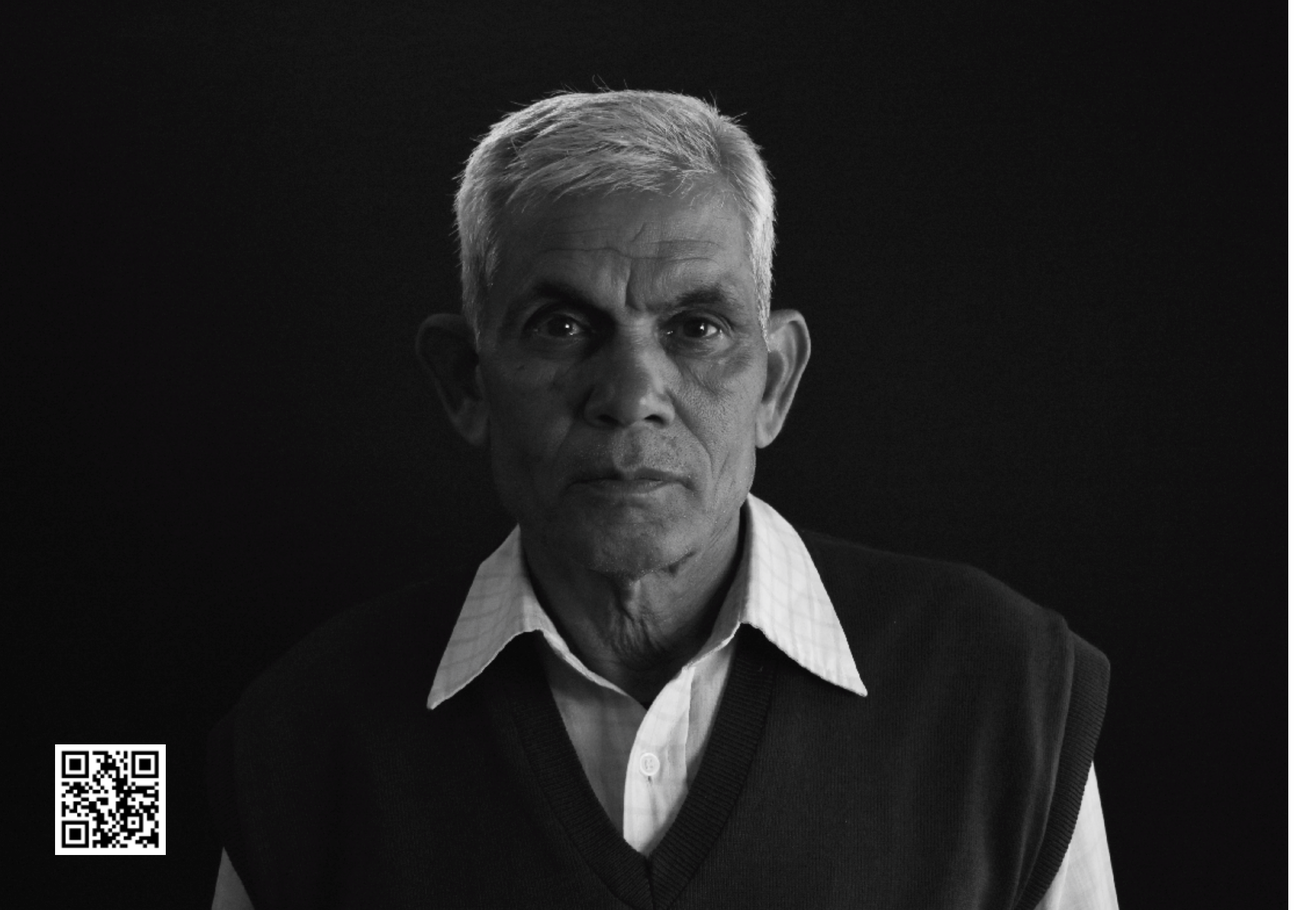
“Jo apne kadmo ki kaabiliyat par vishwaas rakhte hai,
aksar voh hi apni manzil par pohonchte hai”
(The people who believe in their dreams are often the ones who reach their destination.)

As one walks through sector 45, two contradicting lifestyles of Gurgaon are clearly visible. On one side are tall, soaring buildings and on the other is a barren piece of land which is home to the construction labourers. The stall where Mr. Satpal and Mrs. Rajesh sit every day serving tea is the bridge between these two worlds.

The rapid construction is synonymous to the fact that a lot has changed over time. As Mr. Satpal sits at his stall wearing his customary striped sweater, Mrs. Rajesh can be seen wearing the traditional salwar kameez with a dupatta covering her head. It is difficult to overlook people from varied segments of the society hovering around the stall, like swarm of bees, to buy all sorts of dairy products ranging from milk to tea.

Mr. Satpal Prajapati is a native of the village in Jharsa and later migrated to Indira colony in Gurgaon. He is currently 65 years old. His wife, Rajesh Devi, a resident of Najafgarh, has studied till class eight and was married at the age of 16. This lack of education has crushed her dreams, as she was unable to fulfil her desire to be a policewoman. A fiery and fiesty soul, she has managed to be a constant support to her husband and an important pillar in the family. Mr. Satpal himself has only studied till class 4.

With the lines on his forehead becoming prominent, he recalls *“Mujhe school chorhna padha kyuki school ki fees 10 rupees thi aur us waqt humaare paas itne paise nahi the” (I left school because the price of the fee was ever increasing and at one point it was too much for me and my family to afford it- around INR 10. In today's world, INR 10 does not sound like much, but in those days, it was a relatively large amount of money.)*



Man in *camo*

“If you have a bigger room, your thinking ability expands. If you have a smaller room, your thinking ability is smaller.”

Meet Om Prakash, an ex-Army officer with many adventurous, exciting memories and interesting answers to life. He lives in Indira Colony, Gurgaon. This 65-year-old still has the energy of a young man.

Mr. Prakash lives in a vibrant and colourful brick house, with his wife, son, daughter-in-law and grandchild. They are a happy family.

He studied till 10th grade and joined the Army, where he served for 22 years. It was the experience of a lifetime for him. He was also offered a position in the Haryana police, which he declined to join the army. Besides the army, Mr. Prakash has been a state level hockey player. He used to enjoy playing high jump in school with his highest jump being 5.4 ft.

He was first in “Shotguns” and then shifted to “Ordinance”. Ordinance provides weapons, ammunition and artillery to the soldiers. Mr. Prakash was posted in many areas such as Hyderabad, UP, Arunachal Pradesh, Meerut, Jabalpur.

He is an energetic and charming man with a lot of stories to tell, yet his style of living remains straightforward and simple. Every day, he sits outside his house, basking in the sun. His brother, also an ex- army officer, lives next door and they spend much of their time together.



A voice for the voiceless

"I do this to compassionate the future generations."

Gurgaon is a pristine city known for its urban lifestyle and modern infrastructure. But rarely does anybody see the plea of stray animals that hovers around the city. Nobody sees the pain and suffering animals go through, who some people in the city so carelessly abuse and abandon.

But one person does. Meet Ms. Mala Sahni Seth.

A person whose childhood in Assam went in a flurry when she temporarily shifted to Gurgaon. Some people say that fate brought her here as she came to get her father proper medication, who was, then, in a weakened state. Here, she saw the plea of the street dogs and decided to stay in Gurgaon and help them.

When asked about one particular moment that motivated her to do this, she says: *"One weekend my parents & I went for a picnic and I saw a duck in the river. When I came closer, I realised that it had been shot! As a result, I rushed it to the vet and thereafter nursed it back to health over a period of few months after which we released it back in its territory to meet the rest of the flock. So that was probably one of those moments that made me sure of what I had to do."*

After this, Mala stands up and walks us to a field where the dogs are having their free time. She calls all 60 dogs over to play. A sight like this can scare the living daylight out of anyone who is afraid of dogs, but Mala seems to be having the time of her life, petting and playing with the dogs. All her actions seem natural, as she can be seen running energetically along with the dogs through the entire field.



Heal the world

“Be a part of the solution, not the pollution.”

Air pollution has been threatening this planet for many years. It is the most prominent type of pollution and is one of the major causes of global warming. It has caused 1.2 million deaths in 2019. A lot of people are trying to undo this and provide a better environment for the generation to come.

Brought up in the busy streets and pollution of Mumbai, Mrs. Sherebanu Frosh, 43, is a climate activist who is one of a kind and a pioneer in this field. A mother of two, she protests against some beliefs of the government actively. Alongside, she also works in a startup. She spends the majority of her time raising her children. Even with her children to attend to, she tries to create awareness about pollution and social evils. Being a child who enjoyed reading nature books, she was inspired to be a climate activist.

However, life had other plans. Right after completing her graduation from Ohio State University and masters in engineering from Tuft University, she joined ExxonMobil, one of the biggest oil companies in the world. Eventually, she realised the harm done by the fossil fuel industry. She says,

“I saw the damage being done by the fossil fuel industry to the environment, of course to the environment, also to the countries where they worked.”

Currently, she is working with the Clean Air Movement (CLAIM) which has conducted many rallies and protests across India. Her vision is to create a world where people can breathe fresh air freely.



Roam sweet roam...
The forgotten tribes of chittorgarh

The Banjaras have lived an adventurous life- a nomadic one. But such a life comes with its fair share of challenges, be it the quintessential problem of harsh weather, or the newest threat to the community- urbanisation.

Centuries ago, the Banjaras used to live in their province of Chittorgarh, ruled over by the Rajputs. As fate had it, the area was soon attacked by the Mughals. The Rajput fought valiantly, but the then leader of the time- Maharana Pratap was defeated. The Banjaras thence swore to leave Chittorgarh, and never return, if their leader wasn't found. They then attempted to find the famed ruler but in vain. Thus, began their nomadic lives, as they left Chittorgarh forever, and ventured into uncertainty.

"Hamara jo desh tha na? Voh chheen liya gaya hamse"
(Our land, it was stolen from us.)

says a disappointed Suman who is eager to share the tale that has been passed down from generation to generation in her family.

The Banjaras first arrived in Gurgaon many decades ago. According to Suman, they first lived at the Kapashera border (Delhi- Gurgaon border) which happens to be her birthplace. They ventured to many places from there, some of which include Mehrauli, MG Road, Sikanderpur, and finally to Sector 56, where they are currently living.

But how do they make a living? The Banjaras are dexterous craftsmen and traders.

The art of the Banjara craft is less straightforward than it appears. The Banjaras get their goods from a village in Rajasthan. After getting the goods here, the Banjaras get to work, polishing their crafts and woodwork.



Oceans to save, mindsets to change

“It is everyone's responsibility to give back to the world they are a part of.”

A passionate theatre professional, Kriti V. Sharma believes that she can change the fate of the oceans through mindful action as a team.

With a warm smile, Kriti describes how she has designed costumes for over a hundred plays over the past 30 years. Surprisingly enough, she has been able to do this along with working in movies and documentaries at the same time. The list doesn't end here for she has also played the role of a special-needs educator, enabling children to express themselves through theatre.

Her latest endeavour is 'Oceanaris- The Oceans Initiative'. She is the founder of this environmental foundation with the aim of marine conservation and stopping ocean pollution along with creating awareness.

Every face has a story. This face is no different. A few years ago, she faced one of her biggest fears and went ocean diving for the first time. As a result, she was devastated to see a huge amount of trash everywhere.

“It's okay to be hurt, but what are you going to do about it?” This is the thought that inspired her to start Oceanaris.

They say that the sky's the limit. This is evidently visible in Kriti's thoughts and life. Despite a lot happening in her life, she still possesses the same confidence and determination with which she began her career.



Sonipat ki jyoti (the light of sonipat)

"If something makes you happy, just do it.
Put your passion and life above everything else."

Being born and bought up in Sonipat, a small town in Haryana, having studied in a Government residential school founded with a target to nurture the rural talent of Haryana, Mrs. Jyoti Bhasin's story is no less than an analogy of inspiration and hard work. Working as Director in PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in Gurgaon today, she defines success in every aspect of her life.

Sitting confidently in her corporate attire, she has limited time, as she has to attend to her work. As contradicting as it may sound, her calm aura is infectious. It is easy for anyone to make out how it is synonymous to her personality.

Jyoti came to Gurgaon in the year 2001 when she got married, resulting in her migration from her hometown. She joined PwC henceforth. Being a bright student who enjoyed school, Jyoti boasts of a strong educational background. Having been inspired from a family of engineers, Jyoti studied to become a software engineer herself. She went on to do her Master's in Business Administration (MBA) from IIM Ahmedabad, which is one of the leading business schools in the world. As a result, her migration to Gurgaon opened several job avenues for her.

On enquiring about her life in Gurgaon, Jyoti says *"Being exposed to too much urban life is not good."* As a result, she goes to her hometown, Sonipat, every 2 months. "Visiting my hometown and parents also helps me stay in touch with what the rest of India looks like." Even though the rural parts of India are close to her heart as they were a big part of her childhood, she still prefers to live in Gurgaon over Sonipat, as she gets to do what she really enjoys today. An advisor to government and public sector clients for eGovernance projects and contributing to many emerging tech initiatives of the country, Jyoti is in absolute love with her job.

Epilogue

What a wonderful journey we have ventured upon. Teaming up with PARI taught us a new way of looking at everyday people and their lives. We gained new insights, recording and sharing experiences with you.

We have met people selling tea in street corners, baking golden biscuits, and attempting to survive under the scorching sun to people, those just trying to keep their homes, or protect animals and the environment. Each person is as vividly different and beautiful as each unique snowflake in a blizzard that is life. It will truly be an adventure to remember, having the chance to chronicle such compelling tales.

But now, it's time to exit their wondrous worlds and journeys, to walk your own path. Maybe you now have a new, fresh outlook on life. Because, to quote the poet Henry David Thoreau...

"It's not what you look at that matters,
it's what you see."

And maybe it is time to change the lens through which you perceive the world.

"

Life is a circle.
The end of one journey is
the beginning of another.

-Joseph M Marshall

Support pages

We had heard the tales, built the stories, captured the moments. Despite the many challenges, our book was ready. Yet one piece of this intricate puzzle had not been put in place.

We realized that none of this would have been possible, if it weren't for the unique, helpful individuals who had willingly told us their stories. It was our duty to give back to them.

This community service element in our expedition is what led us to create these support pages,in an attempt to help these people, ranging from Banjaras to environmental activists. The idea of giving back to the community and bringing out humanity and compassion is an integral part of our school. We must try to give back for what we take, and believe that sharing these stories is only the first step in helping these people. A small step in the right direction, perhaps, but a step nonetheless.There are also those that helped us in our journey, and we are grateful. We request you to try to help some of them, even if in the simplest ways possible.

“

The greatest good is what we do for one another.

-Mother Teresa

Support the Banjara Community



"No one has ever become poor by giving."

-Anne Frank

In the article 'Roam Sweet Roam', we get to know about the Banjaras' plight and the challenges of living a nomadic lifestyle. Quite sadly, these people are being asked to move out of sector 56 by the government, where they are currently residing. You can help them by donating blankets, toys and other useful supplies at their market.

Support the homeless shelter

Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan (AAA) is a campaign to address the problems of homeless people of Delhi. AAA believes that it is the fundamental right of every individual to have access to shelter, food and clothing. It is based on the belief that homeless people, too, have the right to live with dignity, peace and security. We live in one of the biggest republic countries and yet not everyone has a place they can call home. It is the duty of the government that the necessities of the common person should be provided. Therefore, AAA started their advocacy by way of a campaign to fight the homeless people situation in Delhi with the support of Action Aid.



The people at the shelter lovingly call it an "ashray" which means "a loving home". To help them with their endeavour, please visit their website/ donate at:-
http://www.homelesspeople.in

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR THE WEBSITE

Oceanaris
THE OCEANS INITIATIVE

Scan for the website!

"The ocean stirs the heart, inspires the imagination and brings eternal joy to the soul."
-Robert Wyland

Kriti V. Sharma is working to save the oceans as temperatures increase and sea levels rise. Her organisation works on spreading awareness and taking constructive action towards marine life conservation.

To support them:
Visit their facebook page
'Oceanaris - The Oceans Initiative'
to see their many events, campaigns, fundraisers and more!
Make a donation at
https://risefundraiser.com/campaign/campaign-for-healthier-oceans-healthier-planet#make-donation

Support the PEOPLE'S ARCHIVE OF RURAL INDIA

Our journey would never have begun if it weren't for the People's Archive of Rural India - P.A.R.I.

P.A.R.I is an online journal, archive and learning tool in schools and colleges.They are a not-for-profit reporting on rural India and aim to share tales to a wide audience to bring these lesser known stories to light. They rely solely on donations to make this unique journalistic endeavor a success. Here is an opportunity for you to unravel your creative side and help P.A.R.I.

Here is what you can do:

- **Donate money**: You can send your donations using a range of payment methods on the website- https://ruralindiaonline.org/donate.
- **Share the site** in your network!
- **Contribute content** like write-ups, research, films and photos.
- **Donate equipment** like cameras, recording devices. For more details, contact them on the site- https://ruralindiaonline.org/contact-us/

Scan the QR code for the website!

Support SHAKTI SHALINI

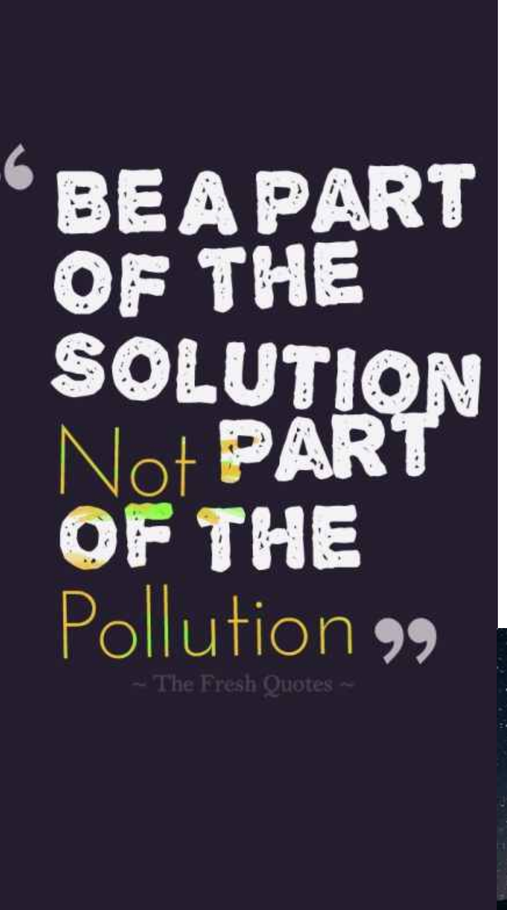
Shakti Shalini is an NGO that aims to promote equality between genders and respect for consent and individual choice. It works with communities to bring about a change in social mindsets. It has four major programmes including a shelter for women in distress. To make your contributions towards their cause, you can do the following:

- **Volunteer** to hold skill development workshops to empower women in the shelter.
- **Donate** money so that Shakti Shalini can reach and support more women and girls in government schools. Visit this link- https://risefundraiser.com/campaign/support-gender-sensitisation-in-government-schools
- **Work as an intern** or **volunteer** and help them in their on-going projects. To know more about this, visit their website-https://shaktishalini.org/

"There is no limit to what we, as women can accomplish."
-Michelle Obama

SCAN THIS FOR THE WEBSITE

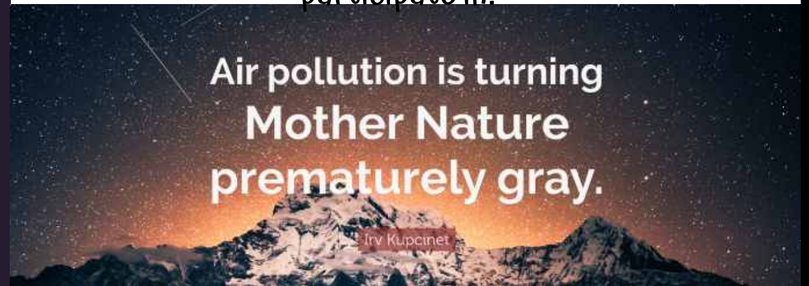




Support the Clean Air collective!

Scan the QR code for the website!

In the article 'Heal the World', we get to know about the passionate climate activist, Mrs. Sherebanu Frosh. She is a part of the Clean Air India Movement and has participated in multiple rallies and protests, to lower air pollution. You can help support this initiative by visiting their website- http://cleanairindiamovement.com/ - to know about any upcoming campaigns and protests that you can participate in.





Scan the QR code for the website



Support the Dog Shelter

You might recall an article which talked about the passionate dog shelter owner: Mala Sahni Seth. The Karma Animal Foundation aims to give animals a secure space where all their needs are met. However, being a non-profit organisation, there can be some struggles.

To help these dogs live a safe life:

- Sponsor an animal & become a virtual parent
- Donate food, blankets, collars etc
- Volunteer at the centre
- Donate money

Contact the foundation at (981) 102 - 8965

MUSEO CAMERA
Centre for the Photographic Arts

Support the Museo Camera

Scan the QR code for the website

The Museo Camera played an integral part in our journey throughout this expedition. From learning how to capture a portrait to mastering the art of editing a picture, all of the portraits that you have seen in this book are a result of our learnings from Mr. Aditya Arya, the curator of this unique museum. Being an enthusiast, he likes working with children. However, being a non-profit organisation, Museo Camera relies on donations to maintain their collection. A few ways that you can support this museum organisation are:

- Donate to them at https://www.museocamera.org/become-a-founder
- Donate your photos and photographic equipments at: https://www.museocamera.org/donate



Photography is the story I fail to put into words
-Destin Sparks

UNITED AGAINST HATE

Scan the QR code for their website!

United against hate is a non-profit organization of people from different backgrounds united against hate, bigotry and racism. Some of their primary work revolves around working towards providing equal protection for all, promoting religious tolerance and the celebration of differences and digging down to the causes of division, fear and hate.

To donate please visit: https://www.united-against-hate.org/donate/
To see their work, follow them on facebook at: 'WeAreManyUnitedAgainstHate'
To volunteer and help them with their efforts, contact: volunteers@united-against-hate.org







Our Reflections

A WHOLE NEW WORLD!

I honestly can't describe this amazing experience in words. This whole process has been extremely adventurous and knowledgeable. I have never done anything like this before and honestly although I am good at small talk with anyone, I am not very comfortable in knowing someone else's life, especially someone I don't know!

But after learning all the skills required like interviewing, photography, questioning and learning how to communicate with someone in GP class, I was really excited to start this journey! Interviewing Mr. Lalchand has taught me to not be biased and be open to all perspectives, it has taught me that there is no universal right or wrong, it depends on a person's view of things, the way they see the world!

Writing is one of my most lovable hobbies and being able to pen down the purely amazing thoughts of Mr. Lalchand was just on another level! We were taught how to write down the whole process of interviewing-the write choice of words, breaking it down in parts, how to draft and format it, etc.

This book is very special to me, as is this whole journey...After, going through this new process it feels like I learned about a whole new world!

~Jassimmrat

Out of my comfort zone

This journey was an experience I will cherish forever. It had many ups and downs along the way. I am an introvert. This expedition was way out of my comfort zone. We were going out in the field to explore, interview people, take photos and so on. I was scared. But this journey turned out to be an amazing one. I overcame my fears of interviewing people. I just had to connect with them. I learned a lot in these 7 months. I love photography and I feel I have improved in this skill. I also learned how to edit pictures using lightroom which was new to me. The teachers guided us throughout this journey and I would like to acknowledge them. Some challenges did come in the way but we did interview our respective respondents and wrote a write up on them. I enjoyed creating the write-up. Teamwork really helped and I feel the write up portrays our respondent in the truest sense. I am super excited about the end product, i.e., the book. We all have put in our best into this expedition and this book is an amalgamation of our collective effort. Overall this expedition was rigorous but it was an enriching experience. I am glad that I got to be a part of it.

~Malvika

We started off with a session conducted by P.A.R.I. and ended with hard work put on hold! This expedition is one that will stay with me for years to come. I, Cherish, a Heritan since 2011, have never experienced such an enriching, memorable, and rather overwhelming expedition. It was truly an eye-opener. Never before had I thought so deeply about this- 'Every face has a story'. My major takeaway was that there is more to everyone than the eyes capture and we perceive. We were taken for field work almost every month. The research work began; interviews were taken; stories were documented. Our respondent was more than a kulfi shop owner. There was more to him behind that smile. Getting to know about people's struggles, challenges, ups and downs in life; listening to them share emotional and unforgettable moments they encountered taught me so much! This expedition required hard work, not only from our side. To sum it up, it was an uplifting and thought-provoking experience.

©® ~Cherish

I still haven't gotten over it yet. The mere thought of learning something not meant for us but for 4 grades higher than our level is indescribable. Doing the task in reality and completing, well I hadn't dreamt that far when we first took the workshop. Now as we come to an end of a truly fantastic journey, I look back at the times. The journey perhaps flew by, and it seems just yesterday we took the workshop with PARI. The story writing was undoubtedly the spiciest and most interesting/difficult challenge for our group. The day we started we suffered our most major setback. Kanav and I fell sick leaving the entire thing upon Harji's back for the next 3 days, with me travelling and Kanav at home. Nevertheless, the writing was a journey of its own as it wrote a personal life story in a mere page or two. It shows us that life is short and quick but, it's the things that you do that make your time on Earth worthwhile. The story was finished with amazing collaboration and writing skills from the whole group coming into play to finish the stories by the deadline. Of course, it included a few sleepless nights but "to gain some, you lose some". The end product: a fascinating compilation of stories and journeys of men and women alike to reach where they are today. It showed me how far determination and perseverance can take you in life.

~Siddhant

My experience of participating in this expedition was enlightening and eye-opening. We often tend to miss things that are so prominent in day to day lives because of work stress, busy schedules and sometimes just because we are too busy or caught up with work. In this expedition we were asked to dig deeper into things that may seem obscure but are prominent in day to day life. It was a good learning experience learning about the citizens of Gurgaon, a city so diverse in culture. Participating in this expedition gave me an eye opener about the citizens of Gurgaon and gave me an insight about different cultures and backgrounds. This expedition also gave me an opportunity to become closer with many of my peers. I can definitely say that I have started viewing the world much more differently than I did before. It is said that "it's seeing the world differently with the same pair of eyes that really changes you." This expedition provided me with a fresher perspective and I am glad that I can see the same things in ten different ways and have ten different perspectives with the same pair of eyes.

~Tvesha

This expedition is something I will remember for the rest of my life. It helped me experience what it truly means to live. I did so, through other people's lenses and got to know how different and interesting it can really be and that how the smallest decisions impact your life in the process. It gave me a sneak peek into the diversity of life and helped me comprehend the diversity and demographics of Gurugram. Prior to the expedition, I thought that in Gurugram, people's lives are the same. They go to the office or school in the morning, stay there for most of the day, come back, go to sleep and repeat. This expedition showed me that Gurugram is a very diverse city where people from many communities live here and live their lives differently.

~ Aditya Arora

This expedition is something I will remember for the rest of my life. I truly enjoyed it. It was an amazing experience to get to know people whose stories we may have overlooked. Not only did I learn skills about interviewing, journalistic writing and photography but I also realised that we cannot judge someone based on how he/she appears on the surface. We must dive deeper to understand who they are. This is something that will help me in my future and is a valuable lesson to learn. Overall this expedition was a huge learning experience and I got a lot out of it.

~ Maya

I was quite skeptical about this expedition. I did not feel I would enjoy any part of it. However, I was proved partially wrong. While making the transcripts was tiring work, writing the article was not. Collating data was boring, but hearing our respondent's story was not. It might have been my aversion to group work that made some of these worse than they were, but all in all, I felt it was definitely a new experience, one which I had not done anything similar to before.

"We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring, will be to arrive where we started, and know the place for the first time."

-T.S. Elliot.
~Aditya Sankar

This expedition has by far been the most strenuous, exciting and suspenseful one. My favourite part of this whole journey were the interviews we conducted with our respondent. The larger purpose of this project was to understand that there is more to a person than what meets the eye, in the city of migrants, Gurgaon. The interviewing process began when we created a list of questions within our groups. Then we disembarked on a journey, which would change our lens with which we view migrants and the stereotypes that come with it. We set off to our respondent's current place of residence. On the way to our respondent's home, we took pictures of the surroundings, to understand how the area influences our respondent's thoughts and beliefs. These interviews were a once in a lifetime experience. I learnt how my respondent's lifestyle changed upon moving to Gurgaon. She told me how scary and overwhelming it was for her to migrate to Delhi at the age of 8 with her mother and was directly put to work. She told me how she was discriminated for having Nepalese features and for wearing western clothes. For some reason, I felt calm but quizzed when I was around her. I wanted to know so much about her, but there was only so little time we had with her, to learn her life story. Questions arose such as "Why didn't other people in her village seek out education?" 'What made her so different from other girls in her village?" "How has she stayed so optimistic throughout her life, despite the fact that her life is a never-ending emotional rollercoaster." I think she felt special, that someone wanted to know about her life and experiences. Even I was eager to learn about her life and the impact her experiences have made in her life. With this expedition, I learnt that people will share, if you're willing to hear them out and give them a chance. This expedition truly taught me: what you see and assume, is not always what is.

~ Yuvika

Telling a baker's tale

Interviewing Ms. Kavita was one of the most different things I have done so far in my life. At first, I couldn't fathom the idea of asking someone I didn't know about their life's story. But within the first few minutes of the interview, it was like we had known her forever. She was an amazingly approachable person that made this entire task surprisingly easy. Her being an optimistic person, it shocked me and my team (Arushi and Meher) as to how well she took on the challenges in her life. After we had all the information we needed, putting together her story was another task. Overall, I really enjoyed this experience and taking back a lot from it.

~Ahana

A gate to a whole new perspective

This journey has been very fascinating for me. I have learned many new skills during this expedition. We started the expedition with going to the camera museum and learned how to take professional portrait pictures by a professional photographer. In class, we learned how to interview people. I usually don't like going up to strangers and talking to them so for the first round, I was very nervous but later got used to it and wasn't that nervous eventually in the second round. After interviewing our respondent, we wrote their story, post which we started making a website on our respondent which we added to the final website with all the other respondents' pictures and stories. I was a part of the design team. It was really fun to design support pages because I love art and designing is a part of art so it was really interesting. I loved this year's expedition and I would love to do something like this again.

~Vanalika Upadhyaya

The journey of a journalistic write-up

This expedition was one of my favourite one as I made many new friends and got to know so much more about the perspectives and experiences of people living in the same city as me. On the way, I learnt many new valuable skills and polished up old ones, such as photography, interviewing, researching, etc. I felt extremely proud and happy when I got to know that my work would be published in an actual book!

I am now looking forward to finishing and publishing a website about my respondent and the journey I sent on to reach my final product.

-Nilay J.

Wielders of the pen

This book was written in the hope to make a change. Many students put in hard work to build these stories. Below are the names of the young journalists that made these tales a reality:

JUSTICE IS NOT GIVEN IN ISOLATION
Vanalika Upadhyaya, Malvika Mullick

THE CRAFTSMAN ON THE MOVE
Ayaan Bhatia, Krishiv Agarwal

STICK AROUND. DON'T LOSE YOUR HEART, JUST KEEP GOING, KEEP AT IT
Nilay Gupta, Rehaan Dev

SAPNA, A DREAM YET TO BE FULFILLED
Yuvika Mehra, Tvesha Ghosh

MOVING PAST THE PAST
Maya Rose Koerber-Marx, Dheer Gandhi

FLAVOURFUL SMILES
Sieya Dengwal, Cherish Dhawan, Zoya Toor

THE JACK OF ALL TRADES
Vir Gogoi, Moksh Nakirekanti

SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO BE YOUR OWN HERO
Kanav Khanduja, Siddhant Jain, Harji Singh

SUGAR AND SMILES
Meher Sharma, Arushi Chatterjee

SMASHING BIASES
Anoushka Sharma, Jassimmrat Kaur Bhatia

THE 'IRON' MAN
Aadiya Pavitra Chari Rajagopalan, Kenisha Sharma, Svarit Mathur Chakravarthy

WITH THE GRACE OF GOD
Shashvat Tiwary, Adavya Atri

LIFE IS NOT A CUP OF TEA
Musaad Masroor, Romir Maudgalya

MEN IN 'CAMO'
Adil Bali, Uday Singh, Angad Madan

YOU MAY SEE ME STRUGGLE, BUT YOU'LL NEVER SEE ME QUIT
Shreshth Bhatnagar, Siddharth Singh Sirohi

HEAL THE WORLD
Raghav Bansal, Aditya Arora, Avyukt Jain

ROAM SWEET ROAM
Vani Agarwal, Aditya Sankar, Ayaan Dhanuka

OCEANS TO SAVE, MINDSETS TO CHANGE
Nilay Jain, Maahir Lohia

SONIPAT KI JYOTI (THE LIGHT OF SONIPAT)
Aarav Singh, Randitya Singh Jhakkar, Kabeer Pujari Chopra

Working tirelessly behind the scenes was the design team and the editorial team to get those last finishing touches and get the book to perfection:

DESIGN TEAM
Maya Rose Koerber-Marx, Sieya Dengwal, Vanalika Upadhyaya, Kenisha Sharma, Malvika Mullick, Nilay Jain, Vani Agarwal

EDITORIAL TEAM
Aditya Sankar, Shashvat Tiwary, Vani Agarwal

SONG COMPOSITION
Yuvika Mehra, Cherish Dhawan, Malvika Mullick, Vanalika Upadhyaya

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The pen is mightier than the sword.

-Edward Bulwer Lyton