

REFLECTIONS

OCTOBER 2020



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Tell us
what you think of this issue. We'd
love to hear from you.

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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Yet another quarter has gone by and we've not yet found a way to get out from under this raging pandemic.

But on a positive note, it gives me immense pleasure to introduce to you the newest member of the *Reflections* team, Ujwala. Ujwala has been a silent member of the editorial board all this while. She has now decided to become an active member. Read all about her in the Editorial Board section. At a broader level, we welcome into the fold the newest employees to join the Newgen family. Join me in extending a warm welcome to Ujwala and the newest addition to the talent pool.

In the spotlight this time are Girish Sundaram who manages Newgen Enterprise, Preetha Ambat who works for the Peter Lang team, and Newgen's Technology team. Turn the pages to find out what makes them tick.

Because of the lockdown, a lot of activities at Nandavanam have been curtailed but the staff and children have put in tremendous efforts to bring continuity to the students.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue. Share your lockdown stories with us.

Write to reflections@newgen.co with your feedback, comments, and stories.

~ Lydia

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Courage

■ BIBI CHRISTA XAVIER

Centralized Books Copyediting Team

Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear.

~ Franklin D. Roosevelt

The above quote by Franklin D. Roosevelt, the only four-time elected president of the United States, who led his country during the world economic crisis and World War II, has been quoted by many great leaders such as Nelson Mandela, who lived to prove the power of its every letter! As words stand to inspire, and lived lives become testimonies, Courage lives in each one of us in different forms. It's what defines us and takes humanity forward.

Courage as a virtue has played out on the stage of life since the first human evolved and took the lead to move out of the continent of Africa, into the expanse of Asia and the rest of the world. Humans have evolved, explored and conquered – from every grain of the biosphere to the depths of the bottomless oceans, to the infinite expanse of space and the unknown, Courage has led them to be the 'be all'!

History books abound with deeds of valour and Courage – from the great king Alexander, who dared on a mission to conquer the world; to Columbus, who set sail to circumnavigate the world; to Amelia Earhart, who dared a solo flight around the world; to Gandhi, who dared the might of the British without a sword – the one thing that



dared these men and women of yore was Courage! The Courage to be and the Courage to not let them be!

Courage and bravery are displayed in the wild too. But it is only to attack when hunger pangs are high, or to feed and sustain the young ones, or to defend one's own. It is never for a noble cause – neither to save the species from extinction nor to stretch out a helping hand to another that is dying. Courage in the wild is savage – it is brutal and it is selfish.

‘Why is Courage now a subject of discourse?’ you ask. Yes, more than ever before, that’s what we all need the most when Fear lurks in the deepest fathoms of our being. Fear has taken a larger form within us! Lest it overpower and engulf the Courage within us, look up to the extraordinary bravery seen in the selfless service of doctors and nurses in the face of death. We see them confront nightmares that have become daily routines with Courage. They fight to keep the breath going with no known tested and scientific cure on hand.

In them we see the Courage to act under the conviction that ‘something else’ is more important than Fear! That something else is the human in us, the divine in us, the noble in us, the glow in us that will live on unto the end of time. This is what each one of us needs at this very hour. The Courage to overcome, the Courage to lend a helping hand and the Courage to move on, in spite of!

The Conversation

SHASHIKANT YADAV

Wolters Kluwer, Tax & Accounting

The only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars.

~ Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*

One day, in the midst of a casual conversation, a friend asked me, “*What is your source of inspiration?*” I contemplated for a while and then answered, “*It’s the people around me.*”

As an avid reader, I live in a world of my own, which is inspired by people I meet and greet. Every person I have ever met and every book I have read, all form a part of me in some way or the other. Being a keen observer and vivid imaginer, I am vastly influenced by the myriad complexities and behaviors of people around me, including the characters of a book I read. Many writers and thinkers talk about ‘*extraordinary*’ people and their stories, but what stimulate me are ‘*common*’ stories and their simplicity. I draw inspiration from the struggle of an ‘*average*’ human being to be ‘*perfectly average*’. Be it a 9-to-5 job or a struggle to be part of the rat race, human beings are always finding ways to fulfill their aspirations and hopes.



I may not be able to understand the nuances of the struggle and hardships of everyone, but through this write-up I wish to thank everyone I have ever met for contributing to my thought process.

At times I have sat alone in random cafés with an appetite for listening to people's conversations, and often I have overheard conversations between idealistic lovers hoping for their togetherness; or listened to a bunch of aspirational youth talk about their dreams of conquering the world; or heard the views of intellectuals on world peace. What makes these conversations utterly interesting is the unconditional hope they all behold. I understand the kind of courage it takes to be hopeful in a world where every second dreams are murdered by reality.

As a school student, one hopes to enter his/her dream university; as a university scholar one dreams to make it big in their workplace; as a new employee one hopes to make big money in their desired work profile and thereafter build an ideal family and so on and so forth. The story of hope is like a vicious circle, but irrespective of whether the person is bruised or healed, he/she always keeps their hopes and dreams intact. To me, it is the conversation and daily efforts of common people to accomplish their simple hopes and dreams that make this world go round.

I was thrilled and excited when I got an opportunity to write for *Reflections*. I first began writing on existentialism and then on imposter syndrome but somehow I felt that through these topics I will not be able to engage in a conversation with the readers of this post, because a true conversation demands submissiveness to each other's thoughts. I stopped my writing in between and just waited for the right time. Today while coming back from a party, I had a conversation with my cab driver about his hopes of owning a house and sending his children to an international school so that his children can dream bigger than him. The conversation was just another ordinary exchange of words, but it certainly was illustrative of the fact that this world is full of dreamers; it's just how much one chooses to learn and gain from their conversations with others. As Guy de Maupassant said, "*Conversation. What is it? A Mystery! It's the art of never seeming bored, of touching everything with interest, of pleasing with trifles, of being fascinating with nothing at all.*"

You may be wondering about the conclusion I am inching towards. Well, I live and think only in abstract. At times, being conclusive kills the conversation, and for me to keep the conversation alive, I request all those who are reading this to write about their hopes/dreams and often talk about it. Share it. Build on it. This world needs our dreams and the best way to build a dream is to start a conversation about it.



SHASHIKANT YADAV IS A LEGAL CONTENT writer by profession and a believer of conspiracy theories by habit (apart from the one that says the earth is flat!). His recent accomplishments include travelling with a PPE kit (personal protective equipment) in a 12-hour-long *Vande Bharat* flight and bagging a research project with the Central European University at Vienna. Of the two, he is prouder of the former. He lives with his partner and parents in Delhi and sips pour-over coffee by the liters while perpetually struggling to win over his “to be read” books pile (mostly fiction). He remains civilized until someone puts their hand on his books. He is fond of climbing hills and has recently (read: pre-COVID era) trekked across Scotland.

He is researching on the environmental impact of a controversial method of extracting oil and gas: fracking (this will decide the 2020 US election—Google it!). His work on environmental justice is published in *The Wire*, *The Hindu*, *Economic and Political Weekly*, *The Ecologist*, and *The Statesman*, among others. His recently published work is available at <https://shashikant-yadav.journoportfolio.com>.

Nandavanam: Update

■ MICKY JOSEPH

Manager, CSR

The following excerpts are feedback from the parents of children studying at Nandavanam. They narrate their experience of the new normal way of working/studying from home and how it has had an impact on their families.

Ever since the lockdown, it has been a difficult time dealing with things on many fronts – socially, physically, mentally, financially, and so on. Our children miss the routine of getting ready to go to school, undergoing activities at school, beach walking, and the like, which was the only way they got to interact with teachers/support staff and the environment. To see our children going to school, returning from school, and bringing them back home was in a way an enjoyable routine with a purpose. This was also an exercise that we as parents loved doing for the betterment of our children. There was a sense of continuity before the lockdown. We were engaged in some work or the other – there was person-to-person contact in the outside world, experiencing the beautiful surroundings and enjoying nature. There was a time when we were looking forward to the weekends for some entertainment, which is not possible these days. Now with the lockdown, we have our home and our family as the only source of all that we miss. All plans for the year have been put on hold, with



Nandavanam children engaged in kitchen gardening during the lockdown period.

the future still uncertain due to the severity of the spread of Covid-19.

The lockdown has been a tough experience for everyone, tougher especially for those with special needs. In the past few months – July, August, and September – we have learned to be patient, going on with our routine, even as the initial months from March to June taught us to take a very cautious approach to life, staying safe, not venturing out, and/or avoiding crowded places. All the while, we have boosted our immunity by taking nutritious food along with fruits, nuts, and so on and homeopathic medicines (Arsenicum album and Gelsemium sempervirens – as suggested by the Nandavanam school management), and also getting sufficient sunlight with occasional trips to the terrace. These have helped us maintain a healthy lifestyle to the extent possible, barring the outdoor activity, which is restrained given the current scenario. But as the situation becomes more suitable, the effort will be to improve physical activities.

I sincerely appreciate Nandavanam's efforts to engage the children with the teachers/support staff to break the boredom the children have experienced, though this has been a challenge as even normal children find it difficult to adjust to this new normal of online classes. The online classes have been useful, nonetheless, with the understanding it cannot replicate the school settings. The instructors/teachers – Mrs. Kala and Mrs. Sneha – with their interesting sessions have been helpful in de-stressing, both for the parent and the child. As parents, we have had a tough time trying to accept and deal with Ranjana, who has been experiencing a few issues due to hormonal changes given her age (13 years). We are pleased she remains happy for the most part, but she has occasional anger bursts/mood changes over trivial issues. This is because she is unable to differentiate between an advice and an order, and so she gets angry and vents



by scratching her mother with her nails or pulling her hair. The best thing to do is to not get angry at her as this will make her more violent. But she easily forgets this after some time and remains her normal self. We understand this is a difficult phase of her life where we need to pay more attention and give her the warmth and affection we always do.

We did visit the beach a couple of times to increase her outdoor activity. But with no people around and with limited access, we do go shopping once in a while just to get out of this boredom. Perhaps, in the coming days, with the lifting of social-distancing norms we will be able to see an overall improvement in all matters of life.

~Premji & Suja, parents, Nandavanam

Without school, it's difficult to teach Naveen. Nandavanam is conducting online classes for Naveen on education and exercise; we are practicing the same at home. Naveen really feels happy to spend time with his sisters and the neighborhood kids. He has turned out to be a little playful now. My husband lost his job as he couldn't open his welding shop because of the lockdown, which has been difficult for us. I've been going to my job for the past one month but for a very low salary. I wash vessels for some houses, but because of the virus, no one allows me inside their houses. I simply wash the vessels from outside. My kids want to go to our native place, but we're not able to go there. Because the kids are always home-bound, they get into small fights sometimes. The women self-help group is asking for their loan back. All of this has made life difficult for us.

Now the school is providing us with some groceries, which is very helpful to us. Also, we have planted a few vegetables provided by the school on our rooftop. Spinach and okra have grown well. The children are having a good time watering the plants in the evening. After the relaxation on the lockdown, things have been better. Naveen's father has reopened his shop and he gets orders for small welding jobs. I'm also getting good jobs and I'm paid a full salary now. Our family is doing good now. We struggled a lot during the lockdown, but it has taught us the importance of saving money.

~Uma Maheswari, parent, Nandavanam

அந்தக் காலம் திரும்ப வருமாப்பா...

AROCKIA ALEXANDER

Centralized Books Pre-editing Team

அறக்கப் பறக்க பரபரப்பா
அலுவலகம் போன காலமப்பா!
அரக்க நோய் தீருமாப்பா
அந்தக் காலம் திரும்ப வருமாப்பா!

அலாரங்கள் அடியடித்து அடிக்க
அலறி தூக்கம் துரத்தியடிக்க
அலுவலகம்போகும் வழியில முண்டியடிக்க
அங்கேசென்று வந்த கதையை பேசிமுடிக்க!



அந்தக்காலம் திரும்ப வருமாப்பா...

அதுஇதுன்னு செஞ்ச முடிப்போம்
அதுல முடியலேன்னா கொஞ்ச முழிப்போம்
அவர் இருந்தார்னா அடங்கிக் கிடப்போம்
அவர் இல்லேன்னா ஆளுக்கொரு ஆட்டம்
போடுவோம்!
அந்தக்காலம் திரும்ப வருமாப்பா...

'ஆ'ன்னா'வூ'ன்னா கூட்டம் நடத்துவோம்
அபூர்வமா அதன்படி நடப்போம்!
அப்பப்போ திட்டியும் தொலைப்போம்
அப்படியே கைதட்டியும் பாராட்டுவோம்!

அந்தக்காலம் திரும்ப வருமாப்பா...

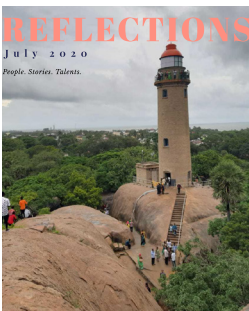
அவங்க வந்தாமட்டும் போஸ்டர் அடிப்போம்
அவங்களுக்கு பெரியத்திரையில் டெமோ
காட்டுவோம்
அன்னிக்கு மட்டும் ரேமன்ஸ் மாடலா வாழுவோம்
ஆர்கானிக் கேக்கு வெட்டினாத்தான் அனுப்புவோம்!
அந்தக்காலம் திரும்ப வருமாப்பா...

அப்படியாகப் போன வாழ்க்கையின்னு
அன்பின் பிடியில குடும்பமா வாழினும்னு
ஆண்டவனாப் பாத்து வாழுந்துக்கோன்னு
ஆணையிட்டா வாழ்ப் பழகிக்கோன்னு!

* The poet reminisces about life in the good old days and longingly wonders if they will ever come back.



Readers' comments: July 2020 issue



- ▶ It was really interesting to read how colleagues at Newgen have been coping with living in times of Covid-19. I also found the profiles of Newgen staff interesting to read – it gave me some insight into life in India. ~ Karen Moore, *Oxford University Press*
- ▶ I've started reading it – it's great so far! ~ Elana Beckett, Journal Production Editor, *Wolters Kluwer*
- ▶ Another great edition. Really good work, and congratulations to Lydia for coordinating and editorialising it so well. ~ Lucy Melville, Publishing/Managing Director, *Peter Lang*
- ▶ I appreciate reading the “Reflections” publications very much, many thanks for sharing this! I think it's a great product ... Looking forward to the next issue already! ~ Regina Böhm-Korff
- ▶ I especially liked the pictures of the kolams and the stories of people's individual travels and experiences. I so appreciate reading about life in other cultures. We are all brothers and sisters, after all. Thank you again! ~ Carol Kokinis-Graves, *Wolters Kluwer*
- ▶ Inspirational and heartwarming. What a phenomenal issue! ~ Deborah Shor, Head of Content Operations, *Oxford University Press*
- ▶ Loved this publication – really cool to learn about others' varying Covid experiences from an artful, first-person perspective. I look forward to the next one. ~ Juliana Peluso, Journal Production Editor, Health Learning, Research & Practice, *Wolters Kluwer*
- ▶ I particularly enjoyed reading the profile of/interview with Raghu. It's always great to get a rounded perspective of the people we deal with from so far away, and absolutely helps having an understanding of the person in the context of their background and attitudes outside of the work environment. ~ Kevin Stokes, Senior Director, Print and Corporate & Regulatory Solutions, Asia & Emerging Markets (AEM), *Thomson Reuters*

Mission to MARS

■ KRISHNAA LAKSHMANAN

Centralized Books Copyediting Team

The year 2067, Planet Mars...

Nandini had woken up from bed feeling a strange sense of excitement. It was her sixteenth birthday, and she would be taking her first step towards her life's purpose.

Now, she was sitting on the front porch with her parents. They looked out at their Martian summer garden with its vibrant range of flowers, fruits, and vegetables. After a while, she went to her room to pack her things into her backpack. She made sure she took extra stationery, just in case.

Nandini's parents smiled at her as she waved them goodbye an hour later. She decided to walk to her destination. It was a special day, and she wanted to enjoy the view on the way. Plus, taking a transport pod would mean having to loiter around for an hour, since she only needed to be at the institute by noon.

She walked by one of her favourite spots in the city: the fountain park. It was decorated with a variety of intricately carved statues and fountains; all of them were carved by students of the Sculpting School, each with a gold-plated sign with the sculptor's name engraved on it. A group of students were even then erecting a statue of an elf playing a flute.



Nandini splashed her face with ice-cold water from one of the fountains. She laughed in delight, her spirits soaring higher. She walked from the park with an extra spring in her step, eager for the afternoon to come.

After about half an hour of walking, she started to feel hungry. Luckily, Raman's Food Gallery was on the way. Nandini stepped inside.

The Gallery, as it was known locally, was famous for its exquisitely designed dishes. Each dish was unique, had its own signature taste not found anywhere else on either of the planets, and was personally designed and made by the owner of the place, Raman Iyer. They were all served in an irresistibly appetizing arrangement.

Nandini watched the news on her table's screen as she ate. It was being broadcast from Earth.

"The Earth is now officially poverty-free," the reporter was saying, smiling broadly at the camera. "Let us now hear the statement from the UN."

"Inspired by the impeccable efficiency of Mars," the United Nations representative spoke into a microphone in front of a huge gathering of reporters, "the United Nations held a historic meeting five years ago to implement similar tactics here on Earth."

“Mr and Mrs Aria, Mars’s presidents, have been at the top of their game from the start. They have had a clear vision of how Mars should be run, and their efforts can be plainly seen by simply looking at the planet.

“Five years ago, on the first of March, 2062, we decided to march ahead as well. Frankly, it was almost embarrassing to see such a young planet move so far ahead, while here we were, dragging ourselves through the mud, so to speak.

“Hence, we came up with a list of plans to be implemented to make the Earth a better place, with Mars as its guiding light. The first on the agenda was the abolishment of poverty. And now,” he looked up from his papers and smiled at the crowd, “I can proudly say that there is not a single human being on Earth that will go hungry!”

Nandini smiled to herself as she finished her Reikzo Platter. She got up, switched off the screen on her table, and walked out the door.

Fifteen minutes later, Nandini reached her destination: the Institute of Creative Engineering. She climbed the stairs two at a time and strode into the entrance hall. Nandini couldn’t wait to design her first art piece; she already had several ideas in her head.

* * *

Twenty years ago, in the year 2047, Mars was colonized and began its tenure as the second planet inhabited by human beings. From the beginning, the presidents of Mars had the promotion of art as one of their top agendas.

Today, Mars is filled with beautiful structures, brilliantly decorated gardens, and numerous other forms of art everywhere. It is inhabited by thousands of poets, writers, musicians, chefs, and a plethora of others who all display their creative skills in whatever they do. Creativity is so imbibed in Martian culture that it is second nature to them.

Twenty years ago, Mr and Mrs Aria signed their names onto a piece of rock brought to Mars from Earth with a message carved on it: “Mission to MARS: Make ARt Shine.” This rock stands as the centrepiece in the fountain park.

Twenty years later, it can be said with confidence: Mission Accomplished.

Spotlight on

Preetha Ambat



Preetha Ambat, Deputy General Manager for Peter Lang, has always wanted to inspire people to do better, to count their blessings rather than their woes, and to fight against the challenges that life throws at them regardless of how difficult the odds of surmounting them might be. She is endeavoring to write a book with characters who inspire people.

As for her own source of inspiration, it is the great saint Mahavtar Babaji, whose existence came to light through the famous book *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda. “I take inspiration from the fact that Mahavtar Babaji has risen beyond the limitations of human existence and stands as a beacon to many who aspire to achieve enlightenment.

This book has changed the lives of millions of people and forced them to look inwards.”

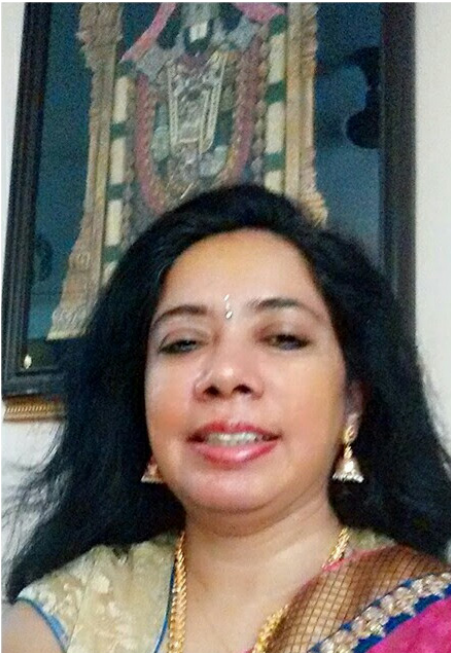
Preetha's happiest memory is the sight of the dazzling snow-covered peaks of the Himalayas seen from Kedarnath. "I had visited Kedar with my mother many years back. This wonderful sight gives a feeling of déjà vu and of being cut out from day-to-day life as we know it. It seems that the world and our life are far away and that the only thing that exists is that moment, the moment of intense awareness suffused with peace, quietude, and a feeling of oneness with the entire universe."

Wang Yibo, an actor in the Chinese drama series *The Untamed*, has impressed Preetha the most with what he has achieved. "He is only 23, and he is an actor, dancer, singer, rapper, host, and a professional motorcycle racer." If a movie were to be made of her life, Preetha would like Xiao Zhan, the actor who played the role of Wei Wuxian in the same series, to play her role. "The range of emotions he displays is amazing. He has a very expressive face and a beautiful smile. He also sings for his series, and the songs are melodious. He has a wonderful voice. There is only one hitch: He would have to dress up as a woman to play my role."

Preetha loves to paint images of gods. "My favorite deity is Lord Venkateswara, and I simply love to paint him." If she didn't have to sleep at all, she would meditate and connect with her gurus and the superconsciousness. She recharges by going around the Tiruvannamalai hill on full-moon days.



Snow-covered peaks of the Himalayas seen from Kedarnath.



“The place is a vortex of energy and the intensity of the energy absorbed lasts for many days. The experience is like having a cup of tea with your favorite person with nothing to worry about. Time is endless, the present stretches on, and the cup of life’s joy is filled to the brim within you.”

The fictional place Preetha would like to go to most is Shangri La or Gyanganj, a mystic place in the Himalayas where spiritual cultivation is practiced. “It is called the land of the immortals, a kingdom of enigmatic eternal beings that remain concealed from the world.” Though they exist deep in the Himalayas, it is said that they have an influence over humankind in several ways. She also adds, “The Himalayas are a place of unparalleled beauty and spirituality. I believe that everyone should

visit them at least once during their lifetime.”

The sunrise, flowers and trees, a melodious song, the chirping of the birds, the sound of the ocean, the clouds in the sky, the full moon, and other things connected with nature make her day better. Adventure, heroism, and romance are Preetha’s favorite genres. “I like fighting scenes with martial arts and supernatural powers.” After a hard day’s work, she meditates, listens to music, or watches Chinese dramas on YouTube.

Colours of Silence

BOHNISHIKHA CHAKRABORTY

Senior Copyeditor, Oxford University Press



Silence is strong and bold
A shining gold.
Silence is deep and dark
A darker shade of black!
Silence is noise and scream

As soft as cream.
Silence is numb
Like the trees in autumn.
Silence is beauty and peace
Indeed! a bliss.

Spotlight on Girish Sundaram

Say hello to Girish, Business Head, Enterprise Language Solutions and Technical Publishing. He lives in McKinney, Texas—“This is the furthest I have been from my Chennai home. I have been out of Chennai for nearly fifteen years now, and I miss *namma ooru* [“our place” in Tamil] a lot!” When asked what he loves and hates most about where he lives, he says, “McKinney offers a good balance of Indian and American culture.

“We have Chennai-like weather for most of the year, which is the best part, and there is a decent amount of cold, wintery weather too. There are so many choices of restaurants and kids' activities around here. So far, it has been an ideal place for us. There is nothing to hate about this place ... yet.”



Girish's grandparents have been his biggest inspiration, while his kith and kin continue to inspire and influence him. “Inspiration comes from within my family, and I've never felt a need to look



beyond!” he says. His biggest irrational fear is losing his memory “and with it the ability to recall all the wonderful people and events in my life.” Girish’s happiest memory is when his dad got him his first motorcycle on the first day of his college: “It was a Kawasaki Bajaj, and I still cherish it.”

What he likes most about himself is that he is a good friend to people of

all ages. His least favorite quality is taking forever to get out of the house for his daily workout! Three things people might not know about Girish: he is a multicuisine cook, a serious remote-control car racer who participates in races, and a former India Cements second-division cricketer from his college days.

Sinking into a large bean bag and watching *MasterChef* is something that Girish looks forward to after a hard day’s work. The first thing he notices about someone is their watch: “I feel a wristwatch says a lot about a person.” Alcohol and horror movies are not for him. He loves cooking South Indian food the old-fashioned way, and he can give a 40-minute presentation on how to make Mysore pak (an Indian sweet prepared in ghee) with no preparation (for the presentation, not the sweet!).

Girish recharges by watching the sun rise and set and listening to music by Ilaiyaraaja and A. R. Rahman. “Paartha Gnaabagam Illaiyo” from the Tamil movie *Puthiya Paravai* is one he has completely memorized—“I love this song!” If time and money weren’t an issue, he would love to learn flying. The most heart-warming thing Girish has known is about his aunt: “She volunteered to be a living organ donor to save someone’s life. Can anything beat this selfless act?”

Girish thinks that everyone should spend two weeks alone at least once in their lives: “Have one meal a day during this period. It helps reset life and you will start to appreciate all the little things we normally



Girish's family: his wife Chitra and his children Ashvita and Yuvan.

complain about.” If he had to choose one thing to save from his house, it would be “the family photos and home videotapes I keep in a grey box with a red lid. They bring back rich memories every time I see them.”

When asked who has impressed him the most with their accomplishments, Girish says, “My wife Chitra. I have known her since the ninth grade, and looking back in time, from her humble beginnings to what she has achieved until now, both in her professional life and on the home front—managing the house, two kids, and most of all putting up with me—she truly deserves a standing ovation.”

Girish is working on the US presidential elections project. Newgen was a Tier 1 partner for the 2016 presidential elections. “That relationship has carried us through to the 2020 elections project. Setting up a fresh team, training them, and running it effectively and efficiently has been challenging, but it’s well worth it.”

Girish’s take on women’s place in today’s society: “Many things that men struggle with, women do effortlessly with better outcomes. When man/society surrenders to this statement, then he truly becomes a man, and the society becomes matured and civilized.”

Spotlight on Team Technology

- ▶ *What does your team do? What is it called?*

We belong to the technology powerhouse of Newgen and this talent pool is called the Technology Team.

- ▶ *Give a small write-up about your team and its members.*

Newgen's Technology Team develops automation solutions and platforms based on the latest technology to make your life simpler and easier.



Technology Team.

It has the talent and the punch to develop cutting-edge technology products and solutions for the publishing world with its wealth of resources like solution architects, software developers, testers and technical writers. Over the years it has developed several production workflows, automated several processes and has created several automation tools and products.

This team keeps undergoing training on the latest technological advancements so that it can deliver the best and the most efficient automation solutions with the objective of making the production process more efficient and error free.

Our team's foundation is built on trust, commitment, accountability and talent, and we give credence to the fact that teamwork is the ability to work together towards a common vision.

▶ *How big is your team?*

We now have 44 members in our team.

▶ *Under what circumstances would someone in Newgen come to your team for something?*

Our team is approached whenever there is a need to set up a new production workflow with automated tools for production and QA or to develop innovative products and solutions or to develop tailor-made solutions for our end clients.

▶ *What is the latest technology your team is currently working on?*

The latest feathers in the team's cap are the application of artificial intelligence-based techniques like natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning in the editorial processes. It requires real intelligence to work on artificial intelligence.

▶ *What's your team's go-to productivity trick?*

We carefully divide the tasks to multiply the successes.

▶ *What are the best things about your team?*

It is the synergy within the team and the helping attitude of its members.

▶ *Who's the star of your team? Why?*

We have several stars in the stardom.

▶ *Who's the comedian or comic in your team? Why?*

This is something lacking in our team that we would like to have.



Srinivasa Prabhu of the Technology team.

- ▶ *What's the one thing that has surprised you about working at Newgen?*
The kind of bonding that exists between the people working here. It is more like a family.
- ▶ *What's your team's biggest work pet peeve?*
Getting calls late at night to provide support to production.
- ▶ *What's the biggest misconception people have about your team?*
People outside the team have the impression that technology team members enjoy a cushy life with lesser quantum of work as compared to production. Their viewpoints change when they join our team and face the reality, which is full of challenges.
- ▶ *What's an area of work that you would like your team to work on?*
Focus more on the latest technology like neural networks, deep learning and analytics and open up new business avenues for Newgen.
- ▶ *What 3 words would best describe your team?*
Agile, tech-savvy, committed.
- ▶ *What is your team's biggest challenge? Quality, productivity, attrition, team building, etc. Why?*
The biggest challenge is hiring the right resources. As quick turnarounds are expected by everyone, it becomes really difficult if we do not get the resources on time.
- ▶ *What strategies would you use to motivate your team?*
Recognition and appreciation of achievement are the major forms of motivation. This may be in the form of an email or done over a phone call or during a simple conversation. We believe that appreciation works better than criticism.
- ▶ *How does your team come up with solutions to problem statements ?*
We adopt a collaborative approach to come up with creative solutions to problems. The information is shared across team members who have relevant domain expertise and the solution is brainstormed to arrive at a conclusion.
- ▶ *What do you think are the major elements needed to improve the team's effectiveness?*
Better communication, collaboration and delegation are the key factors.
- ▶ *How do you handle conflict between team members?*
There are always two sides to every story. Hence it is very important to remain as neutral and open-minded as possible while trying to patiently listen to both sides and come up with a resolution which is acceptable to all.

Nature's Call: What Next?

SHAIFALI SANGAL

TRA Books



Mother Earth is dying
and crying,
Cause it's green no
more nor clean.

It's time to save her and free her
from pollution,
She is the source of all—from our
food to our shelter.

It's in danger 'coz of global warming,
Become a ranger or else, it will sink.

With melting snow and glaciers,
Are tress and water no more
precious?

Don't wait for another call of
distress!
For everything to be in despair...

What next... what next...
Howls our Mother in distress!

With animals and trees dying—a
truism!

What next... what next... our
Mother Earth yelps!

Talent Pool

Written by **BIBI CHRISTA XAVIER**
Centralized Books Copyediting Team

A gold medalist at the International School Essay Writing Contest, KAWIYA B has joined the Newgen family as Project Manager for the T&F team, Pondicherry unit. She was the best outgoing student of Rajiv Gandhi College of Technology in the year 2017. Her skills and talents extend to oration and writing poems. A self-motivator, she spends her free time learning 'grooming' on YouTube!

An ex-employee of Newgen, ANANDHAN V has rejoined the Artwork department. A poet and a songwriter, he has written 35 devotional songs. He has uploaded 2 short films and 2 songs on YouTube and is also a winner of the Kancheepuram district Tamil Poetry Contest.

An all-rounder, RAMYA MARANAN has tried her hand and excelled in sports and was part of the football team of Theni district. She is interested in arts and crafts and learns craftwork from YouTube and did equally well in academics – she was the first rank holder of the 8th semester while doing her BE. She has joined Newgen as a software developer.

A basketball player of Meenakshi College, SUPRAJA SURESH enjoys freestyle dancing. She has joined as a Ruby Developer.

KALIMUTHU K is an ex-employee of Newgen and has re-joined as an XML operator. His hobby is reading Tamil books, his favourite author being Sujatha.

BALASUBRAMANI K has joined us as Project Manager for Aspen. He has an MBA degree. A self-trained dancer, his passion is towards dance – both Western and *koothu* (a folk dance or performance art).

ANISHA AMMAINATHAN holds an MPhil in medical microbiology. She has joined Newgen as a Copyeditor. A natural singer, her passion is towards singing Ilaiyaraaja songs.

BHUVANA N has joined Newgen as a Paginator. She is a smart athlete competing in the 200 m, 400 m and 800 m races. She comes with great experience from SPI Global, having worked in the organisation for 6.5 years. She spends her free time training her daughter in athletics.

A self-made person, THENMOZHI M P has joined as Quality Controller for Peter Lang. She shoulders the responsibility of her mother and younger brother. Her self-discipline and commitment are evident from the fact that she has never bunked or missed a class while doing her BE.

ANU INDIRA has joined as a Paginator. She holds a BSc + BE (Computer Science) degree. She is from Mannarkudi and is a lover of dogs.

A second rank holder in BCA, ASHWINI SANDESH has joined as a Collator. She was recently involved in a vehicular accident and is on her way to full recovery now.

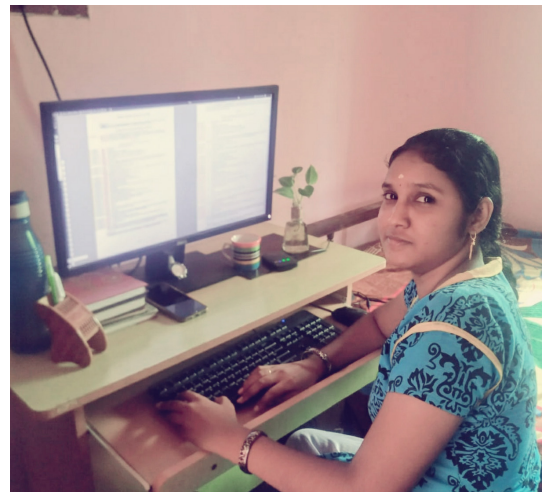
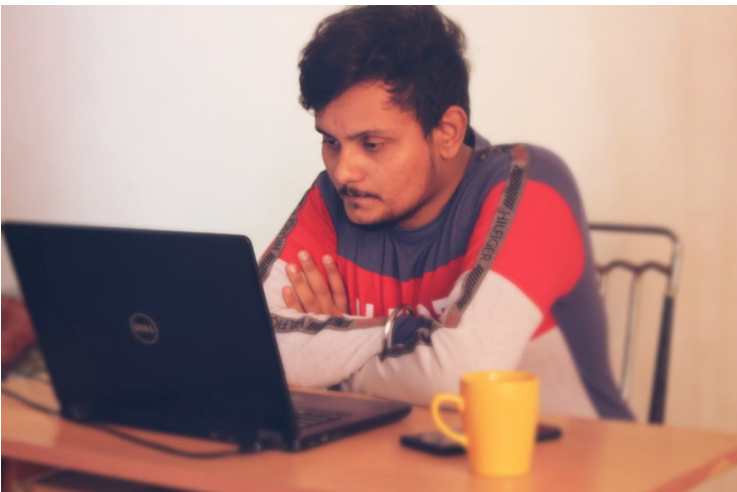
A natural cricket player, BALAJI R hails from Myanmar (Burma). He represented his college at district level while pursuing his BTech. He is an all-rounder in cricket – a bowler and a middle-order batsman. He has joined as a Quality Controller in the Centralized Journals Production Team (CJPT).

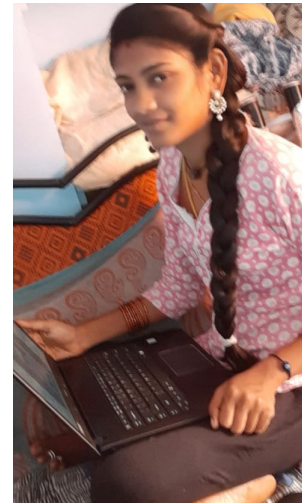
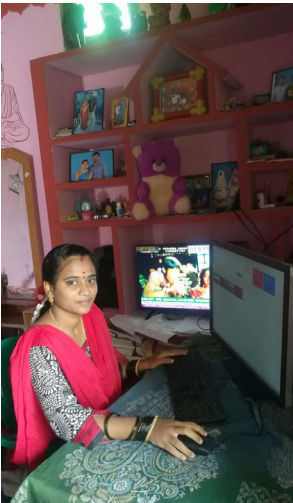
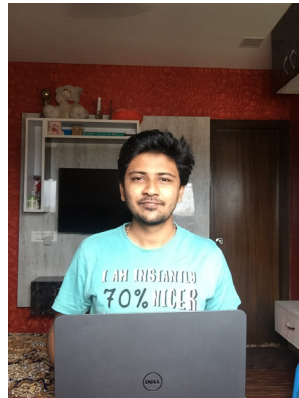
KRISHNAMURTHI G from Pondicherry has joined as a Cover Designer. He comes with a rich experience and is a specialist in invitation cards.

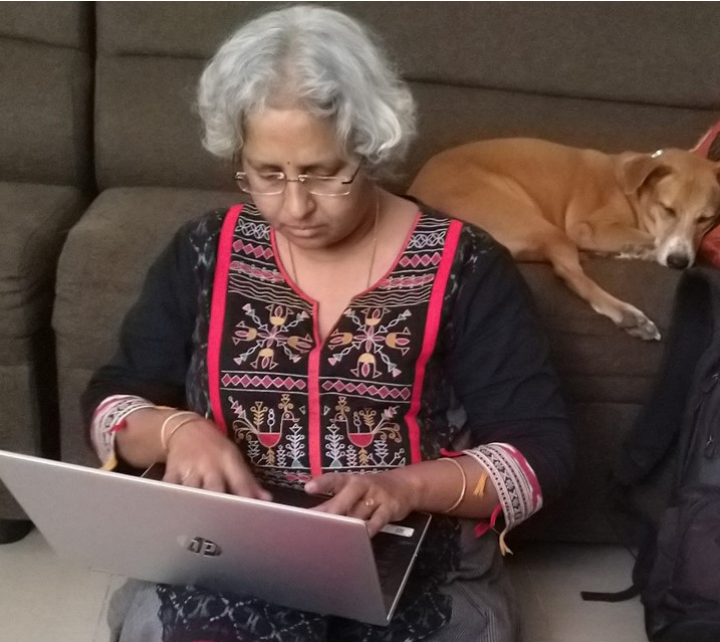
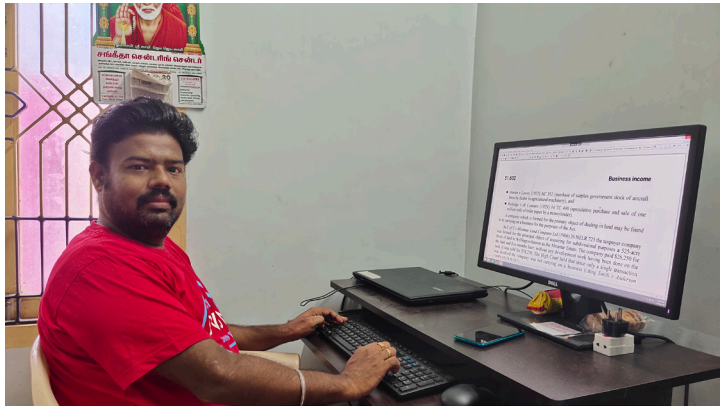
A self-made person, SREEKARTHIKAYAN K completed his BE while working with Newgen. He has now joined the Newgen family as a Software Developer. He has also done his MSc, is into social service in a big way and conducts free yoga classes.

Work from Home @ Newgen

Glimpses of Newgen staff working from home from around the globe. These photos were handpicked from a "Share your work from home photos" drive.









Book Launch

Judiciary, Judges and the Administration of Justice

Written by DEEKSHA CHANDER

Contract Publishing, TR India

It was a complete honor to work on the book *Judiciary, Judges and the Administration of Justice* authored by Justice R. Banumathi, former Judge of the Supreme Court of India, who has been part of the Bench of the Judiciary for three decades. The book brings together her experiences and learnings as a member of the judiciary from the district judiciary to the Supreme Court of India. The book includes a foreword by the current Chief Justice of India, Sharad A. Bobde, and messages from eminent personalities such as Ravi Shankar Prasad, the present Minister of Law and Justice, and Justice N.V. Ramana, Judge, Supreme Court of India. The book was released by the Chief Justice of India during a virtual launch organized by Thomson Reuters, India, in collaboration with Newgen, on 12 September 2020. It was a unique experience for all the attendees to be able to see and listen to the views of eminent personalities present on the occasion from the comfort of their homes.



The author was high-profile and the project high priority, and the book launch was set close to the receipt of the manuscript. The author was cooperative and clear about what her expectations were about the book, which in turn made our work a lot easier to meet the set goals. The author, in fact, even designed the cover herself to show us exactly how she wanted it to look like. The biggest pressure



point of the entire project was to keep it on track to meet the expected date of publication; we had to work on the shortest timelines without compromising on the quality of the project.

We had absolutely no buffer for the book, and even a day's hold-up would have resulted in a delay in publication. All the teams had to keep working simultaneously, and the author made herself available on email and phone to clear any doubts and for any urgent clarifications. This made the production process much smoother. The project was received during the COVID-19 lockdown and even though work from home had an added disadvantage in disseminating information, all the teams fell in line to meet the deadline as proposed. The biggest advantage was that the teams had also put forth their requirements clearly, and hence there was no pressure towards the very end of the publication.

All the teams, acquisitions, editorial, production and sales, worked in tandem on the project to ensure that the book was published on time for the virtual launch on 12 September 2020, a memorable event for all those who worked on the book to make it a success.



E D I T O R I A L B O A R D



An electronics engineer by education, UJWALA has over 30 years of pan-industry experience spanning the publishing, IT, education and hi-tech CNC machine industries. She started her copyediting career at Newgen (in 2006) and is currently manager – copyediting in the CBCE (centralized books copy editing) team. Her role involves QC and team-building (review of work, feedback and training). Being an avid reader herself, she is thrilled that her love for reading has become her profession and is proud of the value she adds to polish a text. She loves travelling, sports (cricket and tennis) and music and would like to think that she can hold a decent tune. She is a yoga

aficionado. In her words, she feels great to be on-board *Reflections* and hopes to continue reflecting the myriad emotions, stories, talents and experiences of Newgenites!

The Robotic Hand

A short story*

■ DIPAK SHAW

Technology, Vice President

Murugan wanted to start a cab business and planned to buy a car. After scouting around for various car models and comparing their prices and features, he settled for a car that was, according to him, the best in terms of performance and after-sales service. After buying the vehicle, he hired a driver to run his cab business. The cab service was ceremoniously inaugurated on an auspicious day. Everything went fine in the beginning, but after a couple of months, his driver reported a breakdown of the car in the middle of the road. On inspection, it was found that the driver, not realizing that he had a flat tyre, had kept on driving the car. He had realized it only after steering the car had become impossible, and even then, he did not know how to change the tyre, either. Murugan was very unhappy to learn that the tyre had been completely damaged. He called the service helpline of the manufacturer and gave them a piece of his mind, stating that it was a manufacturing defect. The helpline staff was apologetic and sent a service engineer to change the tyre, and also to train the driver how to do it himself. They also replaced the tyre with a brand-new one.

* The characters and incidents narrated in this short story are fictional and bear no resemblance to anyone.



A couple of weeks passed, and the driver reported another breakdown. The tyre was again found shredded to bits. Murugan once again called the customer support helpline and demanded a replacement. But this time, he was told that the driver should have stopped driving the car when the tyre got punctured and changed it, as he had been trained to do. After a brief argument, the driver suggested that there should have been some visual indication to give him a warning of a flat tyre. The manufacturer's R&D team agreed to install sensors on all four tyres, with a red light on the dashboard to indicate a tyre puncture, all at a hefty cost.

As luck would have it, in a few weeks the driver reported yet another breakdown, with the same complaint. Murugan asked the driver why he did not stop the car to replace the tyre upon noticing the red light on his dashboard. The driver said that he did not notice the red light as it did not attract his attention, and suggested that the light be changed to a flashing one with a beep. The manufacturer agreed to install the same at an additional cost. In the meantime, Murugan's family and friends

suggested that the driver be replaced as he appeared to be incompetent and irresponsible. Murugan, however, was convinced that the driver was good.

Another few weeks passed by and the problem resurfaced. Murugan was seething with anger on seeing another tyre damaged. This time the driver said that he may have fallen asleep and failed to notice the flashing light and beeping sound. Murugan's friends and family insisted that the driver be changed right away. Murugan explained to them that the driver was good and that finding another one would be a challenging task, and the delay may have an impact on his cab business. Murugan called the manufacturer again, and this time their R&D team suggested installing a robotic hand that would slap the driver if he did not stop the car within 30 seconds of the beep and flashing light. The cost would be one-third the cost of a new car, as major modifications would have to be made to fix the robotic hand. Murugan agreed to it.

In the end, he spent a good amount of money to get so many features installed, when he could have simply replaced the driver. We see the above chain of events happening in several real-life scenarios. At times, we get so biased that we unknowingly turn a blind eye to the actual root of the problem and end up spending time, energy and money looking for increasingly complex solutions. Sometimes, the answer is just staring us in the face.

My Pretty Crown

ANISHA AMMAINATHAN

Centralized Journals Copyediting Team

Every human being must have a crown. Not the crown that one wears on the head, but the talent that one demonstrates uniquely and wears so proudly. It can be anything—your hobbies, an extracurricular activity, a sports activity, studies, art and so on.

My very own crown is making terracotta jewellery. I love doing craft work. A friend of mine introduced me to jewellery making. I fell in love with it and taught myself by watching YouTube vlogs. It is a great art. One thing I realized is this: when you're in great stress, you cannot make a mold without cracking it.



Visit to Chennai

■ ARNAUD BÉGLÉ
Group CEO, Peter Lang

- ▶ *Is this your first time in Chennai? What are your first impressions?*
This is my second time in Chennai. A very nice city that is not too small, has low traffic compared to Mumbai or Bengaluru, but big enough to find it all.
- ▶ *What do you like most about Chennai?*
Newgen.
- ▶ *What do you hate about this place?*
During my first time in Chennai, the weather was very humid. February is the perfect month for traveling in India. There is no way to buy a SIM card at the airport unlike other big international airports.
- ▶ *Did you do any of the following: sightseeing? catch any shows/movies? shopping? try out any adventure activities?*
I went with my colleagues to Nalli [a wardrobe and handicrafts store and silk saree emporium] and found a very nice handicraft oil lamp.
- ▶ *Does anything about Chennai remind you of home? If so, what?*
The Newgen team is like family with a great sense of hospitality.
- ▶ *Did you have an experience (good or bad or interesting) while you were in Chennai? Tell us about it.*



A nice walk with my colleagues through the streets to go to the restaurant. We visited a nice little temple of Ganesha.

- ▶ *Did you try out the local cuisine? What are your thoughts on that?*
Very good seafood.
- ▶ *If you get a chance to travel to India again, what are some places on your travel bucket list?*
Kerala, Jodhpur [in the state of Rajasthan known for its palaces, forts, and temples], and Ladakh [a region in Jammu & Kashmir known for its breathtaking landscapes].
- ▶ *What was the purpose of your visit? Was it fulfilled?*
To facilitate production transition. Yes.
- ▶ *Once you're back home, what will be your interaction with the Chennai team?*
On a daily basis.
- ▶ *Are you excited to be working with the Chennai team?*
Very much.
- ▶ *What are some notes/feedback (positive and negative) you can give to the Chennai team?*
Thank you for all the support.



Arnaud at Mahabalipuram.