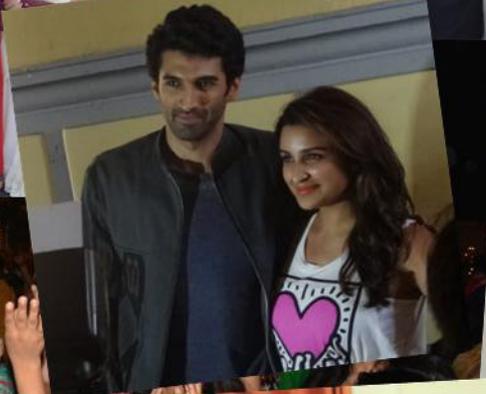


GRIMOIRE

The Miranda House Residence Magazine
2014-2016







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GRIMOIRE

THE MHH RESIDENCE MAGAZINE

2014-2016

FRONT COVER AND
BACK COVER
IMAGE:
MAHI GOYAL

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ALL CARTOONS/
DOODLES BY:
ASMI KHUSHI
(RESIDENT '17)

FROM THE WARDEN'S DESK



IMAGE CREDITS:
ASMITA JAIN

Miranda House Hostel is not just a hostel; it's an enriching, cultivating space for young girls to grow into confident, bright women. 'Grimoire' is an embodiment of the creative potential of these women and reflects the soul of not just the residents but the hostel as well. I hope your stay in this hostel has been as rewarding as my own.

I wish you the best for your future endeavours, specially my dear final-year students! I hope you carry the memories wherever you go. You will always remain in my memories.

Blessings

Bhawani Iyer

FROM THE MATRON'S DESK

To the outgoing batch; you have spent three precious years of your life here, and I really hope that it was a journey to be remembered and looked back on with fond memories. Being in this post makes me responsible for a lot of things and I don't have an other than being strict and stern. And sometimes it's difficult for me especially when I know you won't understand me. I can't always relate to this tech savvy generation but I know you are meant to change the way people look at women.

I thank you all for the pleasant memories you are leaving me with and pray that you achieve all that you wish for. Value real relations, true friendships, set priorities and be grateful for what you have. Strive to be the best, never give up and don't let anyone convince you can't do something.

Best wishes

Mercy Cherian



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

It is a privilege to publish the hostel magazine, and the privilege becomes greater when the hostel magazine has not been published in two years. Before I say anything else, I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the entire Grimoire team without whose efforts and creative brainstorming sessions; the magazine would have not seen daylight.

Miranda House Hostel has always appeared to me as a magical space, and not merely because of the beautiful architecture. It is magic because of all the individual components that come together to make it beautiful. Through 'Grimoire' we have tried to capture the collective spirit of the hostel and to etch out the experience of staying within these brick walls; through surveys, cartoons, drawings, opinion pieces and creative expressions. The idea is to generate a sense of what being an MHH Resident is like.

I would like to thank every Resident who contributed to this magazine and apologize to the ones whose entries did not get published. Despite the effort, we have missed many stories still hiding somewhere in these walls. I hope this magazine urges the authors of those to pen them down and share them in the future editions of 'Grimoire' or on the blog, 'Grimoire' (mhhmagazine.wordpress.com)

Asmita

(English Honors, Third Year)

Image Credits: Maryam Azwer



FROM THE CLUTTERED EDIT DESK THAT WAS

*Aparna Srivastava
Former Editor (2014-15)
B.A. (Honours) English
Batch of 2012-2015*

Miranda House and Patronus charms should be synonyms. Social media, Facebook groups, and most recently Pottermore, have extended the Harry Potter stories beyond the fandom into virtual reality, as the obsession with the boy wizard continues into enjoying an extended life via sub-cultures and with most fans. Friends, fuzzy faces, and strangers alike are sharing posts which compare the recent controversy at JNU with the Battle for Hogwarts, for example. As I reluctantly apologise for evoking Potter yet again, I believe that the Patronus charm, which is cast by recalling your most powerful memory, is a compelling metaphor for our growing-up years at the hostel.

Miranda House gave me many powerful memories that I now recall to beat the dust, grime, and rains here in Mumbai. In a moment of brief narcissism, I recount and share them with you. Inevitably, my nearly three year stay at the Miranda House Hostel was a poignant part of the memories. The first memory of the hostel dates to the time of admissions. A billowing red curtain flowing from some room in the A-Block corridor on the ground

floor, young women walking back and forth aghast by the June heat, students reading intently in the DRC, and the red brick walls. I stood in the DRC corridor and gazed at the hostel in awe even though I was not in the best of disposition, since I had not sought admission in the subject of my choice, or so I thought. I made the best decision ever, I think.

Grimoire has not been printed since I was in first year. Parul, the 2014 editor and I faced the paucity of both funds and students' entries. The problem of funding at this micro level of printing is of course, reflective of a larger problem facing print media which requires capital, and the strange fact that lesser students wish to contribute to a largely communal enterprise, which Grimoire is. It is not something to put on your resume. Most people now discredit hostel societies and activities as non-lucrative events. I participated in these non-lucrative ventures enormously, along with a bunch of other students who now roam in the corridors of Oxford, LSE, JNU, TISS, DSE, and other brilliant places. This does not suggest that allegiance with fan-

cy institutes is the only parameter of success, but given that most people think it is, it renders false the hypothesis that participation in hostel activities is inversely proportional to success for millenials.

We played dumb charades with words, books, films, watched films, danced Garba, danced even more at hostel nights (a fact which is consistent with every batch), played with cats, fought at Hostel GBMs, organised informal discussion nights, events regarding sexual health and much more. The first editorial team of Grimoire spent many hours on the first floor of the New Block in Room N 209 and in the balcony , over many conversations which extended beyond Grimmy to work on starting the blog, managing logistics, design and more. When the first official blog for Grimoire was launched, the editorial team was expecting a poor turnout at the launch event which took place after dinner. But we were all a bit gobsmacked when over 70 people turned up, and stayed. We commenced with informal games, gave a presentation, had writing and pictiory competitions.

Living in the hostel is a unique and heavily privileged experience. Maya John came for a discussion with the hostlers in the New Common Room and delivered a brilliant talk which related the space of the hostel to the larger problem of the paucity of land, where students pay over 15,000 rupees a month to the square, dilapidated make-shift houses of workers who build the towers we live so fondly in. She recounted the case of the hammer houses of workers who build the towers we live so fondly in. She recounted the case of the hammerhead murders which took place in the construction sites in Kamla Nagar, once again re-

minding us of the privileges we hold and the fact that spaces are inextricably connected. Then, while the hostel seems as a cocoon away from the world, it really is not. Yes, it affords the joys of revelling with friends, or being with your thoughts in the sports ground, or hostel lawn and I have grown mentally in my time here.

The thought of hostel activities slowing down, dying scares me. The hostel is an experience in developing your individual personality in a communal environment interacting with a group of diverse people. The beautiful hostel is just a hollow building without the people. So my Patronus comes not from the myriad academic highs I have had, or my extra-curricular achievements, but from trivial conversations with interesting people. The hostel should not be romanticised, or trivialised. Yes, it should be critiqued – we did it through fiery GBMS which had raging (some-time nasty) debates, and meetings which I never thought were Precursors to Pinjra Tod.

In 2010, 250 hostel residents fromMHH refused to enter the hostel as they sat outside the hostel gates, having painted graffiti on the wall. They got the hostel deadline extended from 7.30 p.m. to 8.30. The potential of the hostel space is immense.

I hope I have summed up some of the years that were. I hope these images stay with you, and that you leave with original, powerful, sombre, and happy ones of your own. Patronuses come in handy when you face professional /masters-induced dilemmas, all alone in a strange city.

The author is currently pursuing a Masters in Media and Cultural Studies from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. Write to her at: aparna.rf@gmail.com

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THE GRIMOIRE
EDITORIAL TEAM.
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APARNA SRIVASTAVA,
ASMITA JAIN, SHIWANI
MUNDUIYA
(BOTTOM) ASMI
KHUSHI, BARSHA
CHETIA, VARENING
KONGHAY



IMAGE CREDITS:
TOP: SHIWANI MUNDUIYA
BOTTOM: KRISHNA SHEKHAWAT



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THE GRIMOIRE
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VARENING KONGHAY,
MAHI GOYAL
(BOTTOM) SHIVANI
MOHAN, AAMINA RAHIM
KHAN BABYLONA BORA,
SUMBUL MOIN

मोक्षी

एक झरना बेहता हुआ दिख रहा है मुझे ,
हसी का झरना , उम्मीद से भरपूर
अपनी धरा से कण कण को रोशन कर देने वाला एक झरना
आस पास के सब ही मुरझाये हुए फूल खिलते नज़र आ रहे हैं ,
बादलों की गड-गड़ाहट भी अपना पैगाम ला रही है ,
कोयल एक डाली ओर बैठी गाने का इंतज़ार कर रही है
सरसों को खेत जैसे महक उठे हो ,
आँगन में तुलसी के पेड़ की आराधना हो रही हो
बांसुरी की आवाज़ गूँज रही हो
यह सब उस हसी झरने की ही मेहेरबानी है
उस झरने की हर एक बूँद तुम्हारी रूप-रेखा से रची गयी है
प्राकृतिक सौंदर्य से भी बढ़कर हो तुम
अल्फ़ाज़ों और दायरों तक सीमित नहीं हो तुम
ममता की मूरत , आँचल की परछाई और इबादत का ठिकाना हो तुम
जीवन में ऐसे बहुत से हिस्से हैं जो बाँटे नहीं जा सकते
ऐसे बहुत रिश्ते हैं जो , लफ़्ज़ों से बयान नहीं किये जा सकते
हर नज़र तुम है को है खोजती , हर गली तुम्हारा है पता पूछती
तारों के बीच एक महल सा दिख रहा है
एक पालकी में भगवान का रूप फिर जन्मा है
आना है तुम्हें लौटके , फिरसे
मुलाकाते जो करनी हैं , अधूरी कहानी को तुम्हें ही पूरी करनी है
सवाल तो बहुत हैं , पर जवाब एक भी नहीं
उन्हीं सवालों को सुलझाना है तुम्हें , तिरंगे की तरह लहराना है तुम्हें
ताकत से भरी , साहस से सजी , आम लोगों को हौसला देती हुई एक
अनोखी लड़की
बस हुआ अब , इस सुबह की शाम तो होनी ही है
इस इंतज़ार की घड़ी जल्द ही बीत जानी है
आत्मा से अब ही हो जवान , आवाज़ से अब भी मशहूर हो दिलोजान

तुमसे किये हुए सब ही वादे , हम ज़रूर निभाएंगे
तुमसे अलग होकर हम कभी नहीं जाएंगे

एहसास तो तेरा ज़िंदा है और ज़िंदा रहेगा
तू है सबसे नेक इंसान , तू तो इस दुनिया में कायम रहेगा
रोकर हम सर तो नहीं झुकाएँगे
पर तेरे अब भी होने के विश्वास में हम दिए जलाएंगे

*Shivangi Tewari
Member, Anukriti
B.A. (Honours) Pol. Science*



Image Taken From: www.facebook.com

E/N: Mokshi Wadhera was a Former Resident at Miranda House Hostel from 2012-2015. She was a student of B.A. Programme and went on to pursue Masters in Criminology at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. She was the San-Com Sec for the year 2013 as well as an active member of Anukriti, the Hindi Dramatics Society. We lost her in an unfortunate car-accident, last year, but she lives on in the memories of the many hearts that she touched in her life-time.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

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*Shivani Mohan
B.A. (Honours) Economics
Batch of 2015-2018*

People say that college teaches you a lot, about yourself, about the world and about your views regarding the world. Every activity that you do helps you gain a new perspective towards life. It is a place where you can find your heart and lose it at the same time.

At the end of first semester, here are a few things that Miranda has taught me:

1. Don't waste time being shy!

Face it: no one is going to remember that you stuttered in that debate, you forgot that line or that dance step. Well, it doesn't matter what they remember because 10 years down the lane all that you will remember is that you had the guts to go out there and perform. Your experience, ultimately, is what matters. There will be a lot of opportunities available for exploring your passions. Don't sit and keep second-guessing.

Experiment. With food. With work. With life.

2. Your new checklist

☐ The first thing in the morning is to check if water is coming or not. Your entire day will be based on this crucial activity.

☐ Always carry a spoon with you. You never know when someone might offer you food. Food is your number one priority from now.

☐ Fix a day to wash your clothes. You will never do it on that day but hey, at least you can show to people how organised you are.

☐ On Sundays, Tuck will not be good. Make sure of stocking everything you need for the Sunday Night.

3. Remove your face from the phone

Connectivity has increased over time thanks to Facebook and especially WhatsApp, it's been six months and I still don't know the name of all my course mates. Yes, we are all very happy that Miranda house offers free WiFi but it also offers living people who can turn out to be really good friends. Just forget that Whatsapp chat for 10 minutes. Talk to the person sitting next to you and you might discover a lifelong friend.

4. Wander

Go out for walks. Explore the campus. Learn the roads. And, if you can see beyond the ever present traffic, garbage and pollution, you will see the beauty of nature. Go sit with friends at random tea stalls. Loiter around just for no reason at all. Help yourself to decrease your stress level. For all you know, trees could be even better than YouTube.

5. Experiment

No one is born perfect. Okay, some might be. But most of us mortals have to learn through the life process by experimenting. It's what you call going out and doing something and then, trying to find out if you like it or not. Try new recipes. Mix things up a bit and see if you can make a new dish.

6. "Wisdom lies in knowing when enough is enough,

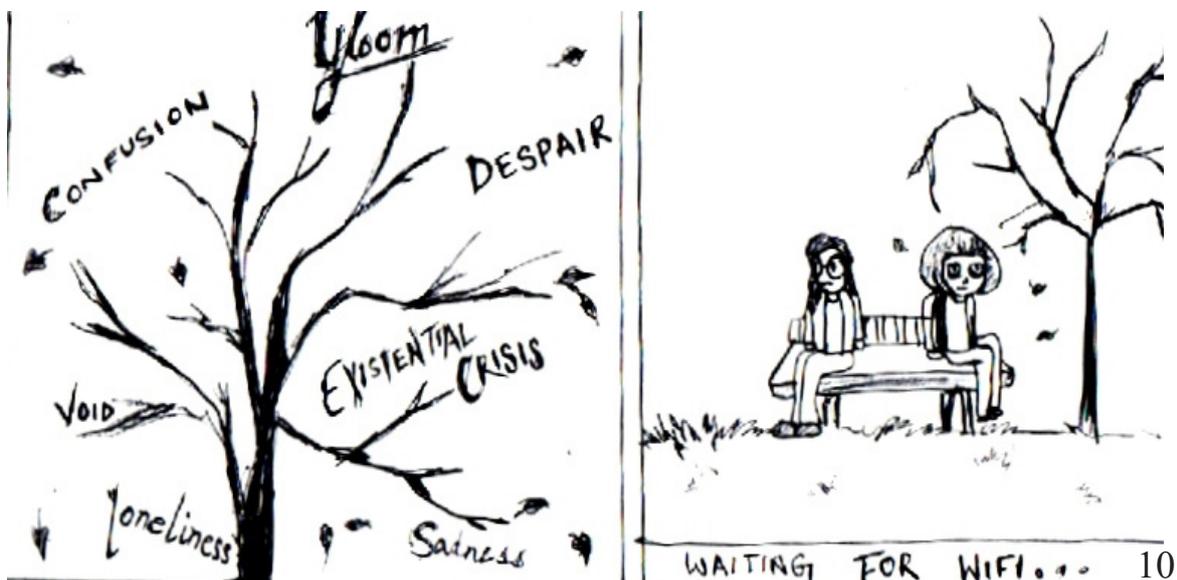
Peace lies in accepting it

And Further wisdom lies in going off to sleep."

The second most important thing of your life will be Sleep. Don't compromise on that. Remember, Einstein needed at least 10 hours of sleep before he could start working.

7. Life is hard Bro

Yes, we have water and electricity problems. And yes the food is average and the rules are strict and stringent. And yes, we all want that change that isn't going to happen. Don't be too hard on yourself. Try to enjoy simple things. Try to see what other benefits life has to offer. It's okay if there is no WiFi. At least, you can have late night chats with your friends.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN M.H.H. RESIDENT

Asmita Jain
B.A. (Honours) English
Batch of 2013-2016

8:00 – There are loud, sharp knocks at the door accompanied by a loud “Wake up!” I roll over in my bed, and sigh as I think of the busy day ahead. How I wish I had the luxury of a little more sleep. The knocks continue and somehow I force myself out of bed. While I groggily brush my teeth, I mull over seemingly path-breaking matters like the unrestrained freedom I enjoyed at home, and the privilege of having a spacious, attached washroom!

12:40– After attending three back-to-back – yet quite exciting – lectures on 18th Century English Literature, I go to a small shop to print posters for my creative writing club. As I pin-up the posters up on the notice-boards, I sense a warm, fuzzy feeling rush through me – the kind Harry must have felt when he drank Butterbeer. I experience the happiness and satisfaction of a job well-done, and enjoyed. Could the day get any more satisfying, I wonder. Little did I know, the best was yet to come.

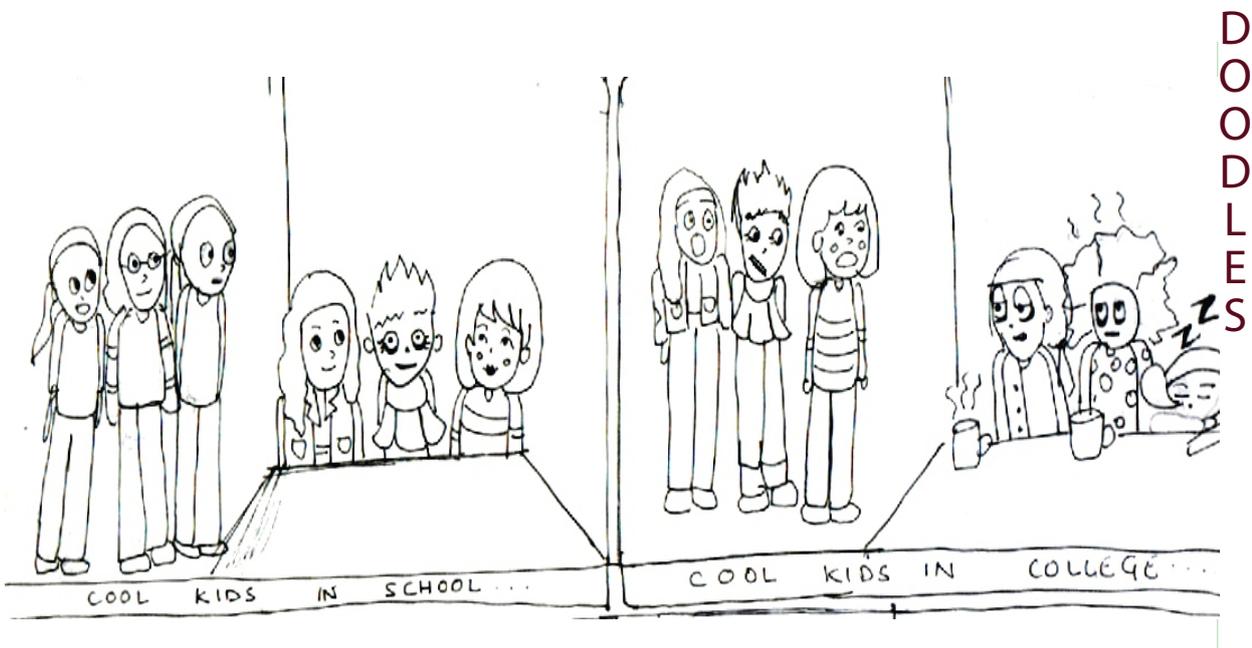
14:10– I now sit expectantly in the Students’ Activity Centre, awaiting the screening of a documentary on the Israel- Palestine conflict, titled ‘Five Broken Cameras’. The documentary provides an insight into the occupation of Palestinian land by Israel, through the lens of Emad, a Palestinian farmer and amateur videographer. It also tries to incorporate the outlook of Emad’s youngest son, Gibreel, on the prevalent violence. While a child’s life is often equated with innocence, this does not hold true for Gibreel – and I suddenly realise that innocence is as vulnerable as everything else! The boy exhibits acute sensitivity for his age, and also adapts to violence children of five should never be attuned to. There is a moment in the movie when he, at the tender age of five, questions the killing of his favourite uncle. This brings tears to my eyes. Who am I, then, at the age of 20, to complain about the lack of freedom to sleep?

16:40– I am still pondering over the question of restricted freedom and the conflict in Gaza as I sit on the grass of the Hostel Lawns. Just then, my friends turn up, and drag me along to attend a seminar on ‘Gender and Sexuality and Life Skills Education’ (read ‘Gender and Sexuality and Sex Education’) in the New Common Room. The seminar throws light on the social and legal construction of a woman’s sexuality.

At the seminar, I am overwhelmed by the freedom I experience as I discuss issues that are as taboo to us as Voldemort's name is to the wizarding world; issues such as sexual pleasure and sexual purity.

7:30- As I sit for dinner, I suddenly remember how I had (just this morning!), sighed in resigned anticipation of 'another' tiring day. The day, though tiring, had been refreshing in so many ways. The events I witnessed today have been a step in furthering my understanding of 'freedom.' Now, the freedom to sleep a little more seems trivial in contrast to the fight for the freedom of one's land, or the freedom to live out your sexuality...

The day had changed me through three little moments. It was a jam-packed, but extraordinary day which gave me new perspectives about the world, and taught me how to rise above my mundane life to engage with the complex realities around me.



ON JOINING COLLEGE SOCIETIES

5 RESIDENTS TALK ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF JUGGLING HOSTEL LIFE, ACADEMICS AND STRENOUS COLLEGE SOCIETIES

Aamina Rahim (ARIELS) :

Second year is going to be my golden academic year- I thought to myself on the train back to the capital! I'm going to overflow my plate with more than I can consume and I won't have any regrets about it. The English Theatre Society, The Creative Writing Club, work from home internships, just everything was on my bucket list.

Within a month of the new session, auditions commenced in August and I made it through the production department of The Ariels. My elation lasted only for a while until my friends pushed me to the auditions for a part in the new production. I did it for fun, only I got selected!

Acting isn't my cup of tea, coffee or brandy! Nevertheless, I decided to take one for the team and went ahead for developing my character as 'Madame' in Genet's-The Maids. 10 minutes of stage time, 3 months of preparation, and God knows how many days of stress and self loathing. Some would say I submerged myself too much in my character as my tantrums on the stage, as well as, in my real life were endless.

Before I knew it, I was clumsily managing classes, rehearsals, meetings and my own little existential problems. Some days at rehearsals were great, and other days were an irreparable mess. I'm sensing my diva-ness here, aren't you? Well, let's just say my dear directors and team members pushed me to greater heights of acting! Eh, not really! However, after a home performance in November, the response of the (known) audience was overwhelming and it was all worth it.

In all honesty, I know it in my heart that managing multiple things isn't my thing. Ask me if I've learnt my lesson? Ah! No! The stage isn't my thing, but the people behind the hard work that shows on the stage are! I've had a marvellous mix of emotions and memories with The Ariels. And if it assigns me another 3 months of back-breaking hard work, let the action begin!

Pallavi Joshi (ANUKRITI) :

I am about to complete three beautiful years in Miranda House Hostel and as well as in Anukriti, The Hindi Dramatics Society of the college and I really don't have any idea how these years passed by. I mean, yesterday only we came as freshers and now we are the senior most. I was asked how I manage hostel life and the society but in past three years I never had to choose between the two as both the places are home to me.

To some people it might give an wrong impression that after rigorous practices of Anukriti you cannot enjoy the events in the hostel. But the two are not mutually exclusive as people believe. Personally, I feel privileged being a Miranda House Hostel resident. It taught me so much; how to celebrate, how to enjoy life at its full and lot more that cannot be described in words. After all, we are not robots that we work on electricity or batteries and we need our share our fun.

Barsha Chetia (MRIDANG) :

Ever thought of hiding in a hermitage? Well, the society members would surely nod to that when it comes down to submitting heap of assignments and competitions to go for. I joined Mridang in my second year after I realised there is a lot to learn beyond the four walls of the classroom. I became habitual to practicing for long hours and still managing to show up for classes. Although it might have taken a toll on me to manage academics and co-curricular, the society gave me opportunities which wouldn't have been possible otherwise. Not only did I widen my knowledge of dance, I had the opportunity to compete among the best colleges of the country. Nothing can be compared to the satisfaction of winning laurels for your college which is recognition to your own hard work.

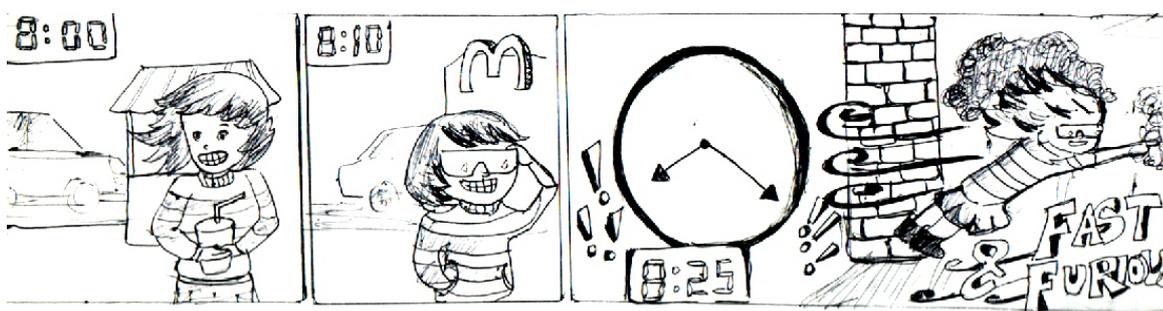
Haidam Zeme (ORPHEUS, FINE ARTS) :

With the start of the second year, I decided that I should hereby stop being a procrastinator and should seriously join some societies and should start living ' the College life' and pretty soon I was a part of two societies : The Western Music society, Orpheus and the Art society, Adwitiya. Nevertheless, it did not turn out as I'd dreamt. Flittering between the two societies and college work turned out rather difficult, especially when assignments and tests started coming up. The usual evenings I had spent in my first year having a cup of watery but nonetheless drinkable tea vanished. (I've never had a cup of tea since then!) The fest season got worse and staying up late and leaving early for competitions and blah became the routine. But the happiness you feel when your efforts pay off and the exhibition becomes a success (Though I missed a major part of the art society preparations for Tempest - managing two societies is difficult too), or When your name is read out as the winner_ words cannot make you understand the happiness one feels. It makes all the time spent worth it. This year has been an amazing year and I'd rather this life than a monotonous (still lazy most times) one.

Shameen Khurana (N.S.S.) :

Being in NSS meant being in the college 24*7. Being in the union of NSS opened up a lot of responsibilities and avenues for me. Rushing between classes, managing union duties and running to the mess in the lunch break time was a challenging yet great learning experience. There were a lot of times when I missed my lunch ; when I was called early morning to do some work and I had to sacrifice my sleep.

During the preparation of any event, my room would turn into a hub of activities with lot of people coming in,going out, a lot of material being kept in the room etc. After the end of the event when I finally cleaned my room, I would find lost, hidden treasures. Looking back, these were the memories that make my tenure memorable, and all that juggling a great exercise in time-management skills. I made loads of new friends and got more insight into people's life's and problems. The addition of MHH residency to my NSS post holding has indeed transformed me into a responsible person.

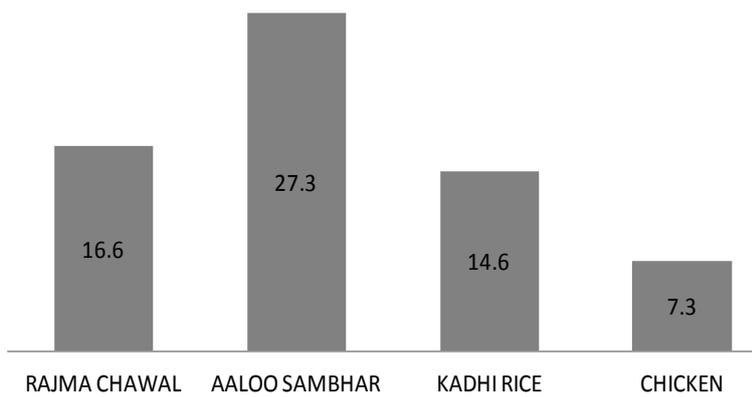


SURVEYS

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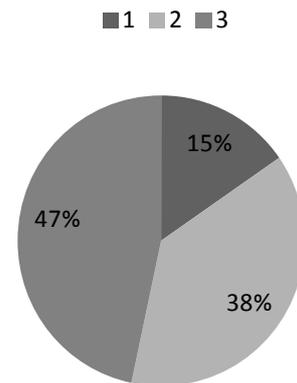
THE GRIMOIRE TEAM CONDUCTED SURVEYS AND POLLS, USING A SAMPLE OF 30 STUDENTS FROM EACH BLOCK- A TOTAL OF 150 IN ALL; ON VARIOUS HOSTEL RELATED TOPICS. PUBLISHED HERE ARE THE RESULTS

Which Meal Do You Like The Most?



VALUES IN PERCENTAGE

Opinion On Hostel Cats

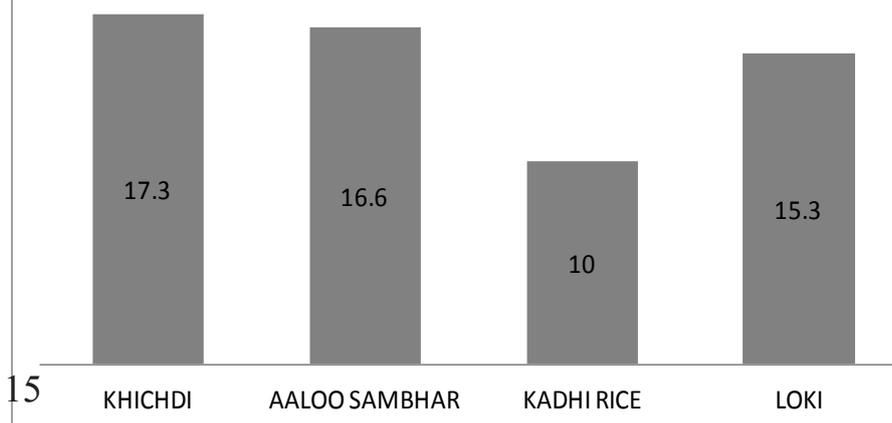


1) THEY ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF HOSTEL LIFE

2) THEY CREATE A MESS AND SHOULD BE RELOCATED

3) I DON'T LIKE THEM BUT DON'T MIND THEM EITHER.

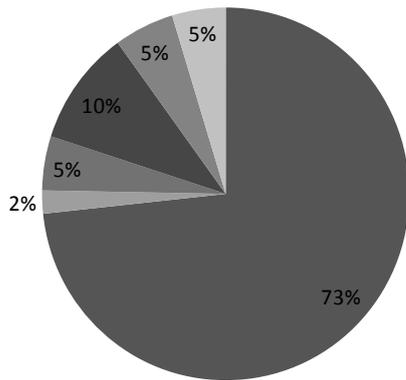
Which Meal Do You Skip The Most?



THE MOST CAT-FRIENDLY BLOCK: N BLOCK

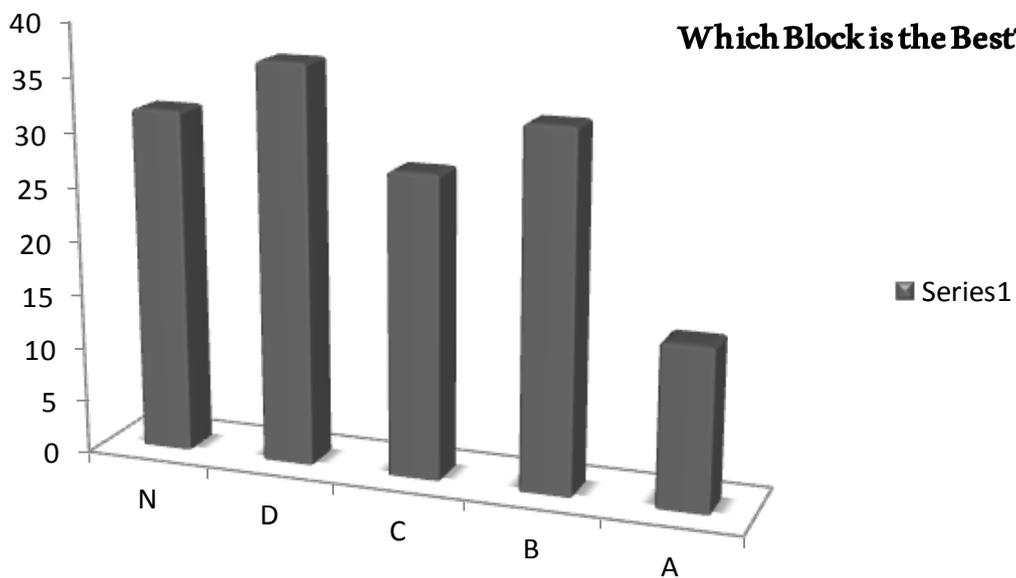


FAVORITE HOSTEL EVENT

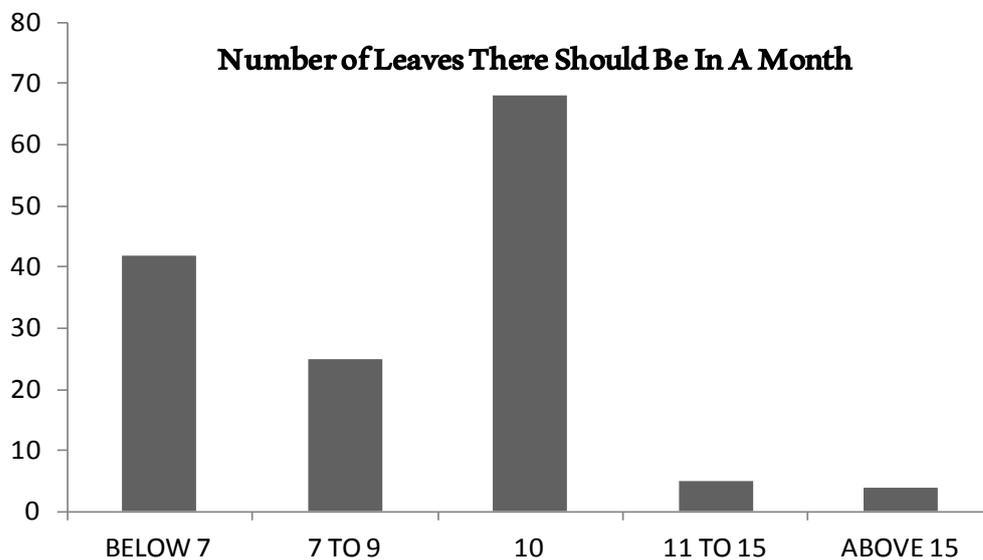


■ GUEST NIGHT ■ MRIDANG NIGHT ■ FAREWELL
 ■ FRESHERS' ■ SOCIALS ■ OTHERS

Which Block is the Best?



Number of Leaves There Should Be In A Month



TRAVEL

A QUEST FOR NIRVANA IN THE LAND OF HOT SPRINGS

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*Neha Singh
B.A. (Honours) English
Batch of 2013-2016*

Final year could be a year of acute crisis when nothing seems clear. In this phase of self-loathing, you could do two things- either torment yourself endlessly or you can take things easy. Better yet, use this aggravation as an excuse and take a much-needed break.

I and my friends agreed on the latter (obviously) and reached "the land of hot springs" and hippies- Kheerganga in Himachal Pradesh. Our minds and hearts were on the quest of relief in the realm of nature. And in all honesty, we weren't let down.

We boarded the bus from Majnu Ka Tila, New Delhi to Bhuntar. Two jarring hours on a local bus took us to Kasol. Staying as a house guest with one of the locals instead of a hotel proved easy on our already vacant pockets. My personal favorite is Auntie's place (it does not have a name) where you get the best parantha and chai.

Later on, we roamed around, visited Manikaran Gurudwara and Shiva temple. The view from the bridge over river Beas with relishing white water is indeed magnificent. We almost got lost and saw some marijuana plantations and picked a few apples from real apple trees on our way back (before you say anything, for a girl from plains- it sure is a big deal). During the

evening, we explored the local market which had a spectacular variety of things to offer.

Cafes in kasol offer delicious Indian and other cuisines. I'll have you know- Everything! Yes, everything is mouth watering here!

Day 2's itinerary included trekking to Kheerganga. By taking a bus from Kasol to Manikaran and then a cab to Bershiani, we reached our starting point. The journey is beyond beautiful. Pine trees against steep hills are immensely pleasing to the eyes and haven't lost their essence. **4**

The trek wasn't an easy one. It is 14 km long and pretty steep for beginners. You will see many refreshing waterfalls and thrilling mystery spots. The stepping stones in the brooks are unstable and muddy and give yourselves well deserved credit if you manage to reach the top without slipping, falling or wetting your shoes.

The path was pretty dangerous and you tend to slip frequently when admiring the beauty on your right rather than watching your step. We had plenty of company- foreigners who greeted us with a smile and Namastey and overly friendly dogs that followed us to the top. In around four to five hours, we reached the top and the



*Image Courtesy:
Neha Singh*

view was remarkable. It was worth every step; not that the climb was any less challenging or pleasurable.

Our feelings were ineffable, and the weather was fairly nippy, quite a change from the extreme weather conditions of New Delhi. But the real treat to our exhausted bodies were the sacred as well as the natural hot springs. As we stepped in the 'kund' the water seemed unbearably hot, almost boiling, but in a few minutes, it relieved us of all the exhaustion. We spent the night, partly under the starry sky and partly in our cozy tents. The sky was dotted with innumerable stars, along with a few airplanes here and there. My friend insisted that the planes were spy satellites meant to keep an eye on us!

A fellow trekker told me Lord Shiva had made kheer for Ma Parvati here and hence the name- Kheerganga. Where the flowing water is as white as kheer and the place has natural hot springs. It could only be the miraculous, inherent balance of Nature's that ensured that the natives get uninterrupted supply of hot water which in the cold region of Kheerganga. Oh wasn't the air pure and unfathomably stimulating!

The pastures down the hills with snow-lined mountains around them, along with copious trees could have inspired Wordsworth and Coleridge. It seemed potent of inspiring narratives, art, and lives. It had so much to offer to one and all. All you have to do is look for tranquility.

Somehow we climbed our way down and I personally was unbelievably happy to be able to make it as one intact person. We were running (literally running) late but luckily made it to our bus in a Hindi movie fashion. It was a trip to remember, with so many new experiences. All of us were awestruck, going back with a memory of one personal achievement or the other to keep ourselves respectfully alive till life struck us with the next set of crisis.

I know this is no 'ZNMD' story to inspire you to pack your bags and go to some random places but remember this is real and accessible. So, convince your girl gang, save some money, pack your bags and explore when you can. And if you decide to, do remember to look around before booking anything. You wouldn't believe the price at which we always found accommodation. Also, be ready for a bargain- be it for Volvo tickets, cabs or hotels because they tend to give in easily. Despite the fact that we ate ravenously, 3000 bucks covered our entire expenses. Another tip is to keep your bags light since the trek is painfully long, steep and exhausting. I happened to see a few boys who threw away their expensive clothes while trekking just to get rid of those few extra grams. Luckily for us, our bags were not unbearable. I wish I could pen down every detail but for now, this should do.

TRAVEL

WANDERLUST

*Mahi Goyal
B.A. (Honours) English
Batch of 2015-2018*

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There are people who don't feel the urge to wander all over the world. They are content with staying within their enclosed walls, immersing themselves in some or the other TV show or a book, being an absolute couch potato.

Honestly, I myself belong to this very category. The title of the article might have thrown you off.

But, I also suffer from wanderlust.

WANDERLUST essentially is the strong desire to travel and explore the world. Fellow wanderlust sufferers would agree- Whether it is curiosity that drives us or the desire to run away from reality, the case remains the same. Our constant urge to travel doesn't just go away with one trip. We travel for the same reason we attend classes, read magazine articles, chat with strangers at parties: we want to learn.

Personally, I'm not very experienced in the Actual-Going-To-Places but I'm an expert at Wanting-To-Go. The thought of fitting all my life in one suitcase thrills me. I've sat through multiple Science classes making a to-do list of what to carry and what not to carry for my imaginary trip to Iceland.

Day-dreamer? Hell yeah!

Of course, I want to see the world. I want to see and do spectacular things in my life and not remain a tiny fleck on this huge ever changing canvas of a universe. I want to piece together all the coins I collect from my journeys as memories, so that they chink with adventure with every step that I take. I want to hear other people's stories. I want to learn new languages. I want to get in, then out of, my own head.

"I need to go somewhere on a vacation and figure out my life..." - a thought that enters in everyone's mind at some point or the other.

The question is why do we feel the urge to strip away from all familiar comforts of our family and friends, move away from our comfort zone into the unknown, and find solace amongst strangers? Because deep inside we all feel the need to get away from reality and submerge ourselves in a world where obstacles don't exist, where we can resort to fantasies without bearing its consequences. At least this is what I figured out in my Science class.

Now, pack your imaginary suitcase. Build a world for yourself, a world you want to live

in, your very own Happy Place, no matter how utopian this vision is. And now move to it. Soon you'll move away, explore this world, and then find yourself. But remember to keep yourself afloat in this vast ocean of bright energy energy that surrounds the universe, and our own lives.

We want, we want, we want it all. But ask the traveller inside you - how do you board planes, see mountains and rivers, immerse yourself in foreign worlds, and yet, keep your place among the people you love? Can you travel trailing your relationships behind you and trusting they won't get damaged? Can you leave without deserting what you left behind? Meanwhile, the things you love will crumble away constantly beneath you. Hello, you say to the world, and then: Goodbye to the rest.

Can you truly call this unknown place your home? Wherein lies your heart?

POTATO RUN-AWAY!



OPINIONS

JUGAAD

*Krishna Shekhawat
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Batch of 2014-2017*

A profound sense of disillusionment makes me wonder why Indians unanimously rely on 'jugaad'. What about change? Is it only a reversal from our past doings? Or is it a meek reaction to the furore rising in the hearts of rebels? Perhaps we need to define change before we redefine it. Change is not just an act of difference, it is an opposition to negativity. It is the call of humanity crying out to you, to me, and to each one of us to break-free from the shackles of silence and take the world by storm. The only dynamic perspective in the lives of some Indians is that they are people who have grown up without growing wise. The 21st century has till now been a century of ferment - Indians wake up every morning to the slavery of the clock, seldom wondering whether they will leave their imprint on the sands of time or will they be remembered by the the annals of history by mere accident? The present political scenario presents us quite an array of black folks in a black room looking for a black cat that isn't there and finding it. Does India's future then appear bleak? I can smell the smoke of fire raging in the oceans. No I'm not joking. But somewhere deep inside the callous conscience of Indian youth I can sense a faint hint of fierce protest; the will to break free from foul narrow-mindedness. In

the vast expanse of our oceanic knowledge, I can see the spirit of change burning bright. I can envision the silhouette of our torch-bearer, not well-built but with a formidable frame, not arrogant but stern, not stubborn but firm. India does not need the botox uplifted faces of reluctant leaders but craves vibrant young faces who will rejuvenate it. Thinkers are many, doers few. The zero hour is here. We need dynamism, not stale stagnance. Power not corruption. Liberty but not anarchy. Indians, not rowdy politicians. Change is the only constant, and our country is in want of it.

THROUGH THE EYES OF 'SMALL EYES'

*Varening Konghay
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Batch of 2013-2016*

The year was 1995. Like any other year, thousands of babies were born, and there she was like any of them... except she wasn't one of them, at least not most of them. Little did she know that those eyes that made her see the world would be the same eyes that made the world view her differently. So here's my story through the lens of my two 'small eyes', an Indian girl from the state of Manipur who grew up in different states of India.

In my growing up days in Agartala and Lucknow, I was completely unaware of my Mongolian features. I thought that the faces I saw around me reflected the same image as on mine. I never felt different. I recall once asking a girl from Mizoram when I was a 7 year old child, "Are you Chinese?" Little did I know that this question was going to haunt me in the years to come. I used to converse with all my friends in Hindi ...*"Sorry my Hindi is not that good" echoes the voice of my 20 year old self...* and even with my own brother while watching Pokemon dubbed in Hindi. I watched Bollywood movies and danced as Kareena Kapoor in the song, 'Kehdo na, you

are my Sonia', wearing bright red pants as I performed on the stage in front of the whole colony.... *"I don't dance...I don't know this song!"* echoes again the 18 year old me as I decline my friend's invitation to dance along with her on the dance floor. I did what everyone else did, played catch 'em catch, hide and seek and excitedly run with coupons in my tiny hands as the mela began. I always thought I was one of them...one of you...but I guess my eyes would never let me.

It was in Mumbai when I became aware that the space my eyes occupied on my face made a world of difference to the way I was treated. Before shifting to Mumbai, I had been in Mizoram for a brief time, and there I lost touch with Hindi and all the Bollywood craze. It was there I realized that I was different from my friends back in Lucknow as I realized that I blended there even though I didn't speak their language or was even aware of their culture, rather due to the mere fact that I reflected their faces on mine. My first day in Mumbai was quite amusing for me. I must confess, I deliberately posed myself as an outsider because I found it rather amusing to be thought of as a foreigner. I sat outside in the balcony on the first floor and spoke in a language foreign to myself "chingchao mi sa wo...ting tang waaa...mo?"

?" and I took joy in watching heads turn as the kids playing outside curiously stared at me and my cousin sister with whom I was supposedly having a serious conversation in our version of mandarin. But the joy came with its own price. I remember on the first day of school when a girl came up to me to befriend me, we shook hands and exchanged a few words. Then, she went to her friends and laughed and said in Hindi about our awkward encounter thinking I didn't understand Hindi.

And sometimes I wished I didn't.

My reception in school was with wide eyes of excitement of seeing the 'other' and I still remember one boy shouting out "Chinese" as I entered the French class. All my childhood I have found people directly assuming that I was Chinese. It was a sad but a true fact that a foreign country like China was a much more familiar name than our country's own states like Manipur, Nagaland, etc. My brother often lost his temper when little boys, random people on the road or anybody would shout out, "Hey Chinese!" Lucky for him, he spoke fluent Hindi and could always reply back. Once, a sales man came up to our door and was interacting with my mother in English. I am assuming his boss called as he said, " Haan Sir, koi Chinese log hain, haan ji". Then he happened to overhear my brother's mobile conversation, in Hindi. The sales man stared wide eyed at him and then sheepishly asked us where we were from and my mother replied, "from Manipur, a state in India."

It was during this particular chapter of my life that I began telling myself that I was different, that we were different. I went on telling people that I'm not exactly an Indian because of my Mongolian ancestors. I insisted that I'm an Indian only because of the British colonization. My denial was a product of the society's failure to see me as one of them. Being considered as the 'other' I began to accept myself as what they saw me as. People would say why don't you learn Hindi, and then entertain

themselves when I tried to speak and even imitate my accent. My broken Hindi and a lack of knowledge about the Indian culture is a clear evidence of my denial as an Indian. There was a phase in my life when I didn't have any identity because I never grew up in my hometown and interacted with people from my culture, so I never knew much about my tradition. I never really fitted in anywhere. But coming to Delhi, I came to interact both with people from northeast and the mainland Indians. My northeastern friends would update me with the current happenings back home and my mainlander buddies would expose me to all their food and festivities, all of which I was offered no option to excuse myself out of. So I began to feel connected to my original roots while feeling very much Indian at the same time.

It is still a struggle but it has taught me to be stronger and bolder against any racial discrimination. I am grateful to some of my friends who have fought for me when I was discriminated and made me realize that the longer I ignore their ignorant assumption of me as Chinese, the longer I will suffer in silence. Recently when the law against calling a person from North-East Indian a 'Chinky' was passed, I felt like I was holding a weapon, a weapon not involving usage of offensive words to fight back the rude remarks. My friend once uploaded a post that said, "If North-East is all about small eyes, then the rest of India is all about small minds." To this a guy wrote, "Chinki ka dimag toh human eye se bhi chota hota hai". This kind of a comment was not new, but my perception about the situation had changed. For the first time in my life I was willing react to a stranger's discrimination whilst nervously typing my comment with fingers shaking. My desire to be heard was louder than being afraid of being mocked for what I was to write. And this was what I wrote, "Just a gentle reminder to the narrow minded folks out there. If any person from north east is called a chinky... there can be legal actions taken against that person, say, five years in jail...I hope we can all

be a little cautious with our tongue now...now shouldn't we." Later he deleted his post and liked my comment.

Several years of quietly listening to the racist comments being hurled, responding to it through the social media where the public is watching has made me feel that I have finally begun walking in the right direction by establishing my voice, my identity. Although it is still a daily struggle, but I am hopeful that in a not so distant future I will hear a stranger finally say, "Are you from Manipur?" "Sorry, I'm a Japanese...." Then, I would smile at the confused Japanese tourist and walk on with a sense of pride that these '*small eyes*' will not make me any less Indian than you are.

This is my story. Twenty years of being who I am, as witnessed through *my small eyes*.



CREATIVE WRITING

GHAZAL- SEASONS

Upasana Sharma
B.A. (Honours) Sociology
Batch of 2013-2016

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Mud splatters on our shoes, it is the ire of this season
Snails, like comrades, join in on the fervour of this season.

Bridges, we navigate, winding and hollow -
He, my marigold, and I, his iris in season.

Behold the wickedness of strife, I see sparks
And then kisses like whispers, spreading fire across seasons.

Thighs like pincers, a mouth churned out of gold
Hostages to one another, accomplices too, this season.

On a park bench, where fingers creep and collide -
Touch that spoke of home transports us to another season

We bounce around in thirst, chasing shade, running into shame
Yet the sun finds us, desire swelling over seasons.

Somewhere along the line the days came to quicken
A game of hide and find, mischief that ensued last season -

Clouds watch over us in consternation, we offer penance
Our loneliness comes to pass with a wish for seasons.

And now dawn looms above, dizzy and bright
We offer the stars a share of our drunken seasons

Night's end reminiscing it's twilight to the brim -
Shattering, isn't it? We claim this unquiet as our season.

NINETEEN

Parul Singh
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Batch of 2011-2014
MAGAZINE CO-ORDINATOR 2014

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Where I lived last month there was one window. The one window to the sun, the moon and the stars, to sneak into a room crowded by 90's songs being played in the apartment right below mine. Where I lived, walls were thin and people stubborn. The window allowed desires and sighs and incense for a stroll, the kind Hansel and Gretel took, not knowing where or when the wandering would end. This space, I had called home.

And before that, there was a place with two beds in a room and one window and a paper which said 'nineteen' that particular morning.

Here.

One morning, it went like this -

The morning after
you walked right into this place
and found that red warmth
with a sadness of home.
how easily can you wake up at 5:42am,
if it wasn't for the air stirring a mango yellow curtained door,
watching through the haze of iron grills,
few potted plants, a reading, and a green cup.
These all and I can muster up at the back balcony,
is this question of me waking up.
Also my toes. Waking up in a haze.
It does seem too trivial, also
when it is today, after two short, long years
of never looking outside, I spot
the brilliant Neem.
Never really looked, did I?
How nice it would have been if I was determined to. At times,
when I am not being whimsical. Or a woman.
It is so difficult
to get hold of a place- the complete clutter
of bricks, bones and blood. It flows.
Far or away, I leave to you to know.
While I live with an Albert Camus,
waiting for an 8:40 am class.

असफलता का डर

Kavita Verma
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Batch of 2015-2018

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एकू दर्द जो सीने में उतर गया
एक डरी सी सहमी सी आवाज़ में बदल गया
दिल को चीरा इस तरह
की होठों ने मुस्कुराना छोड़ दिया
आखें तरसती रही अपनों के प्यार को
भूलने की झिल्लत में दर्द आंसू बन निकले
सदाओं से टकराना भी जैसे नासूर हो गया
कभी थी जिस चहरे पर मुस्कराहट
खामोशी सी होने लगी
अपने अब अपने न रहे
पराये होने लगे हैं
जब मंज़िलें थी करीब, उची थी उड़ान
तो सबकी जुबान पर था हमारा नाम
सब हमारे साथ थे, हमारे पास थे.
उस वक़्त को गुज़ारे, ज़माना हुआ
बहुत सी मुसीबतों से हमारा टकराना हुआ
समझ तो हमने भी खुद को काबिल ही था
पर टिक न पाये इस तूफ़ान में और
हताशी सी होने लगी
खोकर अपना वजूद ज़िन्दगी भर गयी कड़वाहट से इस
तरह
की अब न अपने रहे, न अपनों का साथ रहा
न सफलता रही और न आत्मविश्वास रहा

बन गया था मैं ज़िंदा लाश
खोकर अपनों का साथ
लेकिन मेरा डर उस दिन काफ़ूर हुआ
जब मुझे खुद से प्यार हुआ
अब न किसी की उम्मीदें थी
और न किसी का साथ
लेकिन अब मुझे था खुद की काबलियत पर विश्वास
अब न रुका, न थमा
आगे बढ़ता गया,
बिना किसी सहारे के
दिल में विश्वास और सफलता की
चिंगारी लिए
कर इस नफ़रत के जहाँ को पार
जहाँ अपनों ने किया मेरे दिल को तार तार
क़दमों ने पावं रखा ही था
मंज़िल की ज़मी पर
की गौर से देखा ये मंज़िले भी वही थी
लोग भी वही थे, बस लोगों की नज़रें अलग थी
आज अपने ही नहीं
पराये भी दोस्त थे
आज मेने एक बात है जानी
की सफलता का कोई नहीं है शानी
है सफलता तो सब है

TORN SHOES

*Aamina Rahim
B.A. (Honours) Sociology
Batch of 2014-2017*

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How you walked alone in that pavement,
With those mighty torn shoes. Kicked to a corner now.
When you gathered all that was left in you,
To let your love known,
staggering and stumbling in those mighty torn shoes.
Kicked to a corner now.

How you jumped with joy on your first salary,
Supported by those mighty torn shoes. Kicked to a corner now.

How you had your first kiss in the rain. Not caring about
your drenched socks.

Nothing could feel better, you felt invincible in those
mighty torn shoes. Kicked to a corner now.

How you ran to catch that last bus in those mighty torn
shoes.

Kicked to a corner now.

"We need to talk."

You walked home with a broken heart,
In those same torn shoes. Not so mighty now.

"These never did me any good."

How your first ever salary bought you a new pair of
shoes.

Those torn shoes.

Kicked to a corner now.

LOST AND FOUND

Rajendrani Sarkar
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Batch of 2015-2018

Faint daylight stole inside the room like a frightened cat, tiptoe-ing, through the narrow slit above the transparent glass window. He opened his eyes slowly. The room smelled of medicines and sterilized linen. The only sound audible was that of the monitor beeping at regular intervals. He closed his eyes again; a gush of pain rose from his heart through his throat, finally making its exit as a drop of warm salty liquid through the half closed eyelids. Dr. Shantanu Chatterjee, leading gynecologist of Kolkata and counted among the best few in India, couldn't resist his tears today.

A rise in the heartbeat rate caused the monitor to beep faster, causing the nurse dozing at one corner of the room to wake up with a start and scurry towards him. Years of experience had told her that such mental stress could be fatal for any patient recovering from a massive heart attack. However, unable to handle a forty nine year old man sobbing miserably like a child who had lost his way on a crowded street, she rushed out to call for the Matron. By the time the Matron entered his cabin Dr. Chatterjee's heartbeat and blood pressure were already on the rise and he was breathing heavily. Wasting no time they quickly injected him with a tranquilizer, waiting for his heartbeat and pulse to return to the normal count. Making sure he would do fine thereafter, they left as he slipped back to unconsciousness.

"But Baba you don't understand. This town has no prospects, it's absolutely hopeless. I won't be able to flourish if I stay back here, my career shall be ruined forever. Then tell me, why did you spent so much on my education if you never wished me to do any good of it?" persuaded Shantanu, a fresh M.B.B.S. graduate of the Calcutta Medical College. Sandipan Chatterjee took some time to answer, "Look here son, I don't wish to ruin your career or prospects. All I want is to help this town that you call hopeless and create some hope here. Who could assist me better than a brilliant young man like you?" Sandipanbabu fell silent. He was the teacher of mathematics at a government funded school in Siliguri. Though of a very humble state, he was highly respected within his circles and in the whole town. This was because of his calm, polite nature and because he practiced the oft repeated phrase: simple living, high thinking. He engaged himself in a variety of social activities too; that included giving out free tuitions to the children of economically backward families. He had been faced with struggle to fund his elder son Shantanu's education at the Medical College and was naturally concerned about the future of his younger son Samiran. Unlike Shantanu, who had been studious, ambitious and stubborn since childhood, Samiran was laid back; he preferred sports and other activities over academics. Sandipanbabu wanted his brilliant elder son to guide the younger one.

But here was Shantanu who wanted to leave Siliguri and settle in Calcutta as a doctor. Before his arguments and determined mindset even Sandipanbabu felt quite helpless. Now, Swati, his wife finally spoke up, "Then what about us, Shantanu?", she said, not losing her calm, solemn composure; "What shall your father and I do without our eldest son? What shall happen to Samiran without his elder brother guiding him? Your father is ageing and will retire soon enough. The meager pension he will receive will hardly be enough to fund Samiran's education. Give the matter a second thought, son. We need you here!"

"I will keep sending money every month, Ma. Trust me.", said Shantanu impatiently. He was determined to leave Siliguri and settle in the big City. Nothing would stop him.

A week later 24 year old Dr. Shantanu Chatterjee left for the New Jalpaiguri Railway Station with his luggage. Only once did he turn back from the rickshaw and wave carelessly at his family standing rather morbidly at the gate of their humble abode.

Gopal walked into the cabin rather shyly. Looking up at his master lying exhausted and motionless on the bed, he asked softly, "How are you feeling now Dadababu?". Dr. Chatterjee opened his eyes, he was astonished. "What brings you here, Gopal?", he asked his servant of twenty years. "Concern for you Dadababu...concern. I couldn't leave your side like them all. I just couldn't." Gopal's face was streaming with tears by now. "They all left you helpless. Ruined you and then just left you helpless", he sobbed.

Dr. Chatterjee sighed. Ruined, he had been ruined. He had left behind his family, his birthplace to prevent being ruined. The big City had treated him ruthlessly. At one point it had given him everything, and perhaps more than what he wanted: fame, money, a beautiful wife and a daughter, whom he loved more than anything on earth. He thought he was destined to be successful and all he did conformed to the pattern. It was as if Lady Fortune had become truly appreciative of him, and he had been blessed with something like Midas' touch.

Then suddenly She, owing to some Divine conspiracy, held him with displeasure. He wasn't aware of the enormity of rivals he had created while exposing the people involved in the gang of organ thefts, conducted behind the facade of a clinic. Some dark monetary transfers in the higher echelons of power resulted in a plot to disfigure his public image. The next day all the leading newspapers of Calcutta bore on their front pages, as eye-catching headlines, the testimony of a famous doctor's misdeeds. Filing a law suit for alleged defamation never helped; the invisible miscreants had too long a reach. The hospital where he worked as a senior doctor, the clinics where he practiced, found it inappropriate to retain such a controversial individual as him. Patients who once flocked his private chamber everyday dwindled day to day, and finally fell to zero. Troubled by constant monetary and other hardships his wife Saswati left for her paternal home, along with their ten year old daughter, Tanaya. It was soon after that he suffered a massive heart attack. Dr. Chatterjee wondered why his rivals hadn't killed him right away.

"Dadababu!", Gopal's voice broke off the doctor's chain of thoughts. Gopal was speaking again, "Dadababu, we have nothing left here in this city. Why don't you consider going back to Siliguri? You will at least have some support there."

Dr. Chatterjee did consider returning to his hometown, to his father and brother. For a moment his mother's face flashed before his eyes; the woman who had done every sacrifice for the sake of her husband and children. She had been diagnosed with uterine cancer soon after Tanaya's birth. It was almost the last stage and no medicine whatsoever could cure her. All the old lady had wanted before she breathed her last was to see her long gone elder son at her bedside. But the son was busy attending an international conference in Munich, when his wife informed him of his mother's death via a phone call. Dr. Chatterjee couldn't even attend the post death rituals, he had a lecture scheduled in Chicago soon after.

The chill in the air was felt as soon as they alighted at the NJP Railway Station. Dr. Chatterjee's little town from childhood had changed terrifically since he left. During his last visit which was almost a decade ago he did notice some changes, but this time he could feel the little town bustling with activities. There were three star hotels, multi-specialty hospitals, schools, shopping complexes flaunting international brands of products and what not. The thing that hadn't changed, however, was the spirit of the town:

warm, welcoming, hearty.

Driving through the lanes Dr. Chatterjee smiled for the first time in months. Yes, here he was with his near ones, here he was where none would judge him, here he was where they would accept him for whatever he was;

he was; to here he belonged.

At the gate of Chatterjee Villa, a comfortable looking three storey private house surrounded by seasonal blossoms, stood an old man of eighty. He was anxiously waiting his elder son's homecoming. Within, a young woman in her mid thirties was busy preparing lunch and setting the table. Now and then she received her husband's calls and confirmed that Dada had not reached yet.

As the rickshaw pulled up before the house and Dr. Shantanu Chatterjee stepped down, his father, despite his age, ran forward to embrace him. "How have you been, my son? Oh how we all have missed you! I know you've been through a lot, but now that you're here things will be absolutely fine, I assure you!", the old man was panting after having spoken continually. Shantanu bent down to touch his feet, both were in tears; tears washing away years of agony and pain. The young woman came running from inside the house. She was Samiran's wife Ananya, a Professor of History at the Siliguri Government Arts College. "Welcome home, Dada. We're so glad to see you. Your brother is on his way from the office. Do come in and freshen up. I have cooked luchi and chholar dal." She led Gopal inside the house with their luggage.

Shantanu was overwhelmed. This was the family he had given up on and settled in an alien city. Today they happily received the one who had rejected them long ago, while he had been afraid that they would hate him for his indifference. The Almighty, however had set the stage differently.

Samiran arrived in a while. He was now a successful real estate and property developer. After a sumptuous lunch he and his wife discussed with Shantanu his present situation and assured that all kinds of assistance would be forwarded to Shantanu. Samiran offered to construct a clinic to re-establish his elder brother's medical practice. They also decided to contact Shantanu's estranged wife and bring the family together.

Sandipan Chatterjee could only look at the framed photograph of his deceased wife and sigh, "If only you were here today to witness such joy! Such happiness!"

That night, before going to bed, Dr. Shantanu Chatterjee was in the balcony of his room, speaking to Saswati. She was apologetic for not having trusted him, for having left him helpless. She promised to start off for Siliguri with their daughter Tanaya as soon as possible.

Dr. Shantanu Chatterjee was again the happy man he used to be. But this joy was different from what he had experienced ever before. It was a wonderful emotion of fulfillment, gratitude, solace and contentment. After all, he had finally found the sentiments that he had lost carelessly long ago.

REAL ILLUSIONS

The following isn't an extract from the book 'Real Illusions', authored by Mahi Goyal, Resident '18. The book was launched by Mr. William Dalrymple under the aegis of Taj Literature Festival 2013 held in Agra.

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I got inside my Volvo and drove according to my GPS system. It took about an hour to reach the tall, white building because I took a wrong turn at the corner and had to drive all the way back. God! It was a long distance; I did not realize it last time as I was in his company.

I came out of the car but somehow, this time I did not feel that certain connection with the place; like a chord had been broken. But with the hope getting bigger with each step, I arrived at the fenced gate and entered the garden but to my surprise it lay there fruitless and fallow. All the lush green bushes and that tall proud tree had vanished! The chirping birds no longer enjoyed the water as they too had disappeared.

Shocked, I crossed the bridge and stood in front of the main door but it was locked. I thought I was being a fool; he might have been out somewhere and would chide me if he came to know that I had come all the way to his house looking for him. But inside I knew I was only consoling myself, ignoring all the other contrary information I had gathered in these few days. And suddenly, I don't know what came over me that I picked up a lying piece of wood and smashed open the lock which broke in an instant.

Funny, I said to myself. He uses such feeble locks! I pushed the door open and immediately began to cough uncontrollably. There was dust all around the place and I was allergic to it. I covered my mouth with a handkerchief and entered inside. My mouth fell open and my breath came with a whooshing sound. I was frozen in place. The sofas, the painting, the lights, all had gone and in its place there laid dust and cement flakes on the ground. The place looked like it hadn't been touched for a hundred years!

I couldn't believe any of my senses at that moment. I stood over the pile of cement that had collected in a corner and tried to make sense of all this. How could this be happening? I was here like few weeks ago and now it looks a hundred years old. I pinched myself in the hope of finding myself to be dreaming but unfortunately the horrible scene in front of me stood still; unchanged. The desire to disbelieve deepens as the threat grows.

I moved up the massive staircase I had so admired. It now looked all blackened and rusted. I walked through it with the fear of it collapsing any second and approached the first room we had seen- Efron's living room. I visualized its original picture in my mind but my heart knew that it wouldn't be the same.

The room was now filled with webs of all kinds, there were cracks on the floor, the walls were blackened, the windows were half broken and the room was totally empty. For a second, I felt like I was losing my balance. I almost tripped but took hold of the door handle, which too yielded due to the pressure.

What is all this happening? Could someone please explain it to me? How much I wanted all this to be

a practical joke of his and that he would enter the room the very next moment and give me a hug but unfortunately, it did not happen. I could only stare at the room but could do nothing about it.

I ran directly to the lantern room and the balcony, I needed some fresh air at that moment. All of this was suffocating me. I tried to open the door but it was jammed, I pushed hard and the door came off. I was startled. Already the room was quite small so it was even more of a mess. The light seemed fine as it was made very durable but otherwise the floorboard was in a bad shape. I struggled to open the door to the balcony and it took me a while to do so. I finally opened it.

I stood there, absolutely still; trying to process all the images I had collected. The pain seemed too much for me to carry. Every echo of his laughter now came with a shrieking pain. I tried to push away all those memories but the more I pushed them, the more they found a way deep in my heart, dredging a hole in there. Every corner of the lighthouse gave me but pain, reminded me of his smiling face that I was trying to push away.

I'd thought Effron had been healing the hole in me but I'd been wrong. He'd just been carving out his own hole, so that I was now a game of Jenga, with empty spaces in the middle, just about to fall apart.

When I could bear no more, I simply ran from the balcony to the staircase and found my way out, only to realize that it had begun to rain. Funny, how it always comes when you need to hide your tears! I stood there, absolutely still, in the barren garden which had once been so luxuriant; now lay empty. I stood there aimlessly, not sure what I was doing. Stood there soaking the rain till I was wet that I couldn't even carry my own weight. Tears came but now they were only flowing as if involuntarily; calmly.

INTERVIEW

IN CONVERSATION WITH RAMESH BHAIYA

*Shivani Mohan and Ezaboo Beniwal
B.A. (Honours) Economics and
B.A. Programme
Batch of 2015-2018*

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There has always been a wide divide between the residents and non-residents of Miranda House. MHH is the sacred domain of the residents which non-residents can only breach during (the visiting hours) or when we manage to sneak those course-mates in. But we are not always successful. Are we? There is always the looming danger of being caught by the Guard bhaiya who has an exceptionally high success rate.

He sits basking in the sun, occasionally shouting at someone breaching the holy area of the residents. He is the one who has successfully and single-handedly maintained the divide between the residents and the non residents.

Just by asking in that deep voice of his, "Kahan ja rahe ho? Hosteller Ho?"

But have you ever wondered how does he figure out who is a hosteller and who is not? Have you ever wondered about the man himself?

Read on to find out all about what goes on in his mind in the following interview.

Q: How many years have you been here?

A: My grandfather used to work in the laundry service many years ago. I remember playing in these gardens of

Miranda Hostel as a kid long time back. We had to move out with my father. I was in class 10th or 11th when my father died, so I took up the job in Miraz guard services to support the family and have been serving in the Miranda Hostel since then.

Q: Who all are there in your family?

A: A wife and a son, who is about as old as you kids and attends the School of Open Learning.

Q: What do you do in your free time and what are your hobbies?

A: I like listening to Music mostly, especially old songs.

Q: Now, the most important question. Sir, how do you get the difference between a Resident and a Non-resident? There have been so many times we have tried to sneak our friends in but almost every time we are caught. Do you remember the faces of every resident?

A: It is not very hard to figure out who is a resident and who is not. I recognize the faces of most of the residents and almost every second and third year student. It is usually the first year students I don't remember. So, I ask them if they live in the hostel. It's mostly about reading the body language. Any hesitation or fear on their face shows that they don't live

here. Another thing is that hosteller usually knows where she wants to go. A non-resident is usually with a resident and relies on her for directions.

Q: Don't you get bored on the job? What is the best part of your job?

A: No. I used to get bored when I started the job. But now it has become a huge part of my life. Miranda has become a huge part of my life. The best part of my job is when ex-students come to visit us in the hostel and tell us stories about the time when they tried to sneak a friend in. It gives me immense joy to see them happy and successful and sometimes, I also get to meet their kids.



Image Credits: Asmita Jain



INTERVIEW

IN CONVERSATION WITH BHASWATI CHOUDHURY: ONE OF MHH'S MOST DYNAMIC FORMER RESIDENTS, ON HER LIFE AT HOSTEL

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Barsha Chetia
B.A. (Honours) English
Batch of 2013-2016

"Oh my god! I am really scared now (peeping into my notebook). Don't ask me tough questions ok!" exclaims the girl whose leadership qualities leave everybody in awe.

Her presence is indispensable when it comes to organising any event be it fests, seminars, or social campaigns. Bhaswati Choudhury, an ex-Mirandian who is now pursuing her Masters in Sociology at the Delhi School of Economics, is unarguably, the lady of the hour. Surrounded by the four graffiti-filled walls of Kori's Restaurant, we start off with a little chit-chat. In that hour and a half, I was given an insight of her life at Miranda, and learnt how she successfully managed to juggle her academics with extra- and co-curricular activities.

Below are excerpts from the interview:

Q: You are originally from Assam. How long have you been in Delhi?

A: It's been three and a half years now. I came to Delhi in 2011.

Q: Why did you choose to study at Miranda?

A: Well, to be honest, I was all set to take admission in Hindu College when my father told me to consider Miranda House once. My local guardian who has been living in Delhi for quite a long time now, got me acquainted with Miranda House, as one of the finest institutions in India. Hence I ended up at Miranda, and I consider it to be the best decision of my life till date.

Q: Did you ever think of living in the prestigious Miranda House Hostel?

A: Yes, of course. Since the time I took admission, I always dreamt of being a resident of MHH. At first I couldn't secure a seat because there were students who scored more than me. My dream turned into reality when the new block was inaugurated and I managed to get in on the basis of my semester results.

Q: Having lived at MHH for two years, what were the perks of being a hosteller?

A: Ah the perks! (Smiling) Certainly there were many. 8:40 a.m. classes were never a tension for a sleep loving person like me! (Laughs). I tell you, the hostellers are envied so much by the day scholars who have to



Image Taken From: mhhmagazine.wordpress.com

wake up early and travel for hours to be in the first class. On the other hand we could wake up as late as 8.15, and be on time, sometimes even managing to grab our breakfast... and then of course, the free WiFi! Nothing can beat that.

But – friends would come at the top of my list. Definitely. MHH gave me the opportunity to meet people from all across the country and even abroad. I can say this with confidence: that in the future whenever I'll go to places, I'll at least find someone or the other from MHH. This is something which I would have never found elsewhere and I feel really privileged for this.

Q: Miranda obviously holds a special place in your life, so what makes Miranda unique according to you?

A: Mirandians. Definitely. They are the best. Mirandians are confident, intelligent and dignified women and I can assure you, many of them are going to decide the future course of this country.

What makes Miranda more close to my heart is the fact that it has brought about tremendous changes in me. Be it in my personality, or the way I look at

in me. Be it in my personality, or the way I look at life now... it has made me capable enough to stand against the odds. I can proudly say that I came as a girl and I left as a lady.

Q: Do you have any special event or incident you would like to share with us, about our life at MHH?

A: Everything about MHH was special; everyday was a venture into something new. It's difficult for me to pick one. But if I have to recount one, it will certainly be those 3-4 days when I participated in the night-cricket matches. It gave me a platform to know other hostellers better and memories for a lifetime to cherish. And yes, how can I forget those cooking expeditions with you guys! These are some of those incidents which bring a smile to my face when I look back at my days in Miranda.

[At this point, Bhaswati (known to us as "Bhaswati di", of course) sighs and asks me, "How am I going?" I reply with a surprised, "Tumar hosake first time ne?" (Is this really your first time?)

Laughing, she nods at me. Amazed, I move on

with the questions.

Q: Apart from academics, what were the co-curricular activities you participated in?

A: I was an active participant in our Department's as well as the college's activities. I was the Joint secretary and the General Secretary of the Sociological Society of Miranda House from July 2011-April 2012 and July 2012-April 2013, respectively. I was elected President of the Gandhi Study Circle in July 2013.

I was also an active participant and organiser of TEMPEST (the annual college fest), the North-East Fest, One Billion Rising, and the ZENITH MUN.

Apart from this I was associated with many NGOs as well. I worked for JAMGHAT, Delhi, an NGO based in Chandni Chowk which caters to the needs of under privileged children. I consider myself extremely lucky to have had the chance to work under Dr. Sam Tarporvala, Director, Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged. Besides this SWECHHA-We For Change, is really close to my heart. I volunteered in many campaigns which included raising social awareness among the public, be it political or otherwise, and even got the opportunity to be a facilitator for a 4 day Gram Anubhav held in Rajasthan.

Bhaswati Chaudhary is currently pursuing Masters in Sociology from Delhi School of Economics.