

together

a national family maga



TO BE OR NOT TO BE

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Together is a national family magazine. It is a monthly, published by the Franciscans (OFM) in India. It was started in 1935 in Karachi, now in Pakistan. It got its present name in 1966.

The magazine **Together** is a conversation platform. Nothing changes until our families change. It is an effort at making worlds meet by bringing down fearful, pretentious and defensive walls. **Together** is a journey, an ever-expansive journey—from me to us, from us to

all of us, and from all of us to all. Let us talk, let us cross borders. The more we converse and traverse, we discover even more paths to talk about and travel together. **Together** is an effort to uncover our shared humanity.

Your critical and relevant write-ups, that promote goodness, inclusivity and shared humanity, are welcome. Your articles must be mailed to editor@togethermagazine.in before the 15th of every month.

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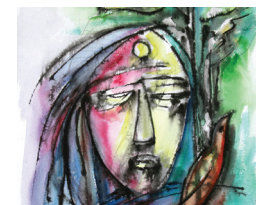


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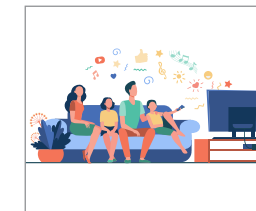


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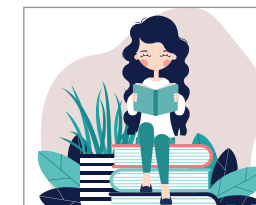


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The Year That Was

Military coup in Myanmar

FEBRUARY

A military coup in Myanmar deposed democratically elected members of the country's ruling party, the National League for Democracy headed by Aung San Suu Kyi. Mass protests have been taking place across Myanmar since the coup.



Suez Canal blocked

MARCH

A cargo ship, stretching more than 1,300 feet, ran aground and blocked one of the world's most vital shipping lanes, the Suez Canal, leaving more than 100 ships stuck at each end of the canal.



Covid-19 deaths crossed 2,00,000

APRIL

The total number of people who have lost their lives to Covid-19 in India crossed 2,00,000 as

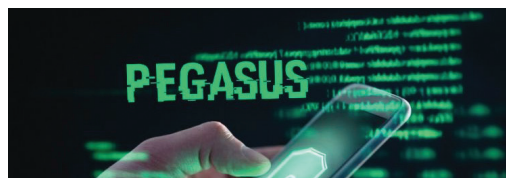
the country struggled to fight off a devastating second wave. As of now over 4.8 lakh people have lost lives due to the pandemic.



Pegasus snooping

JULY

The Pegasus Project investigations alleged that in India the Pegasus spyware was used on ministers, opposition leaders, journalists, activists, minority leaders, Supreme Court judges, religious leaders, administrators like Election Commissioners and heads of Central Bureau of Investigation.



Tokyo Olympics 2020

JULY - AUGUST

Despite the coronavirus pandemic, after a year-long postponement, Japan hosted Tokyo Olympics 2020. At the event India had seven

medal winners and recorded its best-ever tally at Olympics.



Taliban captures Afghanistan

AUGUST

The Taliban took over Kabul. With the capital in their hands, the hardline Islamist militant group completed their takeover of Afghanistan that saw provinces and warlords give up without a fight.



National Education Policy

AUGUST

NEP 2020 gets implemented. Karnataka became the first state to issue an order with regard to implementing NEP. Later Madhya Pradesh too implemented it.



Farm laws repealed

NOVEMBER

The anti-farmer, pro-corporate black farm laws have been repealed in India's Parliament without any discussion. The government of

India was forced to take this step because of a historic farmers' struggle, lasting over a year.



Civilians killed in Nagaland

DECEMBER

Soldiers from the Para Special Forces army unit shot and killed six coal miners in Nagaland's Mon district, saying the soldiers mistook the miners for militants. The deaths led to violent clashes between local villagers and troops, killing seven more civilians and a soldier.



Anti-conversion Bill 2021

DECEMBER

The contentious Anti-conversion Bill 2021, was passed by Karnataka Legislative Assembly by a voice vote. The opposition vehemently opposed the bill, calling it "anti-people", "inhuman", "anti-constitutional", "anti-poor" and "draconian".



To Be or Not To Be

Every civilisation goes from the present to the future through a bit of embarrassment.

SAJI P MATHEW OFM

‘To be or not be’ is the opening phrase of a monologue given by Prince Hamlet in William Shakespeare’s play *Hamlet*. It is the great question that Hamlet asks about human existence in general and his own existence in particular. Hamlet bemoans the pain and unfairness of life acknowledging that the alternative might be worse.

This line from the above soliloquy has been widely quoted in cinema, theatre, literature, and music. Perhaps it is the most quoted soliloquy. People quote it because they can relate to it. To be or not to be is the predicament in every human life. Franz Kafka in his book *Metamorphosis*, and Richard Bach in his book *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* have individuals standing at the threshold of *to be or not to be*. One decides *to be*, and another decides *not to be*. Both travel in opposite directions.

In Franz Kafka’s *Metamorphosis*, we have Gregor Samsa, who waking up one morning finds himself (believes himself) as an insect, a huge bug. His existential struggle is explored in the novel. He goes into cold isolation, not having the courage to believe otherwise and come out of the room. As time goes he gets into greater isolation and eventually dies.

In *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, Richard Bach explores the possibility of change and human becoming. He uses, the seagull as a metaphor for humans. A seagull lives a limited life. Most of



its time it spends by the nest, mating, hatching and breeding. From there he flies to food and back to the nest again — a limited world. But one day, Jonathan, a seagull, decided *to be*. Against traditions and all odds, he began to fly high into the freedom of the sky. At some level, this departure is painful and looks like death. Richard Bach’s words from another book, *Illusions*, complete the picture; he says, “what the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the master calls a butterfly.”

We are at the turn of a year. Another year is shrunk by the pandemic. We spend it in anxiety, depression and sorrow. We have lost a few million people to the Corona virus; Afghanistan is fallen to the Taliban; conflict has killed Danish Siddiqui; Governmental antipathy and unbridled laws have killed Stan Swamy early in the year; and recently more than a dozen in Nagaland. Climate change has wrecked ravage in many parts of the world including India. Accidents, like the defense chopper crash near Ooty, have taken human lives. There is enough reason and it is easier *not to be*; but as a humanity it is an imperative *to be*. We must once again pick the threads of our lives with indomitable spirit and resilience.

Contemporariness

There is no time in the year more apt than its ends to reflect on the ‘now’, and to return to the present. The ‘now’ of our lives looks deeper, back, and forward. This conscious return to the present makes one a contemporary. To be a contemporary is not just to exist at the same point of time but who is aware of that particular

time’s light and darkness. Only someone who lives in such contemporariness, can see the next step, or the missing box, and embrace change.

It is a time, as Eckhart Tolle says, to watch the thinker, to observe the doer, to guard ourselves. Our mind and our ability to think perhaps is a very powerful and even dangerous tool. But what is even more powerful and dangerous is that a person is not in control of it. Our hands and other tools and technologies for work are very potent and even treacherous. But what is even more potent and treacherous is that a person does not know how to be in control of it. Every New Year wakes us up to this responsibility of contemporariness. Some of us decide *to be*, and others decide *not to be*.

Breaking Repetitions

Doing the same things over and over and over again and expecting a different result is foolishness. Walking the same road every day and believing that you will reach a new destination one day is stupidity. Let me remind ourselves of two incidents, one a funny one, and another a lesson from history.

A family of five approached a helicopter service to hire a helicopter to go for a picnic. The manager at the office told them that the helicopter could carry only three people, or maximum four, so they must look at some other mode of transport. The family insisted and told him that they had gone last year also. Finally, the manager gave in. As they were flying to the destination, the helicopter crashed down into a large marshy land. The pilot was the last to gain consciousness. When he got up he was puzzled to see the head of the family and others examining the place, he asked them, what happened? What are you looking for? The head of the family was quick to answer, “We are looking for the place where we fell last year.”

The second incident is from the life of Emperor Asoka, one of the greatest emperors of ancient India. After his war of Kalinga, he takes a walk through the battlefield and sees the agony and sufferings of people: men mutilated, half burned, and dead; wives mourning over their husband’s death, children crying for bread at

the dead bodies of their fathers. Asoka takes a last walk through the battlefields and out; and decided never to war again.

When we are serious and expecting a different result we must uncompromisingly begin to think and do things differently. Or, our worship places will become places of quarrel and bloodshed; our public spaces will become spaces of violence and war.

Embarrass the World

Every enterprise and society goes from the present to the next through a bit of embarrassment. Save the embarrassment, but we remain in the same. Facing our own selves is an imperative to arrive in the future. Every growth, every development demands a painful parting from the past.

Baba Amte was son of a wealthy upper caste landowner in Warora, near Nagpur. Young Amte lived a carefree, privileged life. He was a lawyer. He wore expensive suits, drove sports cars. As time went on, he was disturbed by the fact that the society he lived in was so much stratified on lines of caste. After search and research, to the embarrassment of his own orthodox family and people, he made a break with the practices of his own caste. He allowed Harijans to draw water from his family well. He started farmers’ cooperatives to help the impoverished peasantry. To understand what it meant to be scavenger, he even carried night soil on his head. Eventually, he founded Anandwan – a huge centre for lepers and other socially and economically underprivileged people. He, in every sense, embarrassed his family, relatives, and his caste.

During the season of Christmas, another startling example is of Mary and Joseph, the parents of Jesus. They were both traditional Jews. Mary was informed that she would conceive and bear a son through the Holy Spirit, the latter was told in a dream to take Mary who was already pregnant as his wife. We can imagine what amount of embarrassment they must have brought to their household and family. Every civilisation goes from the present to the future through a bit of embarrassment.

Willingness to Change

Addicts - which I'm convinced are all of us, in one way or another - have an intense resistance to change. We like predictability and control.

RICHARD ROHR

What the ego hates more than anything else is to change—even when the present situation is not working or is horrible. Instead, *we do more and more of what does not work*, as many others have rightly said about addicts. The reason we do anything one more time is because the last time did not really satisfy us deeply. As the English poet WH Auden (1907–1973) put it:

*We would rather be ruined than changed,
We would rather die in our dread
Than climb the cross of the moment
And let our illusions die.*

Addicts—which I’m convinced are all of us, in one way or another—have an intense resistance to change. We like predictability and control. That’s one of the reasons addicts find it easier to have a relationship with a process or a substance rather than with people. Unlike objects, people are unpredictable. Having a drink, making a purchase, or turning to our devices can change our superficial mood very quickly. Even though the mood shift doesn’t last, it makes us feel like we are in control for a while. We don’t have to change our thinking or way of relating to people. We don’t have to sit with our boredom, discomfort, or anger, which short-circuits our ability to grow up and to move beyond whatever is in our way.

In the process of healing and gaining sobriety, salvation becomes not just something we believe, but something we begin to experience through the process of transformation through grace. Most of us won’t move toward any new way of thinking or actual change until we’re forced to do so, which usually means some form of suffering or disturbance that upsets our habitual path.

Until we bottom out and come to the limits of our own fuel supply, there is no reason for us to switch to a higher octane of fuel. Why would we want to change? We will not learn to actively draw upon a Larger Source until our usual resources are depleted and revealed as wanting. In fact, we will not even know there is a Larger Source until our own source and resources fail us. Until and unless there is a person, situation, event, idea, conflict, or relationship that we cannot “manage,” we will never find the True Manager.

Stinking Thinking

Addiction is a modern name and honest description for what the biblical tradition called “sin” and medieval Christians called “passions” or “attachments.” They both recognized that serious measures, or practices, were needed to break us out of these illusions and trances.

In some cases, the New Testament calls them “exorcisms”! They knew they were dealing with non-rational evil or “demons.”

“Stinking thinking” is the universal addiction. Substance addictions like alcohol and drugs are merely the most visible forms of addiction. *Actually, we are all addicted to our own habitual way of doing anything, our own defenses, and, most especially, our patterned way of thinking, or how we process reality.* The very fact that we have to say this shows how little we see it. By definition, we can never see or handle what we are addicted to. It is always “hidden” and disguised as something else. We cannot heal what we do not first acknowledge.

Contemplation teaches us how to observe our own small mind and, frankly, to see how inadequate it is to the task in front of us. As Eckhart Tolle says, 98% of human thought is “repetitive and pointless.” How humiliating is that? When we see how self-serving, how petty, how narcissistic, and how compulsive our thinking is, we realize how trapped and unfree we truly are. We might even call it “possessed.”

Freedom to Choose

It seems to me that free will is given to us for a purpose: so that we may choose freely, without coercion or manipulation, to love God in return, and to love one another in a similarly perfect way. This is the deepest desire of our hearts.

But our freedom is not complete. Working against it is the powerful force of addiction. Psychologically, addiction uses up desire. It is like a psychic malignancy, sucking our life energy into specific obsessions and compulsions, leaving less and less energy available for other people and other pursuits. Spiritually, addiction is a deep-seated form of idolatry. The objects of our addictions become our false gods. These are what we worship, what we attend to, where we give our time and energy, instead of love. Addiction, then, displaces and supplants God’s love as the source and object of our deepest true desire.

The Power of Surrender

Author and activist Holly Whitaker does not believe in a one-size-fits-all approach to sobriety, but she fully embraces “surrender” as vital for any healing and recovery to occur. He articulates it beautifully: I’d always considered the word surrender to be blasphemous. Surrender was never a possibility to consider; it wasn’t something self-respecting, self-reliant folk like me do—we scheme around and bulldoze through whatever stands in our way. That all changed, abruptly, on that day in 2012 when I finally ran out of options and did the thing I thought I could never do—concede.

In *A Return to Love*, Marianne Williamson says, “Until your knees finally hit the floor, you’re just playing at life, and on some level you’re scared because you know you’re just playing. The moment of surrender is not when life is over. It’s when it begins.” It is entirely cliché, but this was exactly my experience. The moment I finally let my knees hit the floor was when I finally stopped playing at life, and every bit of good that’s come to me since then stems from this reversal of opinion on surrender.

Surrender is the strongest, most subversive thing you can do in this world. It takes strength to admit you are weak, bravery to show you are vulnerable, courage to ask for help. It’s also not a one-time gig; you don’t just do it once and move on. It’s a way of existing, a balancing act. For me, it looks like this: I pick up the baton and I run as far as I can, and I hand it over when I’m out of breath. Or actually maybe it’s like: I’m running with the baton, but the Universe is holding on to the other half of it, and we have an agreement that I’ll figure out the parts I can and hand over the parts I can’t.

Life no longer feels precarious, or about to crumble—even when it is, in fact, crumbling. By surrendering to whatever is unfolding and by accepting what is, by giving up on the outcome and allowing life to flow the way it’s meant to, by stepping out of your own way and letting the natural order take the lead, you not only get a break from the exhaustion of having to control everything, but you also get to experience life, instead of what you think life owes you.

As the New Year Begins Enjoy a Tech Break

Author Tiffany Shlain offers a practice she calls a “Technology Sabbath” as a way of reducing our addiction to technology and our personal devices. She writes: How often have you looked up from your screen, eyes dazed, and realized you’ve just wasted thirty minutes or an hour or more? You look around and see everyone else with their heads down staring at their screens, too. You worry about how this is affecting you as an individual and society at large. You think you should do something about it, then your phone buzzes, you respond to the text, and you’re pulled back to the screen again. We’ve become ostriches, burying our heads in silicon sand.

Researchers have compared the sense of technological dependency—the feeling that we must be accessible and responsive at any time—to that of drugs and alcohol. It’s all because of the hormone dopamine, which is related to mood, attention, and desire. When you find something that feels good, dopamine makes you want more of it.

During 2022, what qualities do you want to develop? What habits do you want to break? How do you want to feel when a day is over?

Plan Your First Tech Break

Look at your calendar and determine what weekend day (or weekday) you’re going to start. Mark down several weeks in a row. The power and beauty of this practice come with its regularity. In time you will look forward to it each week.

Look at the list of things you want to do more of. Plan to fill your screen-free day with activities from that list. You can even print the list, post it on your fridge, and reference it throughout the day. Or fill the day with doing nothing, if that’s what you need and want.

Invite anyone you want to join you for a meal, an activity, or the whole day.

Tell people in your life (family, friends, coworkers, boss) you’re planning to do this. Don’t come from a place of apology, but a place of strength and excitement. If they express concern or curiosity, invite them to a Tech Shabbat dinner so they can experience it with you.

COVER STORY



India’s Northeast Nightmare

The politics of AFSPA and the idea of India

AFSPA is rule by the executive arm instead of a rule of law as mandated in the Constitution of India. The result is the sheer disregard for life, dignity and rights, for which the natives have to pay.

KAPIL ARAMBAM

India celebrated its 75th Independence Day in August 2021. A platinum jubilee is a long time but unfortunately, the process of nation-building has been apparently only half completed when we talk about India as a nation-state. The mainland British India became “India” effortlessly for several racial, cultural and geographical reasons but despite the decades of building the idea of India and Indianisation processes in the form of acculturation and sheer coercion, there are

some regions, particularly in the peripheries that have never been, to use Benedict Anderson’s concept, a part of India’s imagined communities. At face value, it appears as a political issue, yet as we will see, that’s just the starters.

We can begin from the latest logic-defying and barbaric incident in one of the peripheries. On 4 December 2021, the Indian military gunned down six coal miners and another nine civilians in Mon district in eastern Nagaland

that borders Burma. Multiple narratives are still coming out from both the sides: the army and the villagers, yet there is one generic result. The incident has brought the spotlight back on the draconian Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act 1958.

Many elected representatives and civil society organisations in the so-called India's Northeast are now demanding that the State must repeal this act, which has its roots in the colonial Armed Forces Special Powers Ordinance 1942 that was enacted by the Britishers to suppress the Quit India Movement.

Political experts maintain that AFSPA is a “legal fiction” that conceals a political act, which reinforces a rule by decision of the executive arm instead of a rule of law as mandated in the Constitution of India. The result is the sheer disregard for life, dignity and rights, for which the natives have to pay. And they are visibly tired and frustrated from decades of protests against this act.

The consensus in mainland India is also that the AFSPA is not only extra-constitutional but also counter-productive, and that it is an antithesis to constitutional democracy, though unsurprisingly the military establishment of this country has always had a different opinion.

For the natives, one of the bitter experiences of becoming a part of the Union of India is the colonial nightmare that has persisted even after the departure of the Britishers. Meanwhile, AFSPA has become another tool for serving neo-colonial interests while further alienating and discriminating groups of people in the peripheries (read those in Assam, Kashmir, Manipur and Nagaland).

G Kanato Chophy, a Naga anthropologist, has coined the term, a Constitutional Indian (Scroll.in - “For Nagas, the idea of India is not defined by the Brahmanical notion of a timeless civilisation”, 11 September 2021), which he explained as “many of the young in my community, and perhaps the North East more broadly, are culturally conservative, proud of their region's distinctive history, tradition,

language, and ethnic identity, but at the same time seeing and desiring common ground with fellow citizens in other regions of the country that have their own – sometimes almost incomprehensibly different – language, history, and culture.”

It seems apparently there are different kinds of Indians, and most ironic to India as a nation-state, there are as many ideas of India. This also gives rise to the idea of “unintegrated regions,” which are also the regions or peripheries where martial laws are in effect. Incidentally, in a public lecture two years ago, external affairs minister S. Jaishankar stated that: “A nation that has the aspiration to become a leading power someday cannot continue with unsettled borders [and] an unintegrated region.” (External Affairs Minister's speech at the 4th Ramnath Goenka Lecture, 2019, Ministry of External Affairs)

It is noteworthy that, in a place such as Manipur, several insurgent groups have put a blanket ban on all things national – this includes singing of national anthem in public places and all kinds of Hindi entertainment from the late 1990s. Two things are clear from this: the idea of India, as it exists today, is highly fragmented, and an act such as the AFSPA is adding insult to the injury.

For a long time, there has been a deep sense of alienation among the natives that is made even worse by the sheer lack of political will of the Union of India. Else, as things stand today, it indicates only an incompetent way of engagement or arbitration.

Moreover, the ignorant and arrogant approach of the State in dealing with insurgency as well as the people and the land in these peripheries is nothing but the coercion to include them in the governance and administration of India. Albeit this is one of the areas that India has failed miserably even after 75 years of independence. If the Indian policy-makers are of the view that AFSPA is going to contain insurgency and negotiate with the fight for the natives' right to self-determination, they might as well leave their jobs or re-read the



ground realities again. Currently, the terms of reference for militarisation only manufactures dissent and it's still not over.

One way out of this quagmire is to understand that the issue is political. First, the Nagas have been demanding self-rule from the days of the Simon Commission. Second, Manipur was annexed to the Union in 1949 through the controversial Merger Agreement. It is an open secret that the then king of Manipur was forced to sign the agreement under duress and without consulting the then popularly elected Legislative Assembly of Manipur. This is the genesis of armed movements in Manipur. Incidentally, one of the first democratic elections in Asia was held in Manipur in 1948, yet the half-formed assembly was dissolved after being forced to become a part of the union.

In such political realities, heavy militarisation might serve as a band-aid solution. Still, when the very foundation of military deployment is based on a State's monopoly on using violence, there will always be resistance. In other words, as much as the issues are political, if finding the solutions is the aspiration for India, then it must be based on political grounds. This has never been the case ever since the Union of India started fighting against the rebels in some of these regions with the imposition of AFSPA in 1958.

An observer once pointed out that the Union depends on the Kautilyan concept of statecraft to fight insurgency in these peripheries. This consists of the four principles of reconciliation, split, force and monetary inducement. Perhaps this explains how one of the oldest insurgent

groups, NSCN IM was convinced to come to the table for 'peace' talks with the Government of India. These talks started all the way back in 1997 yet the solutions have become even more elusive over the years for reasons that both the parties know well yet are equally clueless.

One of the other approaches of the Union is to call all the insurgents a secessionist and proscribing the armed organisations. People on the other side of the fence would differ by arguing that: (i) they have never been a part of India and the question of secession never arises; so they are fighting for political resurgence and (ii) they are merely experimenting with political possibilities since India has never cared about anything but the land and territory in these peripheries.

In a nutshell, history is proof that you can build an empire in 75 years; however, the Union of India has never been able to realise its form and structure of a modern nation-state in as many years. Maybe this is an indication that it must change the strategy for its own benefit. If it can either convince the Kashmiris, Manipuris and Nagas about the idea of India or explore the other political possibilities with an open mind, half of the guns and ammunition in the peripheries will vanish in a fortnight. The most satisfied beneficiary from this kind of approach in these conflict zones will be civilians and the general public, who have long endured violence and disorder from the power tussle between the State and Non-state actors, both of which claim to represent and work for the welfare of the people.

Mass Surveillance: Then and Now

Mass surveillance is the pervasive watching of an entire or a substantial part of the populace of a country. Governments are investing in multiple projects for mass surveillance.

SUMIT DASGUPTA

Governments are rapidly investing in advanced technologies to track their populations' social media activity. This sort of global monitoring, once the domain of the world's most powerful intelligence agencies, has spread to a wide variety of countries, from large authoritarian powers to smaller or poorer governments hoping to track dissidents and persecuted minorities.

The increasing commercial market for social media surveillance has lowered the barrier to entry not only for dictatorial security services but also for national and local law enforcement agencies in democratic countries, where it is utilised with little oversight or accountability. The expanding use of social media surveillance, when combined with an alarming increase in the number of nations where social media users have been arrested for their legitimate online activities, threaten to suffocate civic activism

on digital platforms. With surveillance comes the idea of surveillance capitalism, privacy, the "responsibilities of a citizen" are put in question, and, an illusion of choice is brought forth. These concepts are closely interlinked with each other and understanding these ideas will help us understand the overall path of surveillance in media and surveillance through the media, in the past, present, and maybe the future.

What Is Surveillance?

Surveillance is a topical issue across the world, with growing awareness and an increase in both the number and type of surveillance technologies. Throughout the second half of the previous century, the type and number of surveillance technologies and the type and scope of persons and spaces being surveilled have gradually increased.

This has triggered the emergence of an academic discipline called surveillance studies, a multidisciplinary field covering both theoretical and empirical accounts of past, current, and near-future surveillance in society. Since surveillance is used as an umbrella term that covers a broad range of sub-topics discussed in other domains as well, the concept of surveillance features increasingly in different contexts and disciplines, making it harder to follow and focus debates across disciplines.

The term surveillance can be deconstructed in its etymological parts 'sur' (from above), and 'veillance' (to watch). Where often first associations with the terms surveillance are that of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras placed in city centres and other spaces (e.g., airports, highways, the workplace), the term has been discussed before the emergence of omnipresent electronic eyes in public (and, increasingly, private) spaces. Due to vast and seemingly radical technological changes that information and communication technologies (ICTs) have brought about since roughly the 1960s, the term surveillance has been spreading both in meaning and substance and has been theorised from a large range of disciplines. The subject of surveillance is being watched with a certain purpose, which can be controlling and disciplining the subject into a certain behaviour or a set of norms, but also—possibly at the same time—protecting and caring for that subject. Where this understanding resonates with earlier writings on surveillance, in more recent theories and concepts, the notion of the subject as a passive actor is being questioned, as is the idea of an underlying project to impose certain morals and exercise control.

In a paper titled *Bentham, Deleuze and Beyond: An Overview of Surveillance Theories from the Panopticon to Participation* the authors break down the overall idea of surveillance — theory and practice into three major phases. The first major phase revolves around the idea of the Panopticon, which is characterised as offering surveillance as largely physical and spatial. Either in concrete, closed places such as institutional buildings or more widespread in territorially based social structures. This

idea not only exercises power over millions of individuals but also creates an idea of self-disciplining. The second phase looks at institutions of networks, from various forms of discipline to relatively translucent forms of control. It weaves structures and digital networks together to have a discourse over new forms of power and who may have them. The third phase according to the authors, Galic, Tamin, and Koops, combines the first two phases and looks at new forms of surveillance. Datafication of society through social media, government, and corporate surveillance is found, and voluntary data sharing also emerges here.

Mass Surveillance in India

Mass surveillance is the pervasive watching of an entire or a substantial part of the populace of a country. In India, this would mean surveillance via Telephone tapping, Open-source intelligence, Lawful interception, etc which is possible under the Indian Telegraph Act of 1885, which gives power to the Indian state machinery to have exclusive jurisdiction and privileges for establishing, maintaining, operating, licensing and oversight of all forms of wired and wireless communications within the Indian territory. It also gives them the power to monitor or intercept communications of any kind. Since its inception, numerous amendments have been passed to update the act to respond to changes in technology. The Indian government is not going to stop any time soon because over the years they have invested in multiple projects regarding mass surveillance.

DRDO Netra

DRDO Netra is a mass surveillance project of India that was being developed by the Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (CAIR) laboratory under the Defence Research and Development Organisation. The system could detect selective words like "bomb", "blast", "attack" or "kill" within seconds from emails, instant messages, status updates, and tweets. The system will be capable of gauging suspicious voice traffic on Skype and Google



Talk. To enhance the capacity of the DRDO Netra Project Black Knight was initiated in late 2013 to monitor social media trends and identify the source of various viral messages that posed a risk to the peace and prosperity of the global community.

Lawful Intercept and Monitoring (LIM)

Lawful Intercept and Monitoring, LIM for short, is a clandestine mass electronic surveillance program deployed by the Centre for Development of Telematics

(C-DOT), an Indian government-owned telecommunications technology development centre. LIM systems are used by the government to intercept records of voice, SMSs, GPRS data, details of a subscriber's application, and recharge history and call detail record (CDR) and monitor Internet traffic, emails, web-browsing, Skype, and any other Internet activity of Indian users.

National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC) and Hyderabad Police Command-and-Control Centre (HPCCC)

India's proposed National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC) is a cyber security and e-surveillance initiative. Its goal is to screen communication metadata and coordinate other agencies' intelligence collection efforts. The NCCC could infringe on Indian people's privacy and civil freedoms in the lack of a legislative framework and parliamentary oversight. This project can be seen spreading its roots in Hyderabad in Telangana, the city with the greatest number of CCTV cameras. According to the report coming out Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF), Amnesty International, and Article 19 collaborative project on surveillance states of India, it was found out that the Hyderabad government is building the country's first-ever surveillance tower called Hyderabad Police Command and Control Centre (HPCCC). The HPCCC will collect and keep all personal information, digital transactions and CCTV footage in one place and

give the Hyderabad police an app that makes profiling of "suspicious individuals" easy and done in real-time.

"There is currently no legislation in place to protect the privacy of citizens – facial recognition is a harmful and invasive technology and it is imperative that Indian authorities immediately stop the use of this dangerous technology," said Anushka Jain, Internet Freedom Foundation's Associate Counsel for Surveillance & Transparency in the report.

The Pegasus Report

The Pegasus Report has brought the topic of privacy and monitoring back into the spotlight. The Pegasus Report is a detailed exploration of government surveillance of civilians in more than 50 nations. Amnesty International, Forbidden Stories, and a coalition of 17 media organisations from around the world are behind the investigations. The NSO Group, a private Israeli technology corporation to develop technology to prevent and investigate crime and terror, is at the heart of the crisis. As it turns out, the majority of governments, including India's, deny any involvement in the allegations. The rogue organisation helping nations spy on their citizens in the name of national security without any checks and balances or ethical and constitutional consideration should ring alarm bells.

The Pegasus report was the talk of Twitter when the report dropped but mainstream TV news channels just dismissed the report either as a non-issue or redirected their viewer's attention to something frivolous. This spyware can snoop on three levels, according to the current findings: initial data extraction, passive monitoring, and active collecting. During the initial data extraction, data records such as SMS records, contacts, call logs, emails, messages, and browser history are transferred to the command-and-control server. The information might include everything from listening in on phone calls to pictures. The spyware can take

pictures with the infected phone without the owner's consent.

The Global Market for Surveillance

The market for social media surveillance has expanded, providing intelligence and law enforcement organisations with new tools for sifting through vast amounts of data. At least 40 of the 65 countries examined in Freedom on the Net 2019 Key Finding: Government's harness big data for social media surveillance report by Freedom House have advanced social media monitoring strategies in place. Furthermore, governments are increasingly utilising them: in 15 of these countries, such programmes were either extended or started during the last year. Governments have effectively co-opted social media platforms, justifying their efforts in the name of boosting security, reducing disinformation, and ensuring public order. While these platforms pitch themselves as social connectors and community builders, state agencies in authoritarian countries see them as large repositories of speech and personal data that can be monitored, collected, and analysed to detect and crush the opposition.

Freedom House further states that China is a global leader in the development, use, and export of social media monitoring tools. Semptian, a Chinese company, claims that their Aegis surveillance system gives users "a complete view of the virtual world" and the ability to "keep and analyse endless data." The corporation claims to track over 200 million people in China, accounting for a quarter of the country's internet users. The company even sells a "national firewall" tool that imitates China's so-called Great Firewall, which regulates internet traffic.

If You Have Nothing to Hide You Should Not Worry About Privacy

As long as state surveillance has existed, so have the arguments relating to privacy and agency

of the self. This argument completely dismisses the fact it is equating privacy with secrecy, even though privacy is a far more nuanced concept. The "I have nothing to hide" argument, illustrates a widespread misunderstanding of the meaning and usefulness of the right to privacy. Only those who have something to hide or who have done something illegal are anxious about their privacy being invaded. If you have nothing to hide, no one can use knowledge about you against you. The argument goes on to say that a breach of your privacy should do you no harm. When our privacy is violated, we suffer some consequences. It's why we keep private journals or draw curtains in our homes or not live in glass houses.

Internationally, the right to privacy, whether in one's family, home or correspondence, has long been acknowledged. We don't want our neighbours or the government to know what goes on inside our houses or minds unless we agree to disclose such information. We value private places because we want to do and be as we choose, away from the prying eyes of others, not because something immoral or illegal is going on within our houses.

The "nothing to hide" argument creates a moral error regarding the kind of information individuals desire to keep private. Privacy refers to the ability to withhold information from people who do not need to know it. If we have "nothing to hide", we should not worry about government surveillance. An argument like this justifies mass surveillance that upends the long-standing principle of assumption of innocence until proven guilty.

The state's arguments against the acknowledgment of the fundamental right to privacy appear to have overlooked the numerous facets of privacy. We may have nothing to hide, but if the state's arguments are accepted, we will have a lot to be afraid of, because, big brother will always be watching over us not out of benevolence but with malice in mind.

Gandhiji, Politicians, and the Curious Case of Truth

Gandhi realized that truth is much more than not telling lies or keeping to the promises he made to his mother.

ALEX TUSCANO

Mahatma Gandhi began his life with a determination to align himself with Truth. He called his autobiography “the story of my experiment with truth”. He must have found this title very fanciful.

His life was not an experiment with truth. He truly believed that his life should be lived by the truth. He had determined to search for the truth and live by the truth, the truth as opposed to falsehood. He wanted to be truthful. He believed that living by truth was the best form of life.

Truth and Politics

If we understand his determination of living by truth it was not telling lies to his parents and his teachers and companions. He found it very difficult to tell lies to others. He was willing to face the consequences of telling the truth. He would not tell lies to defend his mistakes or failures. He was keen to go to England for studies. But that was against the religious belief of his community. He had to decide to practice vegetarianism in the midst of non-vegetarian culture of England. He made a promise to his mother that he will not smoke, drink and eat only vegetarian food. His mother gave him a necklace to wear. He continued to wear that long after his mother died, till it had totally disintegrated. He had to put up a brave face to not to get influenced by others and stand alone and live by his convictions.

As he grew up his idea of truth began to assume a deeper meaning. He was struggling against discrimination based on colour and origin of birth. He faced discrimination in a very hard way when he was pushed out of the first-

class compartment of a train and his luggage thrown out. He had bought a first-class ticket and by virtue of that he had the right to travel in the first-class compartment. But the society had another concept of first class. It was not based on the money you paid for the ticket of the first class but by the colour of your skin. Here the rights have different meaning. South Africa was not the birth place of the white. They captured, occupied South Africa and started running over the native Africans. Gandhi realized that truth is much more than not telling lies or keeping to the promises he made to his mother. He understood Truth as Swaraj. This journey of Gandhi to Pretoria was his first lesson in Swaraj.

All through his fight in India for Swaraj he was guided by the Truth. Truth became experiment because the truth began to have greater and deeper meaning in his life. He asserted that if anyone says that truth has no relevance to politics then he does not know what truth is and what politics is. The Truth has become political, politics for truth.

For Gandhi, religion is not an institution or set of doctrines. His God is Truth and hence his religion is to pursue the Truth and realise the truth in and through politics. To pursue the truth and pursue the truth through politics is religion. His politics has been to gain Swaraj, to establish swaraj in the society.

Gaining independence from the British was for Gandhi a political struggle, struggle for Swaraj. And Swaraj was the manifestation of the truth. Swaraj for Gandhi was not only gaining freedom from British Raj but it was also prosperity for the citizens of India. It is better quality of life for all. It included communal



harmony, availability of means to earn one's livelihood, being able to vote and bring a government, which will ensure this to power. Politics for truth means the political power that forms the government should work for Swaraj. “I know that I have before me a difficult path to traverse. I must reduce myself to zero. One cannot involve in Politics for truth unless one reduces oneself to zero. So long as a man does not of his free will put himself last among his fellow creatures, there is no salvation for him.”

Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated before he could be part of the politics for Swaraj. In the night between August 14 and 15, 1947 when Jawaharlal Nehru was making the famous “While the whole world was sleeping ...” speech, Gandhi was walking along the alleys of then Calcutta with the plea to stop communal violence. For Gandhi there was nothing to celebrate when the Indians were fighting among themselves on the lines of religion. There was no Swaraj. The Indians were ruled not by the Truth but by the communal ideology. “To me, peace between Hindus and Muslims is more important than the declaration of independence”.

“I cannot rejoice on August 15, I do not want to deceive you. But at the same time, I shall not ask you not to rejoice. Unfortunately, the kind of freedom we have got today contains also the seeds of future conflict between India and Pakistan (in real sense between the Hindus and the Muslims). How can we therefore light the

lamps?” (Mahatma Gandhi)

In every society, state has two main pillars. One political system and the other economic system. These two systems have to work together to ensure Swaraj for the people. In this frame work there is no place for poverty, exploitation, illiteracy, disease, discrimination, disharmony. Those who own the productive assets are, according to Gandhi “trustees” on behalf of the citizens. They are accountable to the citizens and their assets are meant to provide for the needs of all, in this the first person should be the poorest of all - living down the street.

When politics is at the service of truth, Swaraj, then governance will only be organized in such a way that those in the seat of political power are servants of the citizens. They have to work, meet the needs of the people.

Our Prathan sevak came to power with the promise that he would bring back all the black money from foreign countries to India and every citizen will get Rs. 15,00,000 in their account. He also introduced demonetization and made all the middle class and lower middle class to stand in line before the ATMs. Over 100 people died in the line. His promise was to put an end to black money; to put an end to terrorism.

After the said person comes to power, he does not deposit that amount into the accounts of the people but tells them that it was a “jumla”. This is a classical case of politics serving the untruth. It is a denial of the real

purpose of politics. We have innumerable examples of such jumlas. Indira Gandhi declared the famous slogan of “Garibi Hatao”.

Politics and politicians have changed from what they were during the time of Mahatma Gandhi. Corruption at high places is the order of the day. Politicians and the bureaucrats are known to be corrupt. There is no question of who is corrupt and who is not, but it is a question of who is more corrupt, and who is most corrupt. Once Mahatma Gandhi said I would go to the length of giving the whole Congress a decent burial than put up with the corruption that I see so rampant among the Indian officials under the British Rule”

BJP party claims there is no corruption in their party. There were no incidences of corruption that could be pointed out. There was not a single incident of corruption in the ten-year rule of BJP. But then there is a case of electoral bonds. Business people can contribute to the political parties in the form of electoral bonds. The donors’ name will not be disclosed nor the amount will be declared. The bill of corruption under the name “Electoral bonds” has the approval of the parliament. But it was

passed as a finance bill. This process itself is irregular. Today, 90% of the funds under the electoral bonds have gone to the BJP. Handing over most of the ports, airports to Adani is an act of corruption which has taken the wealth created from the tax payer money and handing over to one or two persons.

“The gap between the have and have nots will continue to grow if the present trend is allowed to continue. This is because there is an exponential aspect to wealth creation. Stated in global terms, wealth on a worldwide scale will grow exponentially, if the governments avoid breaking the global wealth machine. As a result, the entire economic system becomes poorer with fewer jobs. Moreover, schemes aimed at aggressive welfare intervention have destroyed people’s dignity, robbing them of any sense of accomplishment. In the end, the political tension created by vastly unequal income distribution will likely be difficult to measure and predict, and even harder to control. Highly entrepreneurial economies create big winners and losers”. (David Smick, *The World is Curved*)

HAVE A
HUNCH



The Banana Blossom

FR K M GEORGE

Serving food on fallen petals of banana blossoms? Quite funny! Yes, it is. Of course we don’t do that at home. But why not? Look at these quaintly elegant organic crockery from nature. Their colour and shape would certainly add a special flavour to what is served in them. Children, I suppose, would like them. Even adults may enjoy it. This was recently tested and proved in a common meal with my friends. This takes me back to the pre-school days when we small kids used to enjoy playing the traditional “kanji and curry” game. The mom’s role usually fell on me, because a stout older girl in the team always assumed the father’s role. You see, trans-gendering was so easy for children! The poor mother had not only to cook but also find the necessary utensils and plates. The freshly fallen banana blossom petals were the easiest and the cutest thing for her around.

Advancing in age one is intrigued by the mystery of the banana blossom. It is not one single flower, but a tightly sealed casket of

thousands of small flowers, arranged in layer upon layer, each layer safely covered by a protective half-sheath or petal. Every night one sheath will open up and unveil its hidden treasure of a bunch of flowers. Each flower carries in her heart some delicious honey around which bees and bats, beetles and squirrels celebrate a feast.

Every flower is potentially a future banana, but not all come to fruition. Nature intends it because if all flowers bring forth bananas the fragile plant will collapse under their weight.

As the feast comes to an end the flowers come of age to produce the fruit. The protective sheath then folds back. Assuming an elegantly curved shape, it gently falls to the ground in silent satisfaction.

Yes, it would be great fun if we occasionally let our children collect such clean freshly fallen petals and make a little joyful feast at our home tables in honour of the great mystery of creation.

Bengaluru Gives Art Its Space

JYOTHIKA KRISHNAN

Bengaluru, known as the Silicon Valley of India, the Garden City of India, is also an art and art lovers' paradise. Adding to the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), and other art centres across the city, in recent times even its streets are getting decked with amazing art works. There have been several artist-led projects across the city.

Arekere, beside Electronic City, in the suburbs of Bengaluru is an obvious example. There are innumerable artworks along its streets and in the parks. And what is commendable is that

most of it is done with waste and scrap materials. As you enter Arekere, one is taken aback by a sculpture of a veena in the middle of a junction; go a little farther there emerges a bull standing in all its majesty. Enter its park and there are several such works of art.

As early as Greek times, Aristotle had recognised art as cathartic. For a city like Bengaluru, with its stress and tensions of IT careers and professional education, art does its bit in purging away nerve-racking feelings and emotional baggage.



Beware of Addictions

MONICA FERNANDES

The Covid pandemic has brought about a host of challenges in its wake. It is an unexpected situation which seems to have no end in sight. Being confined indefinitely at home has brought about stress and family members getting on each other's nerves. This has led to negativity and young and old resorting to habits that turn into addictions such as substance abuse (binge eating, alcoholism, smoking), pornography, gaming and getting hooked on the social media. Addiction is escapism which seeks to minimize pain and maximize pleasure. This is an increasing mental health issue.

What are some of the causes of addiction?

- Some psychologists opine that genetics could have a role.
- Childhood trauma, physical, verbal and psychological abuse that shatters confidence and faith in human kind.
- Social and peer group pressure.
- Either poor parental supervision or

overprotective parents.

- Wanting to experiment a substance as a lark with game changing consequences
- Escapism
- Environmental changes such as being in a hostel far from home
- Lack of social support
- Poor coping skills
- Being different. One feels like a fish out of water if one has to relocate to another place. Perhaps one has to relocate to the States to baby sit one's grandkids.

How does one realize that one is slipping into addictive behavior?

- Craving : Seeking any justification for substance abuse such as alcoholism.
- Increased tolerance : As we keep on taking eating, for instance, we gradually need more food to keep us happy and thus go on a binge.
- Loss of control as addiction gives one a physical and psychological high.

- Withdrawal symptoms : Physical or emotional changes when one cannot indulge in addictive behavior characterized by irritability and violence.
- Neglecting alternate sources of enjoyment. I'd rather watch TV than read a book.
- Continued use of the substance, for instance tobacco, despite being aware of the consequences such as self harm and damage to close relationships.
- Psychologists advise that if an individual meets four of the above six criteria, then the time for denial is over and he/she needs to seek help.

Steps to overcome an addiction:

- Reaching out to family and friends alone for support rarely yields results as by being supportive and loving, they inadvertently become enablers. Furthermore, they are untrained. Hence when they don't get the desired results, they feel overwhelmed and helpless. It is difficult to continue to love someone when he/she is unable to change for the better.
- Accept that addiction is a mental disorder needing professional help. It is a malfunction in the circuits of the brain causing repetitive damaging behavior. Scientists have found a 'reward pathway' in the brain which keeps on getting activated.
- Education does not stop with school and college studies. If we feel that we are slipping into an addiction, knowledge and research are the first steps towards change. It is suggested by experts that we understand the options open to us. Discuss with our near and dear ones strategies to get out of these sinking sands. They should realize that we are hurting inside. Read up and be aware of tried and tested solutions.
- Talk to professionals to find out the best therapeutic approach to our particular addiction. Go for the necessary treatment. Thinking that I have the wherewithal to get

over my addiction by myself is a utopian dream.

- Unfortunately in our society there is a social stigma attached to addiction as if the person is bad. This is due to a lack of knowledge. Don't be afraid of scorn and criticism. Our wellbeing is more important than the gossip of idle tongues.
- Today there are a host of helplines and support groups that one could resort to.
- Counsellors urge us to be patient with ourselves and request our family and friends to be forbearing as anger often results in our becoming more secretive. They should listen to our point of view, accept relapses as a part of the process of getting cured. They should be alert to signs of our slipping back our old ways. Experts say that the opposite of addiction is connection to people who really love one – not the superficial connections of the social media. In this way one will feel less isolated and have a sense of belonging.
- At the times when one is rational, request them to set boundaries, to be neither too harsh nor too lenient.
- Remember that one is unique and an individual who does not want to throw one's life away. Getting over an addiction requires every ounce of strength and willpower. Withdrawal entails getting frustrated and feeling helpless. May be a change of scenery such as a vacation in a quiet place close to nature and "far from the madding crowd" could help in recharging batteries. Getting over an addiction ultimately is a choice one has to make.
- Spend some time in prayer and meditation to bring about some calmness to our tumultuous brain.

The consequences of addictive behavior are too steep. It affects relationships within the family and others too. The path to abundant living is strewn with challenges but be confident that one will overcome these challenges.



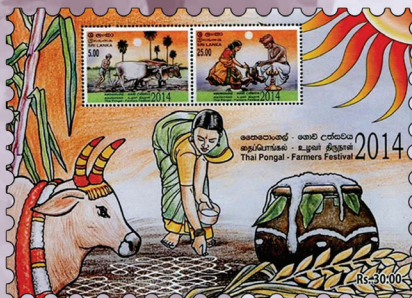
1 JANUARY

A New Year Begins

Every beginning is a moment of assessment and quiet reflection; at the beginning of a new year is perhaps the best among them. Every major culture has its own beginnings of the year, and people celebrate it with due respect and festivities.

Julius Caesar, the emperor of Rome, was the first to declare January 1 a national holiday. He named the month after Janus, the Roman god of doors and gates. Janus had two faces, one looking forward and one looking back. Caesar felt that a month named after this god would be fitting.

TOM JOHN OFM



The most made resolution during New Year is to lose weight, to stay fit and healthy. Nearly 25 percent of them give up on their resolutions by the second week of January.

Anti-conversion Bill

Divide and Rule Policy

Legislators swear by the Constitutions of the Nation but do a great injustice to the sacredness of the Constitution not only by not knowing what it contains but also by shoving aside indiscreetly.

GERRY LOBO OFM

“Conversion is not our construction of a more effective life for ourselves. It is not an intermission in an otherwise predictable drama of our own script and form. It is an interruption and intrusion on our plans, always gracious, for sure, but unsettling, nonetheless” (David B.Couturier). The ruling political clout of the State of Karnataka, having run out of the “poisonous fodder” which it has been consuming in their incumbent domain, has nothing left and are badly hungry for more poison that to legislate Anti-Conversion Bill in order to be the ‘good boys’ of the Prime Minister of our country and his enslaved altar servers is their only foremost agenda. Instead of the conversion that is required for the “construction of a more effective life” for themselves and their fellow citizens, the well-fed and extravagantly palace-resident-politicians have hastened to pass an Anti-Citizen Bill. The great fear is “intrusion” on the plans of these perverted and demonic leaders. Conversion in their own personal lives is “unsettling” and they know that it produces no monetary affluence; instead, it deranges and destroys their egoic strategies. Conversion, therefore, is a dreadful medicine. Hence passing an Anti-Conversion Bill against religions other than the one these profess would keep their stony hearts and unbending wills firm and harder.

The ruling government of Karnataka seems to have lost it all. It is going through a kind of pandemic, begun even before the Covid-19. Not being steady on its feet, fearing the onslaught of losing the elections, by changing the guard

at the helm of affairs and fixing a dummy in his place, the only tactic would be diverting the mind of the people from the burning, existential issues, such as socio-economic and human development, and create sensation among the zealots of a dominant religion in the country. The topic of conversion to other religions is not at all an issue for a migrant or a beggar or a sick and suffering woman or a street vendor or a construction worker or a religious devotee. However, for the ruling legislative members in Karnataka it is an urgent need for their own vain glory. A State which proclaims by carving in huge letters “Government’s work is God’s work” on its sacred house of legislature, shamelessly desecrates God’s work and defeats Government’s work by rushing with a Bill erasing harmony and peace from it which stood out in history for integrity and honour brought about by the great luminaries.

Legislators swear by the Constitutions of the Nation but do a great injustice to the sacredness of the Constitution not only by not knowing what it contains but also by shoving aside indiscreetly. Most sensible Constitution such as ours would never hurt the feelings of the people of any religion. The freedom it offers to anyone to embrace the religion of his or her choice is beyond any dispute. Forced conversion to any religion is absolutely condemnable. It is presumptuous to hold that because in the pages of history there were forced conversions religions are perpetuating the same old practice today in an enlightened world of openness to reality. Vigilantes prying into peoples’ religious practices



and branding innocent devotees as converters, is absolutely unacceptable in a decent society which cares and protects all humans. Disrupting honest people who ‘pay to God what is God’s and to Caesar what is Caesar’s’ in the best way and according to what is most suitable to their conscience, only shows deep seated violence within certain humans who, sadly have lost direction in their life or are misled by religious or political leaders for their gain. Destruction of worship houses is a clear sign of maligning the Creator God and a disquieting conclusive statement about those who indulge in these atrocities. If any indulge in forced conversion from one to another religion, the rule of law must bear the responsibility and not any individual at his or her behest throwing one’s fist or sword.

Anti-Conversion Bill in Karnataka does not honour the State; instead it denigrates itself in the commune of States. Those who at all cost wish to pass it may please their benefactors in the political family. However, the Divine who has no religion will certainly condemn such a move, creating a kind of unease at all times within their conscience. Passing of Bills to suppress a religion or religions does not behave of leaders who are the conscience of their citizens. It only generates hate and a flame of fire burning not only physical properties but also the most sacred of nature, the human being.

Anti-Conversion Bill is a dot on the dignity of humanity and the sheer murder of a good God who loves whom He creates and transcends religion.

Anti-conversion Bill is a strategy employed to exclude religions that do not align with the ruling political party which places religion before the welfare of the human persons only to perpetuate hate feelings and terror in a society. Communalism easily springs up in such an environment and in the name of God, community of people play divisive politics, siding with those who promote their selfish desires such as acquiring prominent power positions in the public domain. Those who give in to the tactics of leaders are taught the ways of brandishing other religions to accuse them of unfounded facts and eventually treat them as terrorists and incarcerate them unlawfully. The political trajectory of recent times has widely experienced this phenomenon, so much so, aggravation of inimical and aggressive feelings and reactions, accordingly, have emerged in people who practice that particular religion, leading to endless conflicts, bitter animosity and human misery.

Religion is a way of binding oneself to a Transcendent Reality who is the same for all humanity which believes in Its existence. From times immemorial humans have connected intrinsically with the Transcendent One having acknowledged a sense of deep interior pover-

ty and dependence. Flesh and blood human beings, who practice a religion that is most meaning-giving, often are unpredictable about their emotions and sentiments, actions and reactions, moods and feelings when others disturb their normal journey. The consequence of these elements is manifested in violent physical destruction, defamation, disharmony and de-stabilization. Peace has been disturbed often and societies have borne the brunt of it. However, religions in themselves, standing for the Transcendental values, can never be stigmatized, branded or brushed aside, as it has been happening in India, the home of several sacred ancient religions. Anti-conversion Bill is a clear sign of hate towards human beings who believe in the One who enables their existence.

Religions “contribute significantly to building fraternity and defending justice in society” (Fratelli Tutti, 271). Hate feelings of any kind or violence have no place other than in the distorted ideas about other religions. Sometimes political leaders together with the religious leaders, whose desire is only to usurp economic advantages, unleash their rashness in verbal statements stigmatizing other religions deliberately, forgetting that they are primarily meant for building peace by extinguishing hatred and “opening paths of dialogue and not by constructing new walls” (FT 284). Anti-Conversion Bill will primarily destroy peace and

enervate hate among those who live for others as servants of the society.

Anti-conversion Bill is a defence against other religions. This reveals the credibility of the nation’s leaders. When leaders who should be in the frontline of a nation’s ethical, social and economic welfare fall degradingly in the valley of shame and ignominy, they are responsible for the nation’s honour and dignity. When religions are stigmatized, the nation’s people as a whole are stigmatized. Can our leaders afford this?

The arrogance of leaders, to suit their agenda in bringing about Anti-conversion Bill, is deliberately including religions and their practices into the political milieu causing uncertainty, in-decisiveness and a war like situation in the minds of people, leaving the ordinary citizens in despair. Particularly the so called religious political parties and their wings in India, have poisoned ordinary believers with hate feelings towards other religions. Anti-conversion Bill is an easy strategy employed by certain political parties in order to perpetuate a centralized majoritarian rule and to proclaim a fabricated dharma without a foundation in what is truly “religion.”

In all said and done, Anti-conversion Bill is nothing but playing politics over religion. It’s a clear “divide and rule policy” as some of our journalists name it.



TAKE TIME OFF

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Karnataka's Anti-conversion Bill 2021: The Argument

Regulating religious conversion through the Anti-conversion laws is not a new phenomenon, but now it has become more politicised.

DR VASUDHA MC

What Is the Bill All About?

The Bill states, “No person shall convert or attempt to convert either directly or otherwise any other person from one religion to another by use of misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means or by marriage, nor shall any person abet or conspire for conversions.” The bill provides for protection of right to freedom of religion and prohibition of unlawful conversion from one religion by any fraudulent means; and it has clear mention of punishment, such as, three years in Jail but may extend to five years with fine of Rs. 20,000, and in case of

SC/ST or mentally specially abled person, the imprisonment will extend up to five years and fines of Rs. 50,000. Many argument and discussion have already taken place with regard to Anti- conversion bill. Despite mounting criticism Karnataka Assembly passes Anti-conversion bill. States of the Indian union make laws with the Indian constitution as the basis. Regulating religious conversion through the Anti- conversion laws is not a new phenomenon, but now it has become more politicised. The anti-conversion laws introduced by state to prohibit conversion from one religion to another by misrepresentation, force, and

fraud will protect vulnerable sections from exploitation like SC, ST, OBC, and poor people through allurement.

What Is Most Bothering to Majorities?

If we take religion composition in India based on 2011 Census: Hindu population is 79.8%; Muslim Population is 14.2%; Christian Population is 2.3%; Sikh population is 1.7%; Buddhist population is 0.7%; and Jain population is 0.4%

Though the Hindu population is clearly the highest what are the factors that are making them to worry?

Over a period of time, the proposition of growth of population is multifold among Muslim. Their birth rate is 6.2 and above, where as rest of the population is around 2. If we compare with 1901 Census report there is a multifold growth of Muslims population in India whereas Hindu population hasn't grown that fast; and the Christian population is considerably low.

Talking about conversion the bill claims that “allurement” includes any offer of any temptation in the form of gift, gratification, easy money or material benefit either by cash or kind, promise to marry, better lifestyle, divine pleasure, portraying practice; and most worried part is

glorifying one religion against another religion.

Going in line with the famous Sociologist and Economist, Karl Marx, religion is the opium of the masses; in modern times, does over emphasis on religion do any good to Indian society which is already victim to high religious morality, whims and fancies of religious leaders, and conservatism.

From the perspective of minorities, the question is, why a new bill?

There is already a law to stop forceful conversion. Let government take action in case of any forceful conversion. The present law is being brought to target a particular religion. The privileges provided by the constitution and religious freedom is their rights.

We need to understand the bill using different approaches like who are the real beneficiaries? How does the bill provide protection from any form of religious exploitation? Does exploitation take place only through conversion? After ratification what are the other serious consequence a society has to go through? How state will successfully manage and enforce the bill? Do they lack co-ordination and fairness at the execution level? And the questions are many even before the bill is passed in the upper house.



Woman

A Biblical Perspective

Woman has a world-view, world-vision, life-situation and an interiority that is particularly hers.

SIDNEY J M MASCARENHAS OFM, PhD

“**W**oman”, a prefix to a concept “man”! Woman is a concept that today includes at least four billions of human beings. Is “wo” just a prefix to the term “man”? We also have the gender terms: “male” and “female.” Again is the “Fe” gender just a prefix to the “male” gender? Actually, the term “man” is gender “neutral.” It was inclusive of all genders. And, on the other hand, “woman” is not merely a concept.

What About the Bible?

According to the Priestly Codex, Genesis chapter 1: “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food”; and it was so. And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.” Let us notice that the Priestly Codex says: “Man and Woman

were created by God in His Image and likeness. And, they were to “rule” over the fish of the sea and birds of the sky, the cattle, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing on the earth.”

The older Jahwist and Elohist Traditions in Genesis Chapter 2, narrate the event allegorically: “Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.” Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. And the man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place. And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. And the man said, “This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.” For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

This Yahwist and Elohist version is very picturesque. But the rich imagery has been open to varied interpretations that depend on the Reader’s mind-set and viewpoint, and, not on the allegorical imagery of the text itself. Male chauvinists see women as fashioned from the “rib” of man, and so, subordinate to men. But does any man lack a rib? In fact, the verses are allegorical: “So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh

at that place. And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. And the man said, “This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.”

Man is in a deep sleep, dreaming! When he wakes up, he sees someone that makes him exclaim: “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.” In other words, woman is as sturdy, steady and flexible as the rib bone of every man. And just as the rib bone is close to the heart, woman is close to the heart of man. In short, woman is someone to whom a man can relate in every way: emotionally, psychologically, economically, intellectually, linguistically, legally, socially, artistically, architecturally, ethically, morally and religiously! Woman has a world-view, world-vision, life-situation and an interiority that is particularly hers.

This was said thousands of years ago. But, have we even today, grasped this fundamental relationship between “Man” and “Woman”? Have we, even in the Church, realized the role women have in ecclesiastical affairs, and, even in matters of faith?

More recently, it was said of Margaret Thatcher, that she is an Iron Lady, and Indira Gandhi, the only Male in India! And today, in India, Mamata Banerjee is the only Male to “demodify” India!

Let us all remember that the Christian faith in the Resurrection is based on the witness borne by women to the Apostles. Let us remember that the miracle of Cana, the first miracle by Jesus, was due to the persistence of Jesus’ Mother, Mary.

Let us remember Anna, the 84-year-old widow who dwelt in the Temple, and who, when, Jesus, was brought to the Temple, exclaimed aloud about the child who all looked forward to. Let us remember, that there were only women, and, just the favourite disciple, John, who stood by Jesus, on the Cross! Above all, let us all remember our “Mother” who bore all of us and made us resilient in life!



Art and the Mother Earth

ROY M THOTTATHIL SJ

Today the world faces environmental challenges from climate change to plastic pollution to the loss of bio-diversity. We have encountered flood, drought and disorder in seasons. I try to reflect here on how art and Mother Earth are intrinsically linked together and the role of artists in creating new vision to magnify 'how earth like the heavens narrates the glory of God'.

Artists and artistic expression are heavily dependent on Mother Earth. Nature is the reference point for the artists from Pre-historical period to Post Modern era. Artists are always intrigued with the Earth, with its mysterious aspects, powers and beauty. Art opens up and exhibits a dimension of the reality that is not accessible either to common observation or to scientific investigation. Art works express the quest for "a secret, primal meaning slumbering beneath the world of appearances" (Carl G. Jung 1964).

Prehistoric people's art was the means to connect their personal and community realm with the wider Cosmic realm. They discovered

their humanness, and they uncovered the mysterious powers of the Earth through art. Also, art was a means for them to express and share their inner experiences while encountering the powers of the Nature. While travelling through the Earth they were travelling through their 'inner-scape' through their artistic expressions. "Art is eternal, for it reveals the inner landscape; which is the soul of man", Martha Graham, a dancer and choreographer testifies.

Almost all the works of the artists of the world, from the primitive to the modern, symbols and motifs from nature are essentially an integral part of the artistic expression. The whole Cosmos is potentially a symbol according to Carl Jung. The symbols and god figures taken from nature of the Primitive people have deeply influenced some to the modern movements in art as the new Primitivism. This quest for returning to the 'primitive' view of life and reality is a major concern in many forms of modern art. The other concern is to integrate it more vitally with the Environment by trying to inspire a child's wonder in the world of reality and our

environment. An encounter with any form of art is therefore another opportunity to know a little more about ourselves and our identity on this Planet.

For an artist there are no boundaries. Everything is connected. S-He walks through the heart of the Earth. S-He hears the music of the seasons; S-He laughs with the rivers and sings with the birds. S-He stands still with the mountains in meditation, and dances with the trees. The Earth is her/his spiritual path towards God. Tagore said, "Nature is the face of God".

The paintings of many of the Indian artists like A. Ramachandran and Laxman Pai are affirmation of the real world, and proclamation that the beauty and comfort of humans depend much on her/his Environment. By alienating ourselves from the Earth we lose our base, our connectedness with its primordial energy, and we lose our sense of the sacred. Artists are concerned about it, and they try to elevate the minds of people to the sacredness of the Earth and everything in it. The river of compassion flows in her/him. S-He becomes the wind of peace and burns with the fire of love. The tree of life grows within her /him... Artists always reach towards such unfathomable beauty of life and the Earth. We all are artists in its wider sense, because art is a spiritual way. "Artists are not special kind of persons, but all are special kind of artists" says Anand K. Coomaraswamy.

Driven by the irresistible human urge to shape and express her/his dreams through colour and forms, art is wo-man's ever recurring link with the future. In earlier centuries human beings treated the Earth with respect, awe and fear. Art partook of this reverential attitude. Wo-Men looked upon themselves as small tenants in this enchanted islet, the Earth. Death was considered only a return to the lap of Mother Earth, to sleep once again in peace. But with the advancement of science and technology the world was considered as an engine for generating more and more wealth. And it was not to be observed in admiration and wonder – an essential pre-condition of innocence and happiness. "The primitive and the child slowly became the twin aspects of a desperate search to repair the broken Gestalt that the intimate link between



Artists work with a different concept of time and space, thus enlightening their public to imagine alternative ways of being in the world.

art and life, and art and Environment. Excessive pride of man that the world belongs truly to man, and can be used in any manner he likes will generate a 'hubris' which will lead to its inevitable nemesis" (Sitakant Mahapatra, 1987).

Artists work with a different concept of time and space, thus enlightening their public to imagine alternative ways of being in the world. Artists are in a position to be able to challenge pre-conditioned ideas and assumptions by presenting unexpected perspectives in new ways. Art opens up an expanded meaning as a signifier, as an instrument of celebration or resistance. Art has the potency as an instrument of transformation and political negotiation as S. Kappen says, "Art is not just something that happen in history; rather it is history in so far as it shapes the destiny of a people".

10 Must Watch Indian Films of 2021

NITHIN G TOM

To prepare a list of must watch films is no easy task, especially when you have such a wide variety of films to choose from. The sheer amount of talent that exists in Indian Cinema also poses a challenge and I have tried my best to do justice with this list. Any such list is subjective and many of you might have a different opinion. However, here is a humble attempt to list out the ten best Indian films of 2021:



1. The Disciple (Marathi)
Directed by Chaitanya Tamhane

This 2020 movie was made available to the Indian audience this year and it was certainly worth the wait. The inner turmoil of an artist in his pursuit of excellence

is delivered poetically on screen. The movie is a meditative character study of an Indian classical vocalist and it is brilliantly portrayed by Aditya Modak who is a classical singer himself.



2. The Great Indian Kitchen (Malayalam)
Directed by Jeo Baby

Probably the most talked about Malayalam film of 2021 because of its sheer brilliance. It presents the reality that you see in majority of the Indian

households without any melodrama. This simple yet complexly woven piece of art has surely hit the nail on the head of patriarchy.

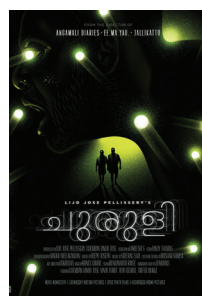
Statutory warning: The movie is injurious to bloated male egos.



3. Garuda Gamana Vrishabha Vahana (Kannada)
Directed by Raj B Shetty

One of the best theatre experiences in this pandemic era when only a handful of films have made it to the big screen. The crime drama is one of

its kind with soul stirring music and beautifully written characters. Gopal Deshpande's character as a cop is one of the finest ever in Indian cinema. When the film ended, I was reluctant to get up and leave because I was still roaming around the streets of Mangaladevi, the coastal town where the film is set.



4. Churuli (Malayalam)
Directed by Lijo J Pellissery

Lijo Jose Pellissery takes you on a wild ride into a lawless land with this one. It is a commentary on the human nature and how people change when they are given complete freedom. The abstract

quality of the movie makes you think and come up with your own interpretations which might

fit into different genres like horror and science fiction. You are sure to be stuck in a 'loop' after watching this.



5. Mandela (Tamil)
Directed by Madonne Ashwin

The movie is a funny take on the harsh realities of caste discrimination and politics. It tells you about how an outcast becomes the most important person in his village

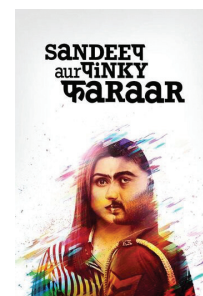
overnight because of his voting power. This political satire conveys the message perfectly to the audience without getting too preachy.



6. Joji (Malayalam)
Directed by Dileesh Pothan

Whenever Dileesh Pothan and Fahadh Faasil come together, it is normal to have high expectations. This time they deliver a masterpiece with the help of Shakespeare

of course. The 'Macbeth' inspired story is beautifully captured on screen with some stellar performances. The haunting background score of the movie needs a special mention.



7. Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar (Hindi)
Directed by Dibakar Banerjee

The opening sequence of the movie is enough to tell you the calibre of the filmmaker. Although eccentric at times, this movie where the two

main characters are on the run keeps you hooked till the end. The movie tries to break all conventional Bollywood traditions and, in the process, gives the viewer a refreshing experience.



8. Thinkalazhcha Nishchayam (Malayalam)
Directed by Senna Hegde

This movie shows us how a cliched storyline can become refreshing in the hands of an accomplished filmmaker. The movie is a delicious treat with some cleverly

written lines. One of the few films of the year which is authentic in its treatment and gives you some good laughs.



9. Jathi Ratnalu (Telugu)
Directed by Anudeep KV

If you are looking for a genuinely entertaining film in this list, then this is for you. One of the finest comedies of the year. The courtroom scenes of the movie

will leave you in splits. Naveen Polishetty's performance is a gem and proves the mettle of the actor. Definitely, a must watch to lift your spirits.



10. Sarpatta Parambarai (Tamil)
Directed by Pa Ranjith

This movie about boxing is uniquely original. Probably the best sports drama of the year. The movie just transports you into the 70s with its impeccable production

design. The character of 'Dancing Rose' played by Shabeer Kallarakkal is one of the legendary characters of the year.

Special mentions

Geeli Pucchi from the anthology Ajeeb Dastaans (Hindi), Nayattu (Malayalam) and Kaman (Tamil).

10 Must Watch Web Series in 2022

NIKHIL BANERJEE

One of the best things to happen during the pandemic has been the release of a number of web series with story lines that are fresh as well as attention grabbing. What's more, each OTT platform has an extensive library, which often spoiled us for choices. To make your selection easier, here is a list of series from across the world and India.

Best International Web Series



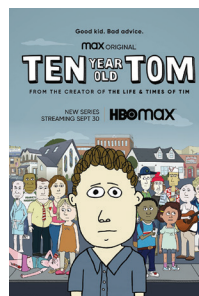
1. The Handmaid's Tale
Season 4
Platform: Prime Video
Episodes: 10
Language: Arabic

Elizabeth Moss' stellar performance probably even outshines her role in *Mad Men* as Peggy. Do keep an eye out on its visual excellency.



2. WandaVision
Platform: Disney Plus Hotstar
Episodes: 09

Marvels first release after the pandemic. With a budget of 25million per episode. It is one of the most expensive series ever produced.



3. Ten Year Old Tom
Platform: HBO Max
Episodes: 10

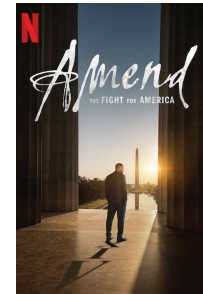
2021 became very exciting when it was announced that we would get a masterpiece again from Steve Dildarian. His show *The Life and Times of Tim*, has made me laugh

more than any other TV show. *Ten Year Old Tom* on HBO Max is another classic from Steve Dildarian. You will be asking for more as soon as the season is over. Let's hope 2022 will give us more from the comedic genius.



4. Turning Point: 9/11 and the War on Terror
Platform: Netflix
Episodes: 05

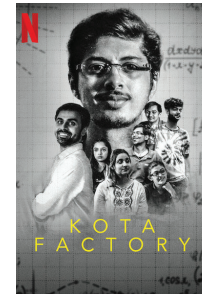
This is a docu-series. Revisit the horrors of 9/11 with a new lens and new perspective, the series tries to unfold some of the conspiracies of 9/11.



5. Amend: The Fight for America
Platform: Netflix
Episodes: 06

Will Smith's take on racism. In today's world of stark polarizing politicizing of race. Welcome to earth is a must watch for those

looking to dwell on nature's wonders. One of the best shows on Netflix right now.



3. Kota Factory Season 2
Platform: Netflix
Episodes: 04

The story unfolds the life of IIT aspirants and their life in Kota. The treatment of the story and how the story is very neatly treated in black and white in a colorful world without boring the audience is one of the main reasons to watch the show.

Best Domestic OTT Originals



1. Aspirants
Platform: TVF, YouTube
Episodes: 05

Chronicles of the lives of three UPSC aspirants and examines their history and present lives. It focuses on their preparation for the super-selective competitive

exam in the past sequences, and on their lives as adults in the present sequences.



4. Little Things Season 4
Platform: Netflix
Episodes: 08

Farewell to a four-season series that has tried to narrate all the four different stages of love story in very matured treatment. This is one of the rare OTT contents

which does not exaggerate real life and the creators have tried their best to show just the story and the characters.



2. Tabbar
Platform: Sony Liv
Episodes: 08

The story follows a journey of a retired police constable who challenges all odds to his family from an unfortunate event which has connection to his

professional life. The story talks about how the unity of the family works in different dynamic situations.



5. Family Man Season 2
Platform: Prime Video
Episodes: 09

After the success of *Family Man 1*. Green lit this season. Bringing India's share of action-packed series to the table. A very well made show whose protagonist has to

save both the nation and himself.

10 Books to Read in 2022

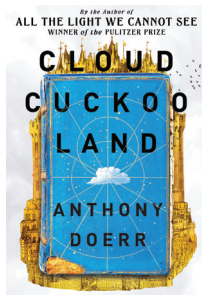
DR SREEVIDYA SURENDRAN

It's that time of the year again, where hindsight is 2021.

In the interest of actually growing wiser at the end of what was definitely a year of learning and adaption, here are 10 books that can throw light on life, the universe and the art of perspective.

1. *Cloud Cuckoo Land* (2021)

Anthony Doerr



A rambling tale that spans time and place, this is a book that transcends the everyday and highlights the resilience of stories and storytellers. Beginning in Constantinople, *Cloud Cuckoo Land* follows the evolution of a fictional tale featuring the story of

Aethon, an idealist who longs to turn into a bird and soar into a utopian sky, as it travels across time and space (literally) influencing all those who come into contact with it. The book uses multiple points of view and covers different eras of conflict, showcasing how a story has the power to bring people together and be a source of strength regardless of the where and the when. Do not let the size intimidate you.

2. *The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency* (1998)

Alexander McCall Smith

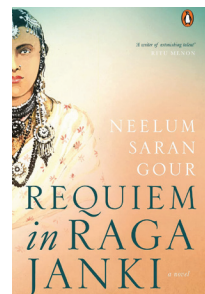


A wholesome read that showcases the value of a quiet wisdom that solves problems with a gentle but effective hand. Follow the wise and "traditionally built" Mma Ramotswe as she solves crimes and provides answers to the problems of her near and dear ones in her beloved

Botswana. The first in a prolific series, *The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency*, is a comfort read that leaves one feeling warm and wanting Mma Potokwani's fruit cake.

3. *Requiem in Raga Janki* (2018)

Neelum Saran Gour



This piece of historical fiction set in the glittering nautch houses of Avadh during the British rule, is based on the real life story of Janki Bai, "Chhappan Churi"—the one who survived 56 knife wounds. The story gives the reader an inside view of the world

of the tawaifs who added beauty and music to

the Avadhi courts, tracing the meteoric rise of the young Janki who transports her listeners to raptures with her voice. It showcases the golden era of music and first recordings of Hindustani music. Neelum Saran Gour combines extensive research with a dramatic plot to give us a riveting story that is as informative as it is engaging.

4. *On Earth We Are Briefly Gorgeous* (2019)

Ocean Vuong



A book of heart-breaking beauty and indescribable emotion. Written in the form of a letter from young Vietnamese-American queer boy to his illiterate mother, this genre-bending masterpiece is an emotional rollercoaster that is saved from

prurient overkill by a bone-searing tenderness and visceral honesty. The fragmented storytelling traces the narrator's experiences of facing racism, physical abuse and domestic violence, drug addiction, love, and coming to terms with his sexuality. The heart of this piece is love and the knowledge that no matter how terrible and ephemeral life might be, it is precious. This debut novel of the poet Ocean Vuong highlights his sublime use of language and leaves one with an aching chest. Trigger warning: Abuse, drug use, addiction, trauma.

5. *The Lonely City: Adventures in the Art of Being Alone* (2016)

Olivia Liang



Surviving lockdown and its isolation has been made easier by the presence of this lovely collection of essays by Olivia Liang. Written with a quiet empathy and deep intellect, this collection navigates the ups and the abysmal downs of being isolated,

allowing the reader to find a modicum of comfort in the gentle prose and the warm insight of this book.

6. *The Red Tree* (2001)

Shaun Tan



If a picture paints a thousand words, Shaun Tan's *The Red Tree* is a veritable epic. This picture book is a piece of immense depth. With sparse text and evocative art, Tan presents a touching portrait of mental illness and negotiating depression.

The Red Tree is a must read for all us living beyond our emotional means.





7. The Wheel of Time series (1990–2013)
Robert Jordan (and Brian Sanderson)



Given that the Amazon series is ongoing, it only makes sense that we read the awesome saga in its original form. Featuring complicated story arcs, fascinating characters with incredible powers (The Aes Sedai are amazing!), and world-building of Godlike

proportions, this 12+1 series is a long-term commitment with huge pay-offs. Trust me, it is worth the effort.

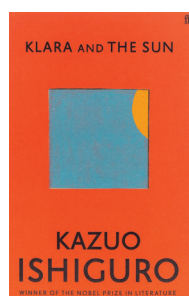
8. The Adivasi Will Not Dance: Stories (2015)
Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar



In a year that began its journey in the midst of the Farmers' Protest, this collection of short stories is particularly relevant. This text contains stories that highlight the lives and negotiations of the tribal minority in the face of mainstream hegemony and State aggression.

The titular piece is especially significant given the events of the end of the year. The quiet dignity of the narration is indicative of the tenacity inherent to the struggle for equity and representation and the continued need for dissent, organisation and agitation.

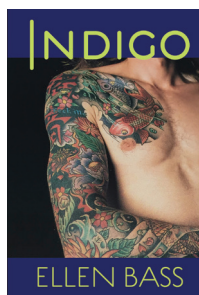
9. Klara and the Sun (2021)
Kazuo Ishiguro



Combining science fiction with philosophy, Ishiguro presents a dystopian world where genetic engineering and artificial intelligence have changed the accepted calibrations of human-technology dynamics. Through the eyes of Klara, Ishiguro

analyses what it takes to love in an increasingly dehumanised world.

10. Indigo (2021)
Ellen Bass



This collection of Ellen Bass' poetry combines her quintessential tenderness and empathetic style with an intimacy and grace that tackles life's complexities with a warm and gentle hand. The titular poem begins with the vision of the

young father with indigo tattoos on his arms ferrying his baby in its stroller with care. This image blooms into ruminations on lost dreams, the persistence of love, and the possibility of a different but still loving future. Ellen Bass as, always, leaves one feeling hopeful and bolstered.

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The Foundation of the Institute of the Sisters of St Joseph's of Tarbes (SJT) is in France.

On 15 August 1843, God gave six young peasant girls of Cantaus, Diocese of Tarbes in France an experience of His Trinitarian Communion. Each of the girls relished this experience, discerned it, and was spontaneously drawn to share it with one another in simple faith.

A Sister of St. Joseph of Tarbes (SJT) is called to:
Gather the scattered; Unite the divided with the motto: 'GOD ALONE'

In and through: Prayer, through her service to the young—in schools and colleges; to the sick—in hospitals, clinics, rehabilitation of leprosy and HIV/AIDS patients; to the aged, orphans, women in distress, the poor and the needy—in and through the social-service ministries.

Dear friend, do you hear this call to reach out?

The Lord Jesus is calling you dear friend, to be part of the SJT family.

Do you hear the call of Jesus? COME AND SEE!



CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH'S OF TARBES

The Lord is inviting you, dear friend, to be part of our family.

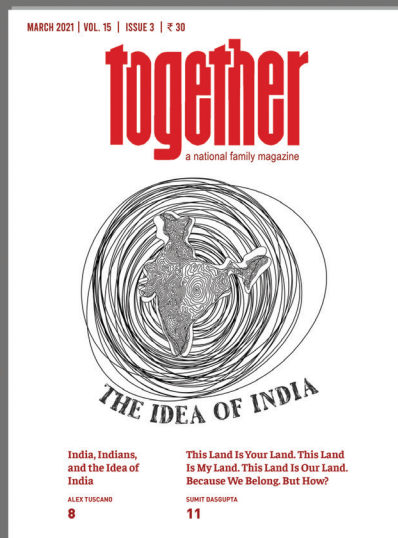
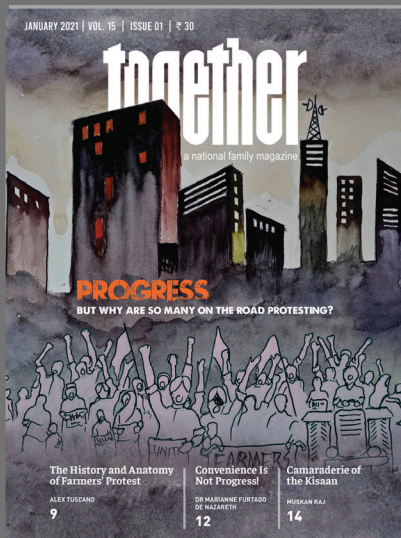
May they all be one.
JOHN 17:21



For Further Information

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