



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF FOREST MANAGEMENT

ALMA MATTERS

August 2021
Volume 5

**WORLD
ENVIRONMENT DAY**

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF IIFM

ALMA MATTERS

THE OFFICIAL ALUMNI NEWSLETTER OF IIFM



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Community,

We are back with the fifth edition of ALMA MATTERS. A lot has happened since we published the previous edition of our Newsletter in April 2021. The happenings have been happy as well as eerie. While the Alumni Association (AA) organized a fantastic Panel Discussion on the World Environment Day “ Nature-Based Solution- A Pathway to Ecosystem Restoration”, there was 100% placement for the students of 2019-21 batch, overdue memories of IIFM Mess staff was captured by interviewing our own Chandu Bhaiya. At the same time, we also helplessly witnessed the departure of some of our alumni due to pandemic. Nothing can fill the void that is created in the families of those alumni who bid adieu to us so early in their life but to keep their memories with us a Memory Grove in the form of Plantation along with the messages carved on the stone was put inside the campus by the AA with the support from the IIFM. The stones were placed for the alumni whom we lost due to the pandemic and some alumni who left us before the pandemic time.

The Batch of 2019-21 is the Batch of the Month for this edition of the Newsletter. It had been a very tough time for each one of them which was full of uncertainties. Kudos to each one of them for sailing through the tough time and finding their destination with support from the alma mater. The Editorial Team has been trying to put together the elements of nostalgia, updates on the work of the AA, connect with the faculties in terms of write up from them and share the news about the campus and alumni. It is time now to reflect and gather suggestions from each one of you about the Newsletter. Please send your feedback to a1_ak@rediffmail.com. All the five editions of the Newsletter are posted on our website www.iifmalumni.com au revoir

Avinash Kumar
(Editor in Chief)

This issue:

From the Editor's Desk	02
Behavioural Issues in Climate Change Research	03
Message from Dr Pankaj Srivastava	05
AA Event of the month- June 2021	06
My forever association with the fabled grasslands of IIFM	07
The Best Punishment Ever	08
Memorable Convocation	10
IIFM through my lenses	12
Cooking as a Ritual: Tale from IIFM Mess	14
NEWS Gallery	17
तुमको ना भूल पाएंगे	18
Batch of the Month	21
THE NEWSLETTER TEAM	22

BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES IN CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH

-Dr.Parul Rishi



Climate change, as a global issue, might have differential effects on different countries, but nevertheless, it is a problem that will influence planet earth as a whole. Current concern over global climate change stems, in part, from the evidence that its causes are anthropogenic in nature with its roots in human behaviour. Much of the happenings around us are an outcome of psychological/behavioural encounters with our surroundings and external world or in other words what one may call as "human-climate interface" which varies across societies and cultures. Therefore, effective solutions must draw on a broader understanding of social systems

and human behaviour in the broader organizational context. People need to know what difference can be made by switching over from merely 'wanting change' commonly known as 'Climate Talk' to actually 'working for change' described as 'climate walk'.

Research and capacity building initiatives amalgamating climate change and human behavioural issues started in the Indian Institute of Forest Management in the year 2009. With my education in Environmental Psychology, I edited a book Environmental Issues-Behavioural Insights with a book chapter- Climate Change and Human Psyche" in which the foundation of climate psychology was established. Subsequently, IIFM supported two research projects- Behavioural Mapping of Climate change in Semi-Arid Zones of India and Climate Stress & Adaptation in Coastal Cities of India: A Behavioural Study. Subsequently, a PhD Scholar (Dr Ruchi Mudaliar) worked on her thesis "An Exploratory Study of Human-Climate Interface and Behavioural Adaptation in Indian Coastal Cities" and published a book chapter-"Psychology of Climate change" by Springer, Germany which was followed by a jointly authored book "Changing Climate Changing Behavior-Towards a better future". The institutional research initiatives in climate psychology led to an international invite for post-doctoral research on "An Exploratory study on climate change distress and subjective wellbeing in Indo-French coastal cities" sponsored by OT Med Laboratory of Aix-Marseilles University, France and cross-cultural research-"Measuring climate change perceptions in India and France" along with Alexandra S Lindenmann which resulted in publishing a book chapter "Psychosocial Dimensions of Culture-Climate Connect in India and France" https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-22759-3_93-1 in Handbook of Climate Change Management by Springer-Germany. The psychometric tool developed in English and translated into French (Climate Change Perception Inventory) is under publication with the title "A Cross-Cultural Validation of Climate Change Perception Inventory in India & France".

Department of Science and Technology sponsored a capacity-building project on "Behavioural Adaptation with Climate Change in Himalayan Regions of India" to IIFM in the year 2017 in which three capacity-building workshops were conducted by IIFM in the Himalayan States of India training more than 80 scientists, academicians, policymakers, forest officers and research scholars. Besides, short term professional development workshops were also conducted like "Rethinking about Climate Change: A Psychological Perspective" at Banasthali Vidhyapeeth, 'Behavioural Adaptation with Climate Change through Psycho-spirituality and Mindfulness - A Journey through Indian Spiritual World' in International Congress of Applied Psychology in Montreal, Canada, June 2018 and 'Psycho-spirituality and sustainability management with a focus on changing climate' in University of Toronto, October-2019. The outputs/experiences of more than a decade are being compiled in the form of a book "Managing Climate change and Sustainability through Behavioural Transformation" to be published as a part of their SDG series by Palgrave Macmillan, the UK under the imprint of Springer Nature, Singapore.

India is a region of diversified spirituality, being the home of multiple religions coexisting across cultures in a harmonious manner. Psycho-spirituality contains the underpinning assumption that the psychological mindset creates, or strongly influences, spirituality and suggests that one can learn to adapt to the changing climatic scenario through spiritual modes like mindfulness and positive existential transcendence.

It can subconsciously control materialistic urges leading to ecologically unsustainable growth and development on one hand and development of positive motivations and emotions towards changing climatic the scenario on the other.

Enhancing the knowledge base in psycho-spiritual systems and developing the capacity to address climate change-linked adversities through mindfulness and other socio-behavioral technique is an upcoming field in which a lot of research worldwide is going on including the phenomenal writings of Christine Wamsler. Taking a clue from that, an empirical study on "Climate Change Risk Appraisal and Adaptive Capacity in mountain regions of India-Mediating role of Mindfulness" has been planned with Ms. Shalini Dagur as a research scholar.

The decade-long research and capacity-building initiatives of IIFM reflect that there is a need for a people-centric movement at the micro-level conjoining into community-based actions under the umbrella of a positive belief system and spirituality. It can prepare people for coping/adapting to any adverse scenario efficiently and at the same time acts as a buffer by providing a good support network in case of any climatic adversity. The support of IIFM alumni in academically connecting with our research initiatives is most welcome.

Dr.Parul Rishi
Chairperson, Centre for CSR and Area Coordinator
Faculty of HRM
IIFM, Bhopal
parul@iifm.ac.in

गुरु ज्ञान

MESSAGE FROM DR PANKAJ SRIVASTAVA

-Director, IIFM, Bhopal



Dear Ashish,

It is heartening to learn and announce that IIFM maintains its unbeaten record of 100% placements once again. All the students of PGDFM and PGDGM courses in the 2019-21 batch got placed as reported by Chairpersons Placement for both the courses. This year it was particularly more difficult due to COVID, but finally, it was accomplished on 18-06-2021. I compliment all our alumni for their contribution in maintaining a glorious record even during tough times. Please convey my compliments to your office bearers of the Alumni Association and friends and well-wishers of IIFM.

CAMPUS NEWS



AA EVENT OF THE MONTH-JUNE 2021

YouTube link of the event: <https://youtu.be/mQidVCqJNTE>

World Environment Day 2021
Reimagine | Recreate | Restore

Alumni Association of IIFM
in collaboration with
International Center for Community Forestry, IIFM Bhopal
announces an online panel discussion

**Nature Based Solutions (NBS) -
A Pathway to Ecosystem Restoration**

Dr. Manmohan Yadav Professor & Dean IIFM (Chairperson, Inaugural Session)	Dr. Dilip Kumar Intl. Civil Service (UN-FAO) Rtd. Director/ VC-ICAR-CIFE Advisor AFDC	Dr. Madhu Verma Chief Economist World Resources Institute (WRI)	Mr. Anish Kumar Director Transforming Rural India Foundation
Mr. Samrat Mukherjee DGM NABARD	Mr. Shailesh Nagar Associate Director Intellectap	Mr. Vijay Pratap Singh Aditya Co-Founder, CEO & Director ekgaon	Ms. Bharati Joshi MD and CEO Indian Grameen Services (Moderator)

June 5, 2021 11:00 am (IST) www.iifmalumni.com

To commemorate the occasion of the World Environment Day 2021, the Alumni Association (AA) of IIFM in collaboration with the International Center for Community Forestry (ICCF), IIFM Bhopal organized an online Panel Discussion on 5th June 2021 "Nature Based Solutions (NBS) - A Pathway to Ecosystem Restoration". The topic reflects on the World Environment Day's theme to- Reimagine. Recreate. Restore our ecosystems. This program was a UNEP registered event. The panel members were renowned professionals from the concerned field. Chairperson of the event was Dr. Manmohan Yadav (Professor & Dean IIFM, Bhopal). The panel members included Dr. Dilip Kumar-International Civil Service (UN-FAO), Rt. Director/VC-ICAR-CIFE and Advisor AFDC; Dr. Madhu Verma- Chief Economist WRI India, Mr. Samrat Mukherjee- DGM NABARD; Mr. Shailesh Nagar-Associate Director- NRMCA, a subsidiary of Intellectap; Mr. Anish Kumar-Director TRIF; Mr. Aditya Vijay Pratap Singh-Co-founder, Director and CEO ekgaon. Ms Bharati Joshi (CEO Indian Grameen Services-IGS) and Ms. Shweta Bhagwat (Founder ClayRoot Sustainable Development Foundation) were the moderator of the event. The

discussion was about ecosystem restoration, sustainable agriculture & aquaculture and financing NBS.

As a unique initiative two tree saplings were planted in the locations of Narmada Riparian Restoration Project Hoshangabad of IGS in the name of each of the panelists. The panel members were given GPS location of the plantation site.

Dr. Amitabh Pandey from ICCF-IIFM and Mr. Ashish Mishra (President AA) welcomed the panel members and Ms Archana Sharma (Secretary AA) gave vote of thanks to the panel members.

MY FOREVER ASSOCIATION WITH THE FABLED GRASSLANDS OF IIFM

-Swayam Chowdhary



The forested hill on which the IIFM campus is perched, gave me my first true experience of nature, solitude and freedom. I remember asking Ashwin sir (PFM 2009-11) about the grasslands. He said, "It's right behind the football field". I went to the edge of the field, came back and said to him, "There is nothing there", and he smiled, "That's where it is".

I went back there the next evening, and this time I did go beyond the football field. I found a pugdundee that I could access by jumping off the field. I walked on it for a couple of minutes till it disappeared and I found myself amidst rocks - small and big, grass - short and tall, birds, and insects! Football field behind me, I could see the campus boundary wall and the wetland beyond that. The mild breeze and the golden light from the setting sun amplified the feeling; it was like shifting from Portrait Mode to Panorama Mode in your camera, like taking off a mask after years, like you could own that moment.

Sometimes I would just walk to a big flat rock in the middle of the grassland and sleep off, other times I would try to enjoy the stillness in that lively motion around me. During winters, I would sit at the sunset point and watch herds of goats, sheep, and even camels shepherded home. I would spend time watching birds, dogs, and rarely, jackals too as faunas of the daytime. The nights in that beautiful landscape were dark and quiet until you stumbled into a nightjar.

Yi Fu Tuan, a geographer, and philosopher had rightly said - "What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value". The transformation happens as a cumulative result of the sensory impressions and the profound events that we experience there.

Strolling on a moonless night after finishing my dinner at the mess, I circled the academic block and headed towards the football ground where I saw a Black-naped Hare running in circles and a pair of Red-wattled Lapwings standing awkwardly at a corner. I jumped down from the field to the pugdundee and had taken just a few steps when I suddenly heard a faint sizzling sound from the ground right in front of me. I had never heard it before. It felt so alluring (and I was so stupid at the moment) that I took out my mobile (with no flashlight) and bent down to try and see the source of the sound in the glow of my mobile's screen - in vain. I had seen Russell Vipers and Cobras making such sound, but that was way louder. My mind said, "Wait, what!! Vipers...Cobras...Snakes...uh-oh, it's a snake warning me."

I gave in to my instinct, ran to Zeeshan's (PFM 2010-12) room, borrowed a torch, ran back to the ground, jumped down, walked to the exact spot where I was standing earlier, bent down, and flashed the torchlight. To my shock - no sound, no snake. And, that moment of not knowing where the snake was made me imagine snakes all around me. I regained my composure, moved backward and there was the sound again. Lo and behold, there was a small, beautifully camouflaged snake, with the body looped into S-shaped folds, rubbing its scales against others across the folds to produce the hissing sound. It was 15-20 cm away from my foot. Later, I learned that Saw-scaled Vipers are usually quick to strike and the mortality rates for such cases are high.

The next couple of days, I was lost in what had happened, and more importantly, in the fact that the snake decided not to bite me. It was surprising that it was a fearful incident that liberated me from the fear of snakes and led me to develop a reverence for them.

When departing from IIFM, I intentionally skipped the goodbye, for there won't ever be one. I still wonder how such small dispersed incidents and certain trivial features make a place so important for us. While I write these words, and while you read them, the tale keeps unfolding and would continue to - in the hallowed lands of IIFM.

Swayam Chowdhary

PFM 2010 - 12

Assistant Director (Strategic Management)

New Mangalore Port Trust

THE BEST PUNISHMENT EVER

-Ananya Sarathe



It was the lecture just before the lunch break, concentration level already low on that cool windy afternoon. It had rained all morning and the sky was clear now. A friend of mine from the other section had called me outside before the lecture began, and asked me to gather my friends from section A near India Gate to go out for lunch in the great weather, all I had to do was make sure everyone reached the meeting spot without wasting even a single minute of that one hour-ten minutes break. The weather, the lunch plan and the job of informing and assembling my friends, had brought up my energy and excitement to a magnitude, I had very little control over. But there

was still one more hour to go, till it was time for us to go out and start having fun before the next lecture began.

It was one of the strictest professors of IIFM teaching, who demanded complete attention and silence in his class, clearly not something I was prepared for that day. The lecture began, and so did my chain of passing on the very important information of the lunch plan. Words were being spoken in bits, chits being circulated all across the classroom, through some of my worried classmates who hoped to not get into trouble because of me, all of this avoiding the professor's eye. For me, the outing was more important than learning about 'Social Institutions' that day.

That professor had scolded me quite a few times in his previous lectures for being notorious and talkative in his classes. I was to watch out and avoid trouble but I did not quite avoid his eye very efficaciously. In fact, I got caught that day as well. Thrice!!!

However, the lunch plan details were still to reach a few more people. Neither could I stop myself from talking nor could the professor be patient with me anymore. Now he had caught me for the fourth time, and this time, he wasn't going to let go of me with a warning. The classroom air smelled of approaching drama and some could even sense that there was no way I was getting out of it this time. I, on the other hand, was still busy giving out lunch details, unaware that now I was the center of attention of the whole class. Some sleepy heads also looked a little awake now.

The professor had had enough. It was evident from his expressions. He paused, took a deep breath, and said "All right, that's enough!". The class still had a few more minutes left before it was to get over, but he took out the attendance register. That meant the lecture was over. The roll call began but my name was consciously left out.

The disturbing element of the class was not to be given attendance for that day apparently. I sat there regretting coming to the class in the first place. I got scolded and wasn't even given attendance. What a futile one hour!

After this set back I was just beginning to carry on with my lunch plan when I saw the professor walking towards the class door not before he stopped once again only to hear some dreadful words come out of his mouth, that could have been easily avoided had I just bunked that lecture. "Ananya, come outside. I need to speak with you".

The professor had the reputation of being really strict and I had definitely fished in some troubled water. Getting scolded every day for so many days in a row, I knew I was going to pay for it. Outside the class, it was him and I, surrounded by some of my curious, peeping-through-the-door-classmates of Section A, who had arrived at the scene just in time to catch on to some exclusive real-life drama. People from the other Section had also moved outside their class to see what all the fuss was about. I saw some concerning friendly faces at the back, but nothing was going to save my neck that day

The professor then said to me in a voice that scared me to my very core, "You've been a complete nuisance in my class for days at a stretch! You come to class and disturb everyone who wants to learn, without an intention of learning anything yourself. People like you shouldn't even be allowed to sit in classes. Your behavior is simply unacceptable. You sit in class for attendance?" He, in that very second, opened the attendance register as I stood there baffled. He took out a pen from his left shirt pocket and at once started marking Ps in front of my name, FOR THE REST OF THE TERM.

"Here! I have marked you present for the whole term. Now I don't want to see you in my class unless you've decided to actually learn something", he said, and walked away in anger and disappointment, while I stood there unable to believe my fate. Had I really been given the license to bunk all of his lectures that term? I was overwhelmed with complete joy and disbelief, as my friends came to accompany me in that moment of sheer happiness, cheering and celebrating with me, what was going to remain with me as the memory of the best punishment ever.

Ananya Sarathe
PFM 2018 -20
Project Officer, WWF India
Uttarakhand, India



MEMORABLE CONVOCATION

-Avinash Kumar



It was someday in March 2006, when I returned after spending a hectic day in the field to discover an email from IIFM waiting for me in my inbox. It was an invitation to participate in the convocation ceremony of IIFM. The convocation ceremony, a much-anticipated event, had been due for the past six batches, starting from PGDFM 98-00, our batch. No wonder, I got quite excited after reading the email.

I immediately booked a train ticket from Chhindwara to Bhopal. At that time I was working with CARE India for the INHP project. I have a special association with Bhopal, not just as a place of my

alma mater (IIFM) but also as the hometown of my wife. When I reached Bhopal with my wife and my two year old daughter, I first visited my in-law's place. Next morning (a day before the convocation ceremony) we reached the IIFM campus, driving my father-in-law's blue Maruti 800 car. We had already booked a room in the guest house. Though many of our batchmates were not able to attend the convocation, it was heartening to see a few others like Dipak Jha, Rajaram Sankaran, Sonia Bakshi, Ashish Sinha, and Nitin Gupta who had arrived with their families to attend the ceremony. Most of the day was spent catching up with friends and staff at IIFM and rehearsing for the ceremony. As the evening approached, we thought of exploring some fast food in the canteen that had recently opened just behind the administrative building of the campus. While I was busy chatting with my friends, reminiscing our past memories of IIFM, my wife Anjali suddenly noticed someone leaving the campus in our car. When the car came a little closer, the registration plate became clearer, convincing us that the car was indeed ours. Before we could react, it swiftly moved towards the main gate. Clueless about what to do, Dipak suggested rushing to the hostel telephone booth and calling the guard at the main gate so that the car could be stopped. I called the guard at the main gate but by the time I communicated the description to him, he told me that the car had already exited the campus. We had no option but to inform the police about the incident. I dialed 100 and registered a complaint about my missing car.

While we agonized over the sudden development sitting at the platform, opposite to the hostel phone booth (most preferred hang-out place during our times) and were brainstorming on lodging a formal FIR in the nearby Nehru Nagar police station; the phone suddenly rang. I immediately rushed towards the phone as somehow I had an intuition that this call could be about the car. It was actually a call from the main gate with the guard informing us that the car has just returned back into the campus. Perplexed, we anxiously awaited the car to come up the hillock to our hostel area where we all were sitting.

Soon enough, the car came! All of us were looking intently at the people inside the car. As we kept staring at the car, two people unhurriedly emerged from the car and walked towards us, Tiwariji and other hostel staff who all had gathered over there. Surprisingly, these people also looked to be equally baffled with our intense looks and with a mini crowd gazing at them in an accusatory way. I immediately rushed to them and asked how dare they take my car when the keys were still with me. These guys were also rattled with the accusation. The guy who drove the car informed us that they were from PFM 2003-05 and they thought that it was their friend's car who had also come to attend the convocation. He said that his friend gave him the car keys and the way he described that car exactly matched mine. He had no idea that by mistake, he took my car. Happily, he got into my car thinking that it was his friend's and drove to Madhuram Sweets in Nehru Nagar to buy some snacks. To further add to the confusion, somehow the keys that he got from his friend worked with the locks in my car.

We all were in a state of disbelief listening to this story! Obviously, we were surprised and also relieved that finally my car has not been stolen. I was still trying to process the incident when Rajaram, my friend suggested that I should first inform the police to cancel my complaint since my car has not been stolen. Listening to the fact that a police complaint has been already lodged, the guy who drove the car was absolutely shaken. I still remember his words.

He said, "Oh my God! This is my first job from campus and this police complaint will give such a bad name to my just started careerPlease do something". I immediately dialed 100 to clarify the whole situation. Now the police officer thought that I was a prankster and he threatened to take strict action against me. Somehow we managed to convince him and made him understand the whole fiasco and he reluctantly agreed to cancel the complaint.

Phew! This is how I attended the convocation event with a bizarre episode that I can never forget. I still get amused thinking of the incident. Somehow I can't recall the name of the person who took the car but I am sure that reading this, he will surely remember and like me, this write-up will bring a smile to his face.

Avinash Kumar
PFM 1998-2000
Director,
Mitratalya Samadhan Seva Pvt Ltd



IIFM THROUGH MY LENSES

-Pikit Hembrom



Photography has always been a hobby that I have pursued not only as a recreation but also to capture the beautiful moments which life had to offer. Since my undergraduate days, I had a point and shoot camera using which I always used to click photos. Coming to IIFM, I got a golden chance to sharpen my photography skills as the college provided me with a wide variety of subjects to capture within my lenses. Not only there were plenty of fauna to capture, the campus and the landscape itself were truly a sight to behold. The first few weeks that I had spent at the campus, usually included an evening stroll in the college grasslands.

I along with a few of my friends often went there for birding as well as to spend some leisure time. The sunsets were really magical at that place. Another hidden gem on the college campus was the rock caves where we always used to spend our weekends chilling out.

It was during this time at the college that I really got to hone my birding skills and it developed into such a passion that I often used to visit the admin block terrace to view some nocturnal species. Later on, the advanced knowledge of birding that I had gained in college life, running around with my little camera, helped me crack a job with a prominent NGO which I had always dreamed of.

But apart from all these things my camera was really instrumental in capturing some of the most beautiful memories of life, which always bring a smile back on my face whenever I look back on them. Be it the Kalpataru where all of my friends were dancing to the tune of life or Holi where all of us were madly drenched in the colored water. My camera played an important part in creating those wonderful memories.

Also, the passion for photography got me in touch with some cool seniors of the college who have converted their hobby/passion of photography to a serious profession.

IIFM proved to be not only a place where I learned to improve my photography skills, but it also added immense value by becoming a part of this hobby. Now whenever I think about this hobby of mine, I fondly remember IIFM as a place that helped nurture my passion.

Pikit Hembrom

2014-16

Capacity Building Officer, BRLPS



Capturing the night sky of IIFM - A star trail image

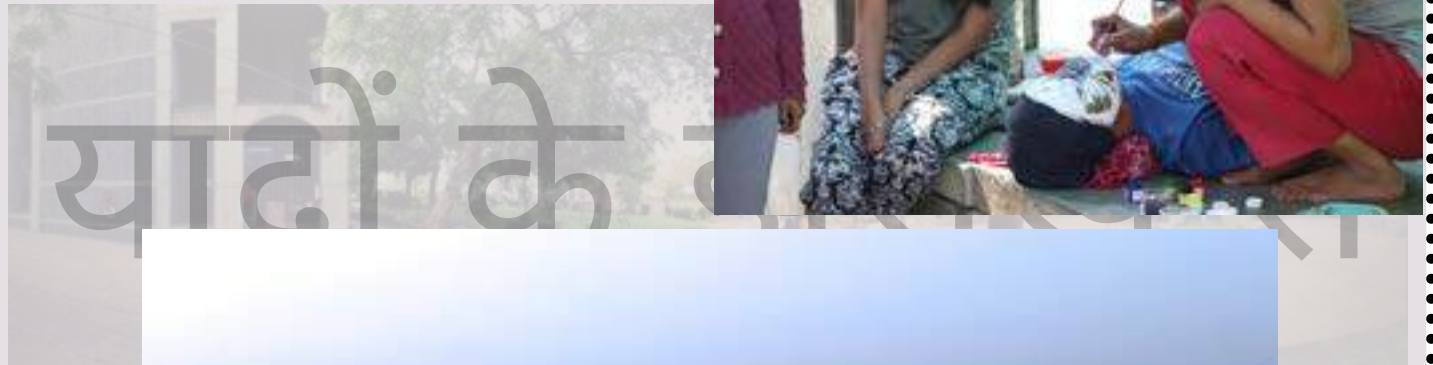
CONT.

-Pikit Hembrom



*Honing my birding skills
- A Brahminy Starling*

*Capturing moments - Face painting
Competition*



A view from sunset viewpoint



*Last trip to sunset point
-Shot on self-timer mode*

COOKING AS A RITUAL: TALE FROM IIFM MESS

-Chandu Bhai



Way back in 1988 if someone would have told the young man, all of 17 years, that his future lied in living on a hilltop lush with trees and feeding hundreds of others for years, he would have merely laughed it off. Though from the land of Buddha, Chadrakant Pageni did not have any idea that his wanderings would take him from Nepal to Bhopal, from the Palpa District in the Lumbini Anchal straight to the heart of India where he would be fondly known as Chandu Bhai or Chandu Bhaiya thereafter.

Others from his village had been moving to cities in Nepal and India in search of livelihood and he accompanied his friend Juju Ram who was already in Bhopal just to see a new place and wander. The temptation of earning some extra bucks got him a job as a contract staff with a catering contractor with whom some of his friends were also engaged. This contractor had bagged a new assignment of managing the Students' Mess of a newly opened institution set on the top of a hillock. The contractor did not last more than three months but Chandu Bhai was poached by the then administration of the institute to work in the mess along with a few others.

The first meal he cooked on his own for the staff and the students was a humble 'Khichadi' on an electric heater, from where he professes to have come a long way with Chicken Biryani being his new-found specialty these days. He also says that the system of morning tea was introduced by him and his team to wake up students and help them stay awake before the classes.

The IIFM Alumni Association Newsletter Team had a one-to-one conversation with him in June 2021 and here is what he had to say. Like a seasoned professional he ducked all the controversial questions and conveniently forgot reference to names and batches which had any scope of hurting the sentiments of those he has fed across all these years.



What brought you to IIFM and what made you stay all these years?



What actually brought me to Bhopal and subsequently to IIFM was a desire to see new places. I was 16-17 years old with a carefree attitude towards life and accompanied some others, who were already working in Bhopal. Things just happened thereafter. I joined as a contract labour with the caterer responsible for managing the mess and then was literally poached by the IIFM administration after the contractor was asked to leave owing to his unsatisfactory work. We were literally asked to hide from him so that he would not pressurize us on accompanying him.

What has made me stay all these years has been the affection and love that I got from the students across batches and from the faculty. Money can be earned anywhere but the real treasure that I have earned is this.



What is the secret of your consistently cooking diverse meals catering to diverse tastes among the students over the years?




I believe love is the most critical ingredient. When I cook I can see the faces of those who are going to eat what I am cooking. I can see their satisfied and happy faces and that propels me to do my best. Honesty in my work along with thoughtfulness and hard work is what I say is 99% of the reason behind any success and I try to abide by this principle.





What has changed in the food that you have been cooking over these years?




The menu has evolved quite a lot. We have You Tube as our greatest source for recipes these days. The days of simple Aloo Bhujji and Parantha are long gone. Students want diversity in the menu. These days we serve Tandoori Roti and Roomali Roti as well. Non-veg used to be a celebration in earlier batches, it is a norm now. The use of 'Maida' has also increased due to that which I feel is not good for health but we have to cater to the tastes.


 **Have you ever done revenge cooking?**


 (Forcefully) No, I have never done any revenge cooking ever. I may have differences with the students but when I am cooking I am a different person altogether. I just focus on cooking the best food I can. In fact my complete focus is that no one should be hungry. All meals have their timings but even when someone is late I make sure that they eat. Whether it is by hiding and siding few plates for the known latecomers or by asking them to go behind the mess and eat I try to ensure they get fed.


 **Any altercations with anyone you remember?**


 When I came, I was very young and was therefore very sensitive to certain things. Earlier we used to have a system where food, especially non-veg, was served in the plates when the students were already seated on the table. That used to result in a lot of confusion as everybody wanted their favorite portion. In 1988 I had an argument with a student on the same issue and I left the Mess crying having made up my mind to leave the work. I was consoled by other students and was brought back. Over the years we have both evolved a system and have also become experienced enough not to be disturbed by such incidents.


 **Which batch was the most creative / destructive / craziest batch and any special incidents that you remember?**


 All the batches had all these components and I have not witnessed a quiet batch over all these years. All students and batches are dear to me. I may be mixing up faces and batches, but certain incidents remain in my mind. I remember a batch fighting among themselves behind the mess (did not mention the batch) due to which the whole 'partying' culture was put to stop, and many restrictions were imposed. They may not have realized it, but their fighting and the incident had a lasting effect on the batches to come. Such incidents are unfortunate among grown up students and should not have happened.


 **What is your favorite food?**

 I am a man with simple tastes. I enjoy my Dal, Chawal, and Sabji. I like cooking Chicken Biryani these days though and am quite good at it.


 **How many Directors have you seen in IIFM?**


 I can recall 13 Directors during my stay here. I may be a little fuzzy on this number as some of them were appointed Directors, took charge in Delhi, and then were transferred to other responsibilities without ever visiting IIFM.


 **Any Mess Secretary(s) you remember in particular?**

 I remember two. One who did not use to eat at all in the mess (he conveniently forgot the name or the batch). Another is Dipanshu Dubey from Indore who was the Mess Secretary 3-4 years back for being a very effective and involved Mess Secretary.

 **What is the secret of the Mess team always playing such fantastic Volley Ball?**

 Volley Ball has been a part of our village culture. We have been playing the game since we're kids and that's what makes us good at it. Nowadays however we have been losing to the students' teams as we are getting older.

 **Have you come across any animals on the campus?**

 I have seen Hyenas from the hostel many times and many other smaller animals but never had the chance to have a face-to-face encounter with them.



Who all are there in your team and since how long have you been working together?



Apart from me, there are seven more people who joined IIFM Mess team a few years from each other. This includes Lal Bahadur, Tul bahadur, Lal Singh, Dol Singh, Arun, Bhaiya Lal and Bagdu Lal. We have been sticking together as a team ever since. With the workload has increased in recent times, we always work in a mix of old team members and new hands hired for the mess so that our experience and understanding of the needs of the students serves as a guide to the management and to our own cooking.



Who all are there in your family and where are they?



I live with my family on the campus itself. My wife and my younger daughter, who is in Class 12, live with me here. My son and daughter-in-law live and work in Australia. My elder daughter is married to someone in Nepal and lives there. My son-in-law works for a Micro Finance Company.



When are you retiring?



I have my services till April 2028 which means I can have the pleasure of feeding at least seven more batches, as they come in.

Interview by:
Avinav Kumar,
PFM 1999-2001
Based at Bhopal
Head of Programmes & Fundraising
Partnering Hope into Action Foundation



[Click on the image to connect with Chandu Bhai*](#)



The Indian Institute of Forest Management Bill, 2021: This bill seeks to declare the existing Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal a premier and the only forestry management educational institute in the country, and an institution of national importance. It will confer on it the power to grant degrees as well.



In memory of the departed Alumni (during pandemic and before pandemic), the Alumni Association of IIFM planted saplings in the IIFM campus. The Director IIFM Dr. Pankaj Srivastava, Dr. Amitabh Pandey, Dr. Yogesh Dubey, Dr. Ashish Davin, Dr. MM Yadav, Dr. CVRS Vijay Kumar were also present during the plantation. The saplings were planted in the name of Bhargavi Manohar (PFM 1997-99), Satish Kharwade (M. Phil 2006-07), Nikhil Tiwari (PFM 2015-17), Abhishek Upadhyay (PFM 2017-19), Sourabh Rohit (PGP 2020- 2022) – Deaths due to pandemic Anjan Guha (PFM 1997-99), Tapas Kumar Giri (MRM 1995), Nishant Tirath (PFM 1997-99), Rajiv Kumar Singh (PFM 1994-96)- Pre-pandemic deaths



Sudin K (PFM 94-96) Did the site visits, designed the grove layout, selected the species, and guided procurement and planned irrigation.

Kallol Mandal (PFM 2006-08): Written on the stones through calligraphy

Bhushan Patil (PFM 2016-18): Teamed up for the work

Shyam Patro (PFM 2004-06) and Jayanta Sharma (MRM 2005): Financial support to add to the financial support from PFM 1994-96, PFM 1997-199, and PFM 2017-19.

The gardeners of the institute worked hard for two full-day and contributed significantly to this program.

तुमको ना भूल पाएंगे



Satish Kharwade M.Phil. batch 2006-07 breathed his last in April 21

As remembered by Classmates from IIFM he was very helpful in nature, persistent in efforts and always ready for some fun and adventure with ever smiling face.

He had faced lots of challenges & overcame all of it to have a very successful career in natural resource management & especially wetlands management. He was also pursuing his doctoral research & is survived by his wife & 2 young kids.

तुमको ना भूल पाएंगे



Bhargavi Manohar
PGDFM 1997-99

Bhargavi left us far too soon on May 3rd after a short battle with COVID. A vivacious and warm person, ever smiling even in the most difficult of situations, Bhargavi had a kind spirit that touched all who came in contact with her.

A bright and intelligent student with clearcut goals, Bhargavi moved on to pursue a career in market research with IMRB after passing out of IIFM, and later on joined Millward Brown, in keeping with the path that she had set out for herself.

An avid traveler, Bhargavi was also known for her keen love for trekking, hiking and nature.

Bhargavi is survived by her husband Prabhu, mother and an elder sister.

It's difficult to believe that you are no longer with us Bhargavi. You will be terribly missed!

तुमको ना भूल पाएंगे



It is with great sadness and heavy hearts that we share the news that our dear friend and batchmate, Nikhil Tiwari, passed away on May 17th, 2021.

He was diagnosed with COVID-19 and succumbed to post COVID-19 complications after fighting them courageously for almost 4 weeks.

He was one of the most decorated person in our batch: Amongst top 10 in our batch, Recipient of Director's Award for Summer Internship, Receiver of Merit based Scholarship from the institute for academic performance, Active participant in sports, Representor of the institute [twice] at Forest Sports Meet, winner of Sportsperson of the year, and a member of Placement Committee, Sports Club and C2EC3.

A quick-witted, polite, adept, grounded human with a photographic memory, he was friend to some, brother to others, bike-lender to many, a perfect foodie, a 24x7 tea lover, the occasional beer guy, and much more.

He got placed in Dr Reddy's Foundation and was currently preparing for Civil Services

He will always be in our memories and we will always miss his presence amongst us. He was at the best place amongst his family and friends. He will always be in our prayers. Let us all pray for his soul to rest in peace and may God give strength to his family during these difficult times.

Ek Tiwari Sab Pe Bhari!!

Stay Safe and Take Care everyone.

Batch of PFM 2015-17

BATCH OF THE MONTH

CLICK ON THE GROUP PHOTO
TO VIEW BATCH'S DETAILS



Batch 2019-21

THE NEWSLETTER TEAM

EDITORIAL TEAM

Avinash Kumar (Editor in chief)

PFM 98-00

Director, Mitratulya Samadhan Seva Pvt Ltd
avi_2021@mitratulya.com

Dipak Jha

PFM 98-00

Director, Epundit Technologies Ltd
jhadipek@gmail.com

Avinav Kumar

PFM 99-01

Head of Programmes & Fundraising,
Partnering Hope into Action Foundation
avinav.kumar@gmail.com

Sejal Agarwal

PFM 16-18

Program Officer,
Partnering Hope into Action Foundation
sejal.iifm@gmail.com

Sonia Bakshi Sud

PFM 98-00

Consultant- Education and Development
Sector
hellosoniahere@gmail.com

ADVISORS

Archana Sharma

PFM 94-96

Managing Trustee, Aranya
archana_aarohan@hotmail.com

Ashish Mishra

PFM 93-95

Managing Director, Vikalp Ahead Renewables
Pvt Ltd
md@vikalpahead.com

Bishnu C Parida

MRM 2005

Chief Operating Officer, JSLPS
Department of Rural Development, Jharkhand
bparida@gmail.com

LAYOUT AND DESIGN

AMARJEET RAUSHAN

PGDFM 2020-22

PATNA (BIHAR)

ARAUSHAN22@IIFMBHOPAL.EDU.IN

CAMPUS PHOTOS

AVINASH BH

PGDFM 2020-22

KODAGU (KARNATAKA)

ABH22@IIFMBHOPAL.EDU.IN



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF FOREST MANAGEMENT

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF FOREST MANAGEMENT
GHAZIABAD

“

AFTER ALL, WE ALL TAKE PRIDE IN
PROCLAIMING – “IIFM के लिए कुछ भी”