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SCHOOL OF BUSINESS STUDIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
CHRIST UNIVERSITY, BENGALURU,
FUNKY RAINBOW & GOODBOOKS

[Signature]

Head

Department of English and Cultural Studies
School of Arts and Humanities
Bangalore Bannerghatta Road Campus
CHRIST (Deemed to be University)
Bengaluru - 560 076



A NATIONAL SEMINAR
A BIG LITTLE WORLD:
PERSPECTIVES ON
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
IN INDIA

9:00 AM TO 5:00 PM
21 FEBRUARY 2017
REGISTRATION FEE - RS. 500
OR FURTHER INFORMATION,
EMAIL US AT -
biglitworld@gmail.com

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II FLOOR
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CAMPUS

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS STUDIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
CHRIST UNIVERSITY, BENGALURU,
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A NATIONAL SEMINAR
**A BIG LITTLE WORLD: PERSPECTIVES
ON CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
IN INDIA**

Thomas Abraham,
Managing Director,
Hachette India

Vidya Mani,
Editor and
Entrepreneur

C P Viswanath,
Co-founder,
Karadi Tales

Radhika Menon,
Publisher,
Tulika Publishers

Roopa Pai,
Children's Writer

Andaleeb Wajid,
Writer

Shyam Madhavan Sarada,
Creative Professional

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CHRIST UNIVERSITY, BANNERGHATTA ROAD CAMPUS, BANGALORE – 76
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS STUDIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, FUNKY RAINBOW
and GOODBOOKS

A National Seminar

On

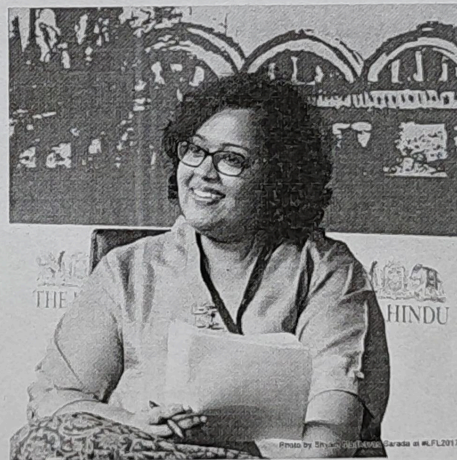
A Big Little World: Perspectives on Children's Literature in India

(A Skill Development Initiative)

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BIO-NOTES OF THE SPEAKERS

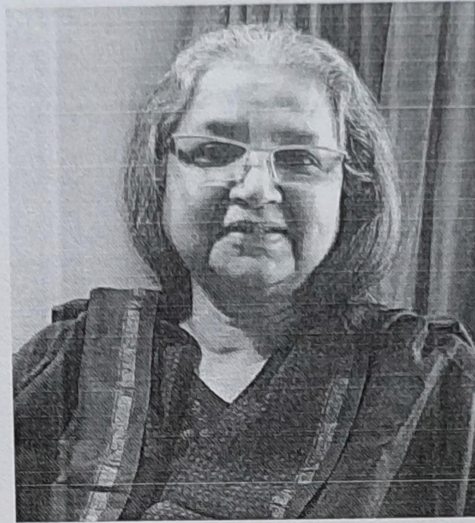
VIDYA MANI, Editor and Entrepreneur



Vidya Mani is a children's writer and editor, who wears many hats. She runs a content and design studio called Melting Pot that creates children's books and magazines for publishers and NGOs. She is one of the founder-members of Bookalore, a Bangalore-based book club that conducts monthly events across the city to bring books and children together in interesting ways. She runs a pop-up bookshop called Funky Rainbow that travels across Bangalore and puts out a curated collection of Indian children's books at various events. She is also the ~~Head~~ managing editor of the children's book review site, Goodbooks

Shyam Prasad Sarada
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RADHIKA MENON, Publisher, Tulika Publishers



Radhika Menon started Tulika as a multilingual children's publishing house in 1996. Tulika's picture books are published in nine languages – English, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati and Bengali. The imaginatively created books have pioneered a new wave of children's publishing in India. A hands-on publisher, she is deeply involved in the visualizing, editing, designing and marketing of Tulika books.

THOMAS ABRAHAM, Managing Director, Hachette India



Thomas Abraham graduated from Loyola Madras as a gold medallist in English Literature and Language, and did his masters in English at St. Stephen's College Delhi.

He moved to publishing from the soft drinks sector in 1994 when he joined Oxford University Press (OUP) as an editor. He soon moved to head the Marketing Department. He joined Hachette India as Marketing Director in 2000. The same year he joined

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Abraham'.

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Penguin Books in the same position and then went on to become the company's youngest ever CEO & President in 2003. In 2008, he moved on to start up Hachette India.

Thomas has a particular affinity for children's books, being an avid collector, and his collection of Billy Bunter rare editions is among the largest in the world. He was responsible for starting Puffin India in 2002; and Hachette has a full-fledged children's division.

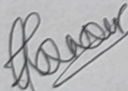
ROOPA PAI, Children's Writer



Roopa Pai is a computer engineer who has written over twenty books for children, spanning the gamut from sci-fi fantasy and pop science to philosophy and economics. Her national bestseller *The Gita For Children* won the Crossword Popular Award for Children's Writing in 2016. Roopa brings together three other loves – history, young people, and her hometown Bangalore – as part of her other job as tour guide with the heritage walks and tours company, Bangalore Walks.

ANDALEEB WAJID, Writer

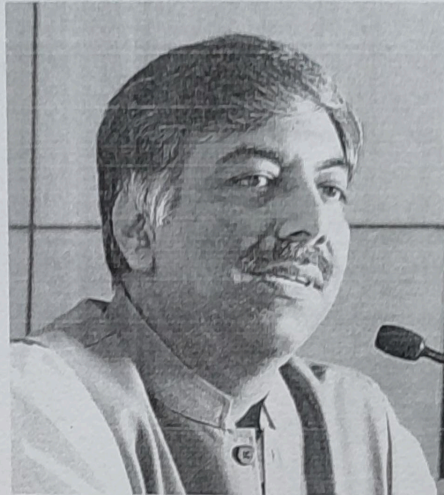



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Andaleeb Wajid has written several novels in the past seven years. Her Young Adult novel *When She Went Away* was shortlisted for The Hindu Young World – Good books Award 2017. She has recently published a romance novel with Juggernaut called *Will the Oven*

Explode? and has several books lined up for publication soon. Andaleeb is a full-time writer and a creative writing facilitator at Nutcracker Workshops.

C P VISWANATH, Co-founder, Karadi Tales



C P Viswanath is a multifaceted individual with a background in international business, children's publishing, music and education. He is one of the co-founders of Karadi Tales Company Pvt. Ltd., one of India's most acclaimed names as creators of children's content. He is co-founder and CEO of Karadi Path Education Company Pvt. Ltd., pathbreakers in language learning pedagogy. He is a co-creator of Karadi Path, a pioneering initiative which is changing the way English is taught in classrooms, especially to first generation English learners. He is the Director of Pedagogy of Isha Vidhya Rural Schools which currently runs nine schools across Tamil Nadu and supports over 500 government schools serving rural and tribal children. He is an accomplished Carnatic vocalist and mridangist with over 1000 public performances.

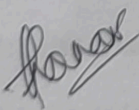
SHYAM MADHAVAN SARADA, Creative Professional



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Shyam Madhavan Sarada is a first-generation entrepreneur with an MBA in Advertising & Marketing from Pondicherry Central University. He has over twenty years of experience in the media and publishing industries in various capacities — writer, illustrator, cartoonist, photographer, art director and publisher. He is also an independent filmmaker.

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National Seminar

on

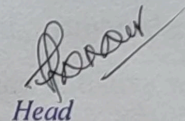
A Big Little World: Perspectives on Children's Literature in India

(A Skill Development Initiative)

Venue: II Floor, Mini Auditorium, Academic Block, Bannerghatta Road Campus

21 February 2017

Consolidated Report



Head

**Department of English and Cultural Studies
School of Arts and Humanities
Bangalore Bannerghatta Road Campus
CHRIST (Deemed to be University)
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Background

The BA Honours in English Studies is a three-year rigorous programme, offering a platform for varied literary, cultural and professional explorations. The curriculum comprises of courses on Literature, Culture, Gender, Ecology, Cinema, Linguistics, History, Writing, Indian Epics, Urban Spaces, etc. aimed at empowering students to pick up key skills, and introducing them to crucial concerns and debates in the field. 'Reading Children's Literature' is one of the papers that the II year students of the BA Honours in English Studies course at Christ University study. Children's literature as a field of study has gained ground with the Popular Culture and Cultural Studies movement in the academia. This course has introduced students to various theories of children's literature and aims to help comprehend the complex

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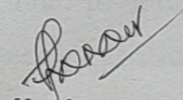
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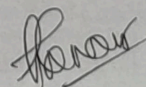
ideologies that operate in the creation, dissemination and consumption of children's literature texts.

The seminar was intended to offer an overview of children's literature in English in India, with a focus on various aspects of publishing, including the art and craft of children's books, their marketing and sales, the politics of representation in books for young readers, innovations in children's books, their digital future and much more. The seminar was to provide a unique forum where students and teachers of children's literature get an opportunity to listen and interact with well established authors, illustrators, editors, and publishing professionals, interact with well established authors, illustrators, editors, and publishing professionals working in the field of children's literature. The challenges and opportunities of the vibrant children's publishing scene in the country was showcased for participants so they are aware of the scope of children's literature being published today. Through this seminar an exposure to current trends, industry perspectives and academic orientations in the field of children's literature was provided to the participating students, faculty and professionals. It was an initiative to bring together the 'industry' and the 'academic' space together and created an interface between both the worlds.

Objectives of the Seminar

1. To engage first-hand with the actual 'industry' involved in disseminating of the texts dealt with in the course.
2. To get a practical understanding of the course as opposed to theoretical knowledge.
3. To gain a job-oriented experience by dealing with the many different aspects of production of children's literature texts.

Scope of the Seminar



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1. Interactive sessions wherein discussions will range from ideological concerns of the field to practical workings of the industry.
2. An opportunity to interact with the leading names in the publishing of Children's Literature texts.
3. Intellectually stimulating discussions augmented by the ambience of the university.

About Funky Rainbow and Goodbooks – Our collaborators

Funky Rainbow: The Travelling Children's Bookshop (www.funkyrainbow.com) is perhaps the only one in the country run by children's writers and creative professionals with the aim of introducing children's books to young audiences. Our books are handpicked and curated for children in the age-group 1-18 years and represent the best of Indian children's writing. The bookstore carries a mix of both fiction and non-fiction titles that are not easily available in mainstream bookstores.

The Goodbooks website (www.goodbooks.in) is a repository for Indian children's books and provides a space to all those engaged with children to enter the fascinating discourse on children's literature. It is where educators, parents, librarians and research scholars get an overview of children's literature in India, and an update of books being published across the country. The reviews on the site critically evaluate books, enhancing the understanding of what constitutes good children's books and creating awareness about the role of books and reading in a child's life.

Inaugural Session

The National Seminar *A Big Little World: Perspectives on Children's Literature in India* organised by the School of Business Studies and Social Sciences, CHRIST University, Bangalore Bannerghatta Road Campus, in association with Funky Rainbow, the Travelling Bookshop and Goodbooks was conducted on the 21st of February, 2017 with its inauguration seeing a large audience presence, all gathered to take part and discuss the intellectual

Ranvir

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questions and arguments put forth by the significant academics that had come to attend the seminar from all parts of India. After the lighting of the lamp, accompanied by the invocation song, Prof. Priya V, Faculty, welcomed the gathering. Prof. Renu Elizabeth Abraham introduced the seminar by listing out its aims and objectives.



The plane was laid out by Prof. John Joseph Kennedy, who posed significant questions on the genre of children's literature, such as "Who are the consumers of these books?", "What are the characteristic features of the books pertaining to this genre and what is expected of them?", etc. He spoke about the complex nature of children's writing and how it is wrongly assumed to be 'simple', just because the language is easier in comparison to adult books. Children's Literature is not given the same importance and appreciation in the academic world that other genres of writing experience, and is marginalised within this world and outside. Very less time is spent studying and analysing this genre due to the limited number of academic institutions providing courses on the same. He encourages more seminars like these to be held in order to bring to light such marginalised topics and genres so as to open up forays into newer spheres for exploration. With this, the seminar took off and the first session began.

Session 1

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“Children's Literature in English in India: An Overview” by Vidya Mani, Editor and Entrepreneur, Goodbooks



The first speaker for the day was Ms. Vidya Mani, who is a children's writer and editor. She runs a content and design studio called Melting Pot that creates children's books and magazines for publishers and NGOs. She is one of the founder-members of *Bookalore*, a Bangalore-based book club that conducts monthly events across the city to bring books and children together in interesting ways. She also runs a pop-up bookshop called Funky Rainbow that travels across Bangalore and puts out a curated collection of Indian children's books at various events. She is also the managing editor of the children's book review site, Goodbooks.

Ms. Mani started her presentation by saying children are introduced to those books by their parents/guardians that they themselves have read. And since most of the parents of the present generation of kids grew up at a time when not a lot of Indians wrote children's literature, very few Indian authors are known to them and resultantly, their kids. most of the books familiar to them are European, such as the works of Enid Blyton, etc. As a contrast to this, she provides the history of Indian children's books. The first books in this genre were mostly rewritten folktales and fairytales that later went on to become original stories, such as *Diwali*, *Procession* and *Homes*, which were the first few books written in 1985.

Subsequently, picture books started getting published, Pulak Biswas of *Makagittibonnie* one of

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them. She mentions the main features of these books: they are didactic, socially conscious, have no possibility of occurring in real life, are a melting pot and culturally relevant. In the 1990s, writers gave books narrative voices that were strong, distinctive and imaginative. This happened through the entry of large children's publishing houses like Tulika books, Tara books, Karadi Tales, etc. They focused and challenged important ideologies and were experimental. They used innovative methods, such as songs in audio-books, folk and tribal art, celebrity narrators, etc. in order to garner the attention of the readers. They were creating culturally-rooted books, speaking in a voice that the child could relate to.

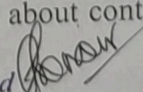
Ms. Mani went on to talk about the present-day publishing scene in India. She says that most of these publishing houses focus on breaking gender stereotypes and address notions of sexuality and are more inclusive of the diverse populations of the country. This is carried on to the Young Adult genre as well, which although emerged internationally in the 1970s, reached India only in the 2000s, through the publication of *No Guns At My Son's Funeral* by Paro Anand. After this, she talks about modern, contemporary books that made a difference by dividing it into 3 groups based on the target audience. The books that brought about a change on the first group, i.e. young readers are:

1. *Gajapati Kulapati* by Ashok Rajagopalan for the culturally relatable name of the elephant
2. *Tiger on a Tree* by Anushka Ravishankar for the Black and White illustration techniques used
3. *Annual Haircut Day* by Noni
4. *Princess Easy Peasy* by Natasha Sharma
5. *The Why-Why Girl* by Mahashweta Devi

All these books brought about an awareness among children by talking about contemporary

themes.

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She mentions books in the second category, i.e. middle readers, that created a difference:

1. *Tigers for Dinner* by Ruskin Bond that sets Jim Corbett National Park as the setting in order to bring a sense of realism into the text
2. *Book Uncle and Me* by Uma Krishnaswami which revolves around a library
3. *Sorry Best Friend* by Ranjan De
4. *Unprincess!* by Manjula Padmanabhan for straying from the stereotype that all girls want to be princesses by creating a character who does not want to be one.

These books provide the appropriate impetus for younger readers that transition into the next stage of their lives and enter the middle reader group.

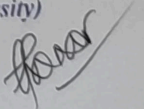
The third group i.e. older readers of children's books acquired the following books that helped create a new surge of thinking through their writings:

1. *The Gita for Children* by Roopa Pai that is devoid of religious connotations, and only focuses on the life lessons that it teaches
2. *Survival Tips for Lunatics* by Shandana Minhas
3. *Ranthambore* by Deepak Dalal that have the adventures take place in exotic locations within India so as to show that India can be a setting for interesting events too
4. *Dear Mrs. Naidu* by Mathangi Subramanian that provides historical lessons through its story
5. *Queen of Ice* by Devika Rangachari that talks about a queen of Kashmir, again contextualising it to India.

These books took up relevant issues that they felt the growing audience would need to become aware and sensitised to.

Ms. Mani mentions that it is not just the genre of fiction that ~~Heads~~ ^{heads} well in the children's field but also a myriad collection of non-fiction books that ~~finds~~ ^{finds} the Indian reality

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through the creative uses of style, method of production, etc. They also address contemporary themes, the way fiction does, but in different ways. Some of them mentioned are:

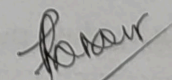
1. *The Sea in My Bucket* by Deepa Balsavar
2. *Something to Chew On*

She concluded her presentation by talking about Literature festivals that have special segments for children's literature nowadays. Some such institutions are the Goodbooks Trust, Bookalore in Bangalore, Bookaroo in Delhi, etc. There are also Awards presented to children's writers that provide impetus to young, aspiring writers. Indie bookshops like Atta Galatta are keeping this alive by conducting similar workshops.

**“Consumers of Children's Literature: An Industry Perspective” by Thomas Abraham,
Managing Director, Hachette India**

The next speaker was Mr. Thomas Abraham, Managing Director, Hachette India. He graduated from Loyola College, Madras as a gold medallist in English Literature and Language, and did his Master's in English at St. Stephen's College, Delhi. He moved to publishing from the soft drinks sector in 1994 when he joined Oxford University Press (OUP) as an editor. He soon moved to head the Marketing Department. He left OUP to join Dorling Kindersley as Marketing Director in 2000. The same year he joined Penguin Books in the same position and then went on to become the company's youngest ever CEO and President in 2003. In 2008, he moved on to start up Hachette India. Mr. Abraham has a particular affinity for children's books, being an avid collector, and his collection of *Billy Bunter* rare editions is among the largest in the world. He was responsible for starting Puffin India in 2002; Hachette India has a full-fledged children's division.

He began by saying that there is a high road and a low road when it comes to children's literature in India - one is commercial, the other is not.



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has been able to bridge this gap successfully but the arena of children's books is still a work-in-progress. It is estimated that by 2020, there are going to be 47 million working surplus population, as opposed to other countries where its much less. India is one of the biggest consumer markets in the world with the fastest growing education market of 5.7 million teachers.

He lists out the challenges that India faces on the educational front:

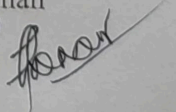
1. Red-tapism
2. Poverty
3. Creaky Infrastructure
4. Corruption
5. Disregard for IPR
6. Government policies not keeping pace with private initiatives
7. Reading the boom timing wrong, etc.

He says that despite all the above-mentioned challenges, India has seen progress in the last 20 years. The poverty rate has gone down and the literacy rate has gone up.

Mr. Abraham next answers the question of who are the Indian consumers of books, by saying that 50% of the population is under the age of 30 years in this country. Yet, only 1 Rupee is spent per person per year on average in India on books. There is a rise in prices in all other domains except for in books. There has been no significant rise in the price of books over the years.

He provides interesting statistics to show how much of the population consumes which types of books. Children's books share 35% of the total percentage of books consumed by the Indian reading public. 80% of the Young Adult books are consumed by adults. After the age of 13 years, the popularity of books among children falls drastically due to distractions like TV, computer, academics, etc. Also, physical books are more popular than

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online books. He next answers the question of why online books are so weak in garnering popularity among the audience by listing out certain factors such as:

1. Sense of community
2. Discoverability
3. Luxury of browsing
4. Author events
5. Collateral
6. Higher price.

Out of these, he elaborates on 4 key factors that work against online shopping and work for physical book-buying. The first being a sense of community that only the physical presence of the customer in a bookstore can provide. For example, Blossoms bookstore in Bangalore. The second is discoverability. Only 17% of the books are discoverable online whereas in a bookstore, similar books pertaining to the same genre are kept beside each other which facilitates better discoverability. The third is browsing which is quite an organised activity that helps in the process of buying books. The last one is staff picks which is very problematic in India because the staff is not trained or educated on the books that they handle, resulting in the customers not gaining help in buying. But otherwise, in other parts of the world, staff picks play an important role in the decision-making process that goes behind buying any book.

Mr. Abraham says that parents only spend money on books only when there is a clear benefit that will help the child get ahead. India is a low-priced market for children's books where the average selling price of these books is Rs. 200 only. However, the kids segment is number 1 on the consumer front mainly due to two reasons. The first is that kids drive sales and urge their parents to buy them the books due to peer pressure. The second is the factors

that affect purchases like illustrations, PR strategies, etc. Age Banding and Humanities into play

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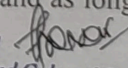
that attribute age groups to various books and that it has its pros and cons in India and worldwide.

He goes on to give a brief history of children's books in the world and also India by mentioning the decades-wise trend and shift that this genre of literature witnessed and experienced. The first picture book that came up was *Orbis Sensuatum Pictus* following which, many other forms came up such as horn books, chap books, etc. The publication of *Billy Bunter* in 1908 created a huge sensation.

1940-70- traveller's order booking saw a rise which was purely distributor-driven. This was when Enid Blyton books came to India.

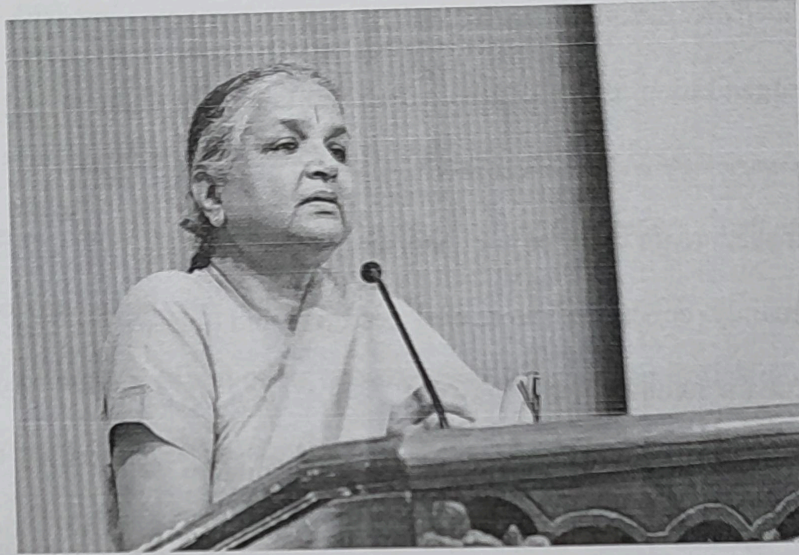
- 1970- Echo Books brought out the first children's imprint
- 1990-2000- saw a decline in children's books internationally
- 2000-10- chain retail came to India which was mostly misguided. But presently, it is vanishing, for example, Odyssey, Landmark.
- 2010-16- online exploitation of books has begun.

Children's market rose in between 1990 to 2016 through audio books and the *Harry Potter* series, with big chains like Bloomsbury having the highest market share. According to 2016 statistics, Current Top 10 Children's Authors has J.K. Rowling at number 1 even though her HP series published decades ago. What is worrying is that only 1 Indian author- Sudha Murthy- makes the list. In that Lifetime list, no Indian authors are featured which points to the lack of popularity and readership of Indian authors' works by Indians. Very few and same brands have been dominating the children's literature scene in India since the 1940s. In 2016, the growth rate of consumption of these books stands at 99 crores, but the minute *Harry Potter* is removed from the equation, the estimate drops to 80 crores. These numbers show that the old has not made way for the new, more contemporary authors in India, and as long as that does not happen, the consumption rate will suffer.

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Session 2

“Small is the New Big: The Indie Children's Publishing Scene in India” by Radhika Menon, Publisher, Tulika Books



The third speaker for the day was Ms. Radhika Menon, Publisher, Tulika Publishers. She started Tulika as a multilingual children's publishing house in 1996. Tulika's picture books are published in nine languages - English, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati and Bengali. The imaginatively created books have pioneered a new wave of children's publishing in India. A hands-on publisher, she is deeply involved in the visualising, editing, designing and marketing of Tulika books.

Ms. Menon starts off by providing a brief history of Tulika by saying that it strives to create quality multilingual books in 9 languages and that its inception was with a bilingual book- *Line and Circle* which also has Hindi translations. Then she talks about the imported books like *Harry Potter* that are heavily-subsidised in India in order to cater to the reading public. This is achieved by big chain publishers like Bloomsbury which bring out several imprints.

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In opposition to this, she goes on to name some of the most prominent independent publishers in India to draw parallels and provide information about the kind of content that

they put out and what they try to achieve through it. Following are the list of companies that she mentions:

1. NBT India - it is the first post-independent government-supported company that produces multilingual, cheap and subsidised books
2. CBT - this organisation also produces subsidised books for children and often publishes award-winning entries by writers/illustrators
3. Katha - is a magazine for children for underserved communities
4. Eklavya - mainly conducts educational research and focuses on the socio-economic limitations on certain communities of India
5. Karadi Tales - published books on Indian culture for children
6. Tara books - created visual books with the inclusion of tribal art in order to provide something new to the readers
7. Pratham books - tied up with municipal corporations and the UNICEF to provide education to children on a large scale. It is not profit-driven and aims at accessibility and affordability
8. Young Zubaan - publishes Young Adult and children's books
9. Duckbill - caters to the age group above 7 years and publishes Young Adult and children's books
10. Takshila - represents the cultural diversity of India through periodicals and other art forms
11. Adivaani - it publishes Adivasi writings and stories for and by Adivasis. It provides their oral forms of storytelling and folklores, narrates their stories of exploitation, struggle and displacement in their own voices by projecting authentic culture.

After providing this extensive list of independent publishers in India, she goes on to name some of the works of individual authors and illustrators that have worked with these

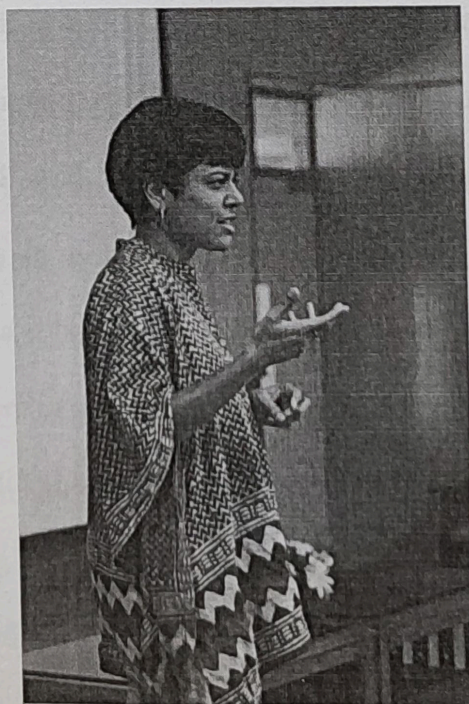
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publishers to create a wide range of works that address important socio-cultural issues of the country. Some of them are:

1. *Home* by Nina Sabnani draws a connection between storytelling and books
2. *The Why-Why Girl* and *Our Incredible Cow* by Mahashweta Devi that have creative ways of illustrating
3. *Dosa Amma Dosa* by Sandhya Rao that are multilingual rhyme books
4. *Big Hero, Size Zero* by Anusha Hariharan and Sowmya Rajendran that is a non-fiction adopted by schools and children

She concluded by saying that children's books should be analysed critically and more time should be given to the process of creating the book, such as editing, etc. They represent works without bias of class, stereotypes, etc. There is a constant battle in the market with big publishers and what needs to be focused on is nurturing the talent of young writers through a creative process that is slow and smooth.

“Looking in to Look Out :Why I Write Indian Stories for Indian Children” by Roopa Pai, Children’s Writer



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The fourth speaker was Ms. Roopa Pai, a children's writer. She is a computer engineer who has written over 20 books for children, spanning the gamut from sci-fi fantasy and pop science to philosophy and economics. Her national bestseller *The Gita for Children* won the Crossword Popular Award for Children's Writing in 2016. She brings together three other loves - history, young people and her hometown Bangalore - as part of her job as tour guide with the heritage walks and tours company, Bangalore Walks.

Ms. Pai begins by answering the question of why she writes. She writes simply because she likes to. She likes to talk about her thoughts and experiences by penning them down. Her next question of why she writes stories has the answer: 'We are the stories that we tell ourselves'. The more diverse the stories are, the more readers will begin to believe that they are possibilities in the world. What story you tell yourself distinguishes who you are - your persona. What is the story that we tell ourselves in India? Which is the better story? we have a responsibility to our children, to tell them empowering stories, inspiring stories, stories that show them that theirs aren't the only stories in the world. This is the reason why she writes stories: to try and make the children choose the better story.

Citing Enid Blyton as her favourite, Pai proposes the next argument that it is our stories that born from our worldview, our culture. She says that the reason why she writes Indian stories is because our stories are not shaped by religion, but rather by its people. She talks about two tropes in relation to this. The first is about 'leaving' as found in European novels. For them, the idea is to leave, to see the world, to be a man. The idea is to conquer and subdue nature to feel good about yourself. As England is a cold country, everything is a struggle. Going away is a theme because no one is coming to their country. If you want to see the world, you have to leave. This is not so in India because of its rich heritage that has drawn others to our shores and not vice versa. Why would we want to go and see the world when the world is at our doorstep, wanting to trade with us. This is why our stories are about the

accepting diversity and understanding that essentially we are all the same. Indian stories are all about finding stillness in the middle of chaos.

By providing excerpts from Salman Rushdie's 'Harun and the Sea of Stories', she proposes that our languages are gateways to who we are, they are repositories of our culture. There is no word in any Indian language that means 'evil' because no one is believed to be devoid of god in India, they are only misguided. She reads out excerpts from Indian epics and classics like the Ramayana and Mrichchakatika to show how words combine together beautifully to create meanings, yet we are ignorant of our own literatures due to having no access to them due to lack of knowledge of Sanskrit.

Her next point is that if you don't know yourself, you will never love yourself. She elaborates by saying that if a person is not secure about who they are, four things can happen- first- they take offense to what someone says about them and their culture. Second- feel threatened by the other person and therefore withdraw into their shell and not engage. Third- get seduced by someone else's culture or fourth - believe what someone else says about their culture which is the worst.

She concludes with her last point that 'if you don't love yourself, then how will you love others'. She talks about India which so many languages, so many stories. It has a grand tradition of storytelling, with its epic stories about human nature. Storytelling is done through sophisticated performance art. Indian children have the ability to absorb complex stories and therefore, must not be restricted to those provided by the West. Pai's point is not to say that Indian children should only read works by Indian authors, but that no representation should be restricted to a single one. The Indian audience must read works from all over the world in order to understand their own culture better and develop a worldview.

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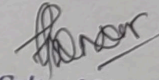
Session 3

“The Politics of Representations in Children's Literature” by Andaleeb Wajid, Writer.



The fifth speaker of the day was Ms. Andaleeb Wajid who has written several novels in the past seven years. Her Young Adult novel *When She Went Away* was shortlisted for The Hindu Young World - Goodbooks Award 2017. She has recently published a romance novel with Juggernaut called *Will the Oven Explode?* and has several books lined up for publication soon. Ms. Wajid is a full-time writer and a creative writing facilitator at Nutcracker Workshops.

She opens by saying that the reason parents keep going back to books by Sudha Murthy and A.P.J Abdul Kalam for their children is because they want to choose inspirational books. She says that no matter how much authors try to incorporate inclusivity in their writings, stereotyping is a reductive process that is inevitable. Through writing books such as 'My Brother's Wedding' and 'Not Just Biryani', Ms. Wajid has tried to break the stereotypes associated with Indian Muslims that as soon as the Bride and Groom say "Qubul Hai", the audience break out into dance and all sorts of celebrations and that all Muslims eat at home at all times is Biryani. Through these books, she has tried to project a reality that is devoid of stereotypes.

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Ms. Wajid enumerates certain key books that have been instrumental in breaking myriad stereotypes and having a sense of inclusivity:

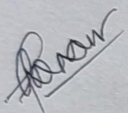
1. *Simply Nanju* by Zainab Sulaiman looks at a school of disabled children but does not make it the centre of the plot by shining light on their disabilities. The main plot is something else; it just happens to take place around these disabled kids. By doing this, this book normalises the differences seen in people which is an important step towards achieving the goals mentioned by these books.
2. *Queen of Ice* by Devika Rangachari in which an author's ambition is termed 'ruthless' simply because she is a woman. It is deemed to be too ambitious for someone whose place is supposed to be at home with her children, carrying out household chores.
3. Ranjit Lal's books introduce sensitive topics by organically weaving them into the plot, without sensationalising them. *Faces into Water* does not sound preachy while addressing the issue of suicide whereas *Smitten* is about child sexual abuse which does not exclusively spell it out and approaches the topic gently.
4. *Slightly Burnt* by Payal Dhar discusses issues of gender and sexuality in children's literature in a normalising manner that neither simplifies it nor hypes it up to exorbitant proportions.
5. *Talking of Muskaan* by Himanjali Sankar deals with homosexuality and suicide in similar contexts.

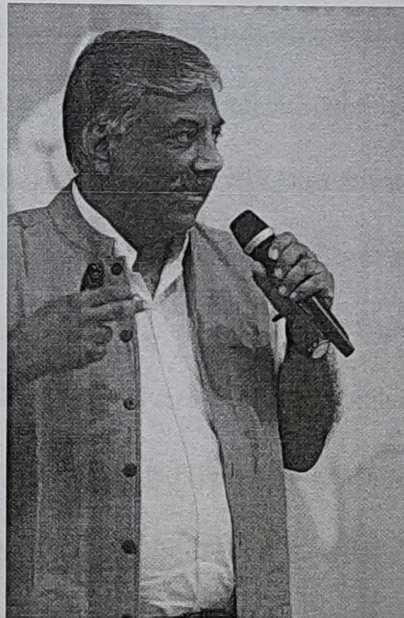
Ms. Wajid next broaches the subject of family in India and says that it is considered sacrosanct and most important aspect of life. It is a supreme force. She says that recent children's literatures are starting to accept the fact that joint families are dwindling and that

even nuclear families may not last for various reasons. She addresses this notion in her book *Where the Protagonist Leaves Her Family Behind*. Her perception that seems to also be prevalent in other recent works is that children should not be protected from

such truths that are present in real life as they will find out eventually. Rather, they should be made aware of it in the right manner so as to inculcate a sense of acceptance. What this body of writing does is that it opens up a new generation of readers to the whole world that are sensitised to these issues in the appropriate manner. Ms. Wajid provides exclusive examples of Muslims in fiction but the same notion is applicable to other stereotyped or negatively-represented communities as well.

**“Changing with the Times: Innovations and Opportunities in Children's Publishing” by
C P Viswanath, Co-founder, Karadi Tales**


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The next speaker was C P Viswanath who is a multifaceted individual with a background in international business, children's publishing, music and education. He is one of the co-founders of Karadi Tales Company Pvt. Ltd., one of India's most acclaimed names as creators of children's content. he is co-founder and CEO of Karadi Path Education Company Pvt. Ltd., path breakers in language learning pedagogy. He is a co-creator of Karadi path, a pioneering initiative which is changing the way English is taught in classrooms, especially to first generation English learners. He is the Director of Pedagogy of Isha Vidhya Rural

Schools which currently runs nine schools across Tamil Nadu and supports over 500 government schools serving rural and tribal children. He is an accomplished Carnatic vocalist and mridangist with over 1000 public performances.

He starts his presentation by saying that children's literature publishing in India is marginal and very less in proportion to other genres of publishing. With respect to the ancient tradition of storytelling in India which plays an intrinsic part of our oral literary histories, he says that this art form has several characteristics:

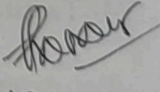
1. there are only discoveries, not inventions
2. it is the fountainhead for all art
3. change and innovation is integral to the art of storytelling
4. it is all about looking back to looking forward - includes stories from Yakshagana and Harikatha as part of modern narratives.

Mr. Viswanath divides his presentation into categories in order to deal with each aspect with clarity and order. The topics that he discusses on are Topics, Writing, Illustration and Formats. He talks about the topics that are covered in these books by saying that:

1. Children's storytelling is slowly moving away from mythologies and retellings to original and contemporary-themed stories.
2. It is becoming much more inclusive and politically correct in terms of its characters, setting and plot structure as compared to earlier times when they were not given much prevalence as it was assumed that children were not smart enough to perceive any of its politics anyway.
3. Nowadays it has become mandatory to be cautioned when it comes to children's books in order to filter through all the adult sensibilities that are being thrust upon children.

He next talks about writing to say that:

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1. There are many emerging writers on the block who are creating an interesting body of work that is seeping into the reading habits of children.
2. There is an absence of formal training in writing for children which is often reflected in the literature that they produce.

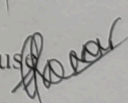
He talks about the kind of illustrations that we are seeing in children's books today and its importance as pictures have always played a significant part in this genre. He says that:

1. The illustrations are getting more sophisticated
2. publishers are paying more attention to illustrations nowadays which is why they are investing more in it, like Tulika publishers
3. there is an emergence of a particular crop of illustrators in India
4. there is however an absence of formal courses on illustration that teach young aspirants how to go about the whole process of illustrating for children's books and what all to keep in mind.

After this, Mr. Viswanath talks about the various formats that publishers adopt in their books in order to garner reader response and consumption. Some of them are:

1. Multilingual books that cater to large audiences and facilitates in learning multiple languages through the process of association.
2. Comics and graphic novels like Amar Chitra Katha (ACK), etc. that catch the attention of younger children.
3. Audio-books that engage children in creative ways by including poetry recitations and songs.
4. Tactile books (picture books) have had a resurgence that has made them more inclusive.

For example, there are picture books for the blind like *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* that use



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various textures and fabrics to represent what they are talking about, which help the visually-impaired to experience picture books.

5. Digital medium like Karadi Path that adopt technology to keep up with the times and provide something that a child will find interesting. They conduct storytelling with the necessary pedagogy and encourage language learning in schools.

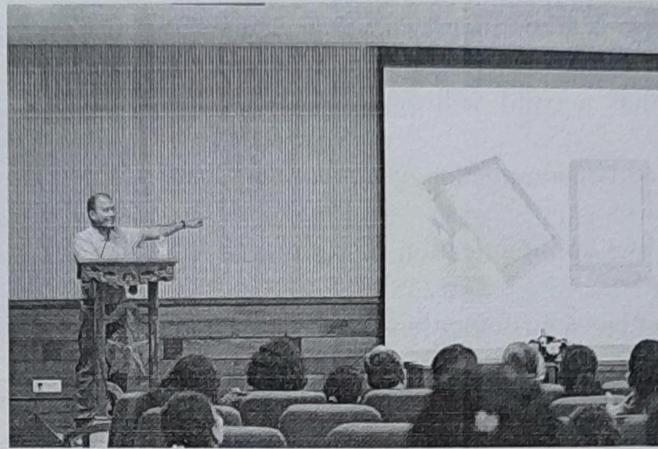
He discusses the communication of children's publishing with the market by saying that the Indian market has a customer base of 300 million children and young adults. The key to getting the books purchased is to get the teachers and parents on board with the kind of books that are written. He says that children's books are art that are created more than for art's sake and the kind of Elitism that is prevalent in this small community needs to be dispensed with. He stresses on the integration of children's books into classroom teaching as being crucial in increasing the sales for publishing houses. Lastly, he says that only if publishing houses make use of the opportunities provided by the digital world, they will be able to thrive in today's technology-oriented world.

He concludes his presentation by talking about the distribution of books among various groups and organisations in India by saying that the big-retail format that was huge during the initial stages of publishing is now beginning to fail, as can be seen in big chains like Landmark, Odyssey, etc. The first style is that of traditional, conventional 'distributor to retailer' channel as found in bookstores. The second style is selling to schools in order to be available in their libraries for students to read. The third style is making books available in book fairs and book clubs. The fourth style is through online and digital downloads available on official sites which are becoming increasingly popular. The last style is that of doorstep method where the books are provided directly to the customers. These are the major modes by which publishing houses advertise their books to the customers.


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Session 4

“The Digital Futures of Books” by Shyam Madhavan Sarada, Creative Professional

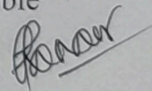


The last speaker for the day was Mr. Shyam Madhavan Sarada who is a first-generation entrepreneur with an MBA in Advertising and Marketing from Pondicherry Central University. He has over twenty years of experience in the media and publishing industries in various capacities - writer, illustrator, cartoonist, photographer, art director and publisher. He is also an independent filmmaker.

He divided his presentation into parts with each part providing a separate history and account on the digital state of affairs in book publishing around the world. The first part is on the Digital Revolution. Here, he provides a brief history of the evolution of publishing:

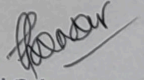
1. In the beginning, there was the traditional model of publishing which was strictly printing of books on paper.
2. In the mid-1980s, desktop publishing began.
3. In the 90s, the internet age descended and with it came Amazon and Barnes and Noble online sites.
4. In the mid-2000s, eBook readers came into being.
5. After this, self-publishing took on new heights with the boom of eBooks.
6. Emphasis was on quantity over quality as opposed to earlier times.

After this, he moved onto part 2 which focused on the Timeline of eBooks:

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1. They began in 1971 with Project Gutenberg publishing 10,000 books in plain text form online that were devoid of copyright issues.
2. In the 1980s, floppy disks were invented.
3. In 1990, the first PC book was made.
4. In 1992, the DOS operating system moved to Windows.
5. In 93, Bibliobytes, the first eBook website was launched and brought with it the evolution of the eReader.
6. In 99, Simon and Schuster brought out iBooks. Microsoft brought out the MS Reader.
7. In 2000, Stephen King's Bag of Bones was published online and sold 5 lakhs in 48 copies which was a record and happened because of the dotcom boom.

Mr. Sarada then drew a comparison between the publishing industry and music industry. Just like the music industry went from tape to CDs to the mp3 revolution, the publishing industry experienced similar changes. The 2007 Kindle by Amazon was not the first eReader, there was rocket before that. The new marketing strategy was to add 'e' to everything, for example, emagazines, enewspapers, etc. eBooks became a subset of publishing material. There were changes in the content delivery over the years. Yet, the 2016 statistics show that Audio books constitute only 3%, eBooks 25% and Prints a sweeping majority of 72%, even though print media takes the most money. He says that digital publishing is the way to go for indie publishing houses as it provides them with a platform to sell at low costs to large masses. Yet, in the case of children's literatures, print books are in demand and popular as compared to eBooks due to certain notions and beliefs of parents regarding the harmful effects of technology. In Adult fiction, 70% sales are digitally and 30% are indie. In Juvenile fiction, 25% is digital and 11% is independent. In Juvenile non-fiction, 11% is digital and 5% is indie.

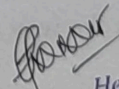
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The third part is about the Future. Here, he talks about the different markets of books in various categories and genres of books:

1. With respect to children's books, the juvenile market has grown 40% in the last decade. However, the eBook sale has seen a downtrend.
2. eBook pricing and eBook formatting are works in progress. For example, Amazon created its own mechanism through Kindle to bring in sales.
3. The market fragmentation is high.
4. The competition for eBooks is generic.
5. Readership is fickle.

To conclude, Mr. Sarada provided current statistics of the medium of readership of children's literature by children through the census method. 64% of children have read an eBook whereas 36% have not. The preference of Print vs. eBooks stands at 60% for Print, 24% for eBooks and 15% having no preference. 80% of the children prefer to read from physical copies even though eBooks are available. At home, if there are assumed to be 100 books, 89 of them will be physical copies whereas 11 books will be e-copies. He sums up by saying that at least in children's literature, Print is here to stay.

The seminar was concluded with a vote of thanks by Prof. Angelin Sanchez and the National Anthem. It was a good learning experience for the students and it gave them a very good overview of the industry of children's writing and publishing.


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1534032	SUJATA ENDAW
1534035	ADITYA R P
1534036	MAHASWETA GOGOI
1534039	RAJBINDER KUMAR SINGH
1534040	RHETHUPARNAN V T
1534041	SAMARTH TEMAK
1534043	ADITI MAZUMDAR
1534044	ANGELA BHUTIA
1534045	ANILA KOSHY
1534046	ASMITA DABRAL
1534048	NAKSHATRA PRAMOD
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1533145	ANNIE JAMES
1533146	DIVYA SHARMA
1533147	GAYATHRI SATISH
1533148	KUDRAT HANDA
1533149	MEGHMALLAR DEY
1533150	NIKITA DUGGAL
1533151	OSHEEN PATHAK
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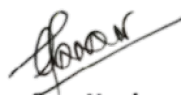


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