Photo by Athira Manoharan

THE SALTWATER SCROLLS

The Research Scholars' E-Magazine

An initiative by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) Pilani, K. K. Birla Goa Campus, Goa.

**November 2024,
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Photo by Kathryn Hummel

Photo by @thecalisthenicbiker

Editors' Note

Dear readers,
Kindly let us hand over this little note and welcome you aboard as you are about to explore the different shades of the ocean through the inaugural issue of our e-magazine, *The Saltwater Scrolls*. This ocean-themed edition holds a special place in our hearts, as it is a reflection of our experiences, talents, and cherished memories from the serene coastal life of Goa. Much like the ocean—vast, turbulent, yet profoundly beautiful—our Ph.D. journey has been a remarkable blend of challenges and triumphs. In this first issue, we share with you a glimpse of this journey, celebrating both our personal and academic accomplishments. We hope that through these pages, you will find a connection to the sea, to our stories, and to the endless pursuit of knowledge that mirrors the ever-changing tides.

Thank you for joining us on this exciting beginning.
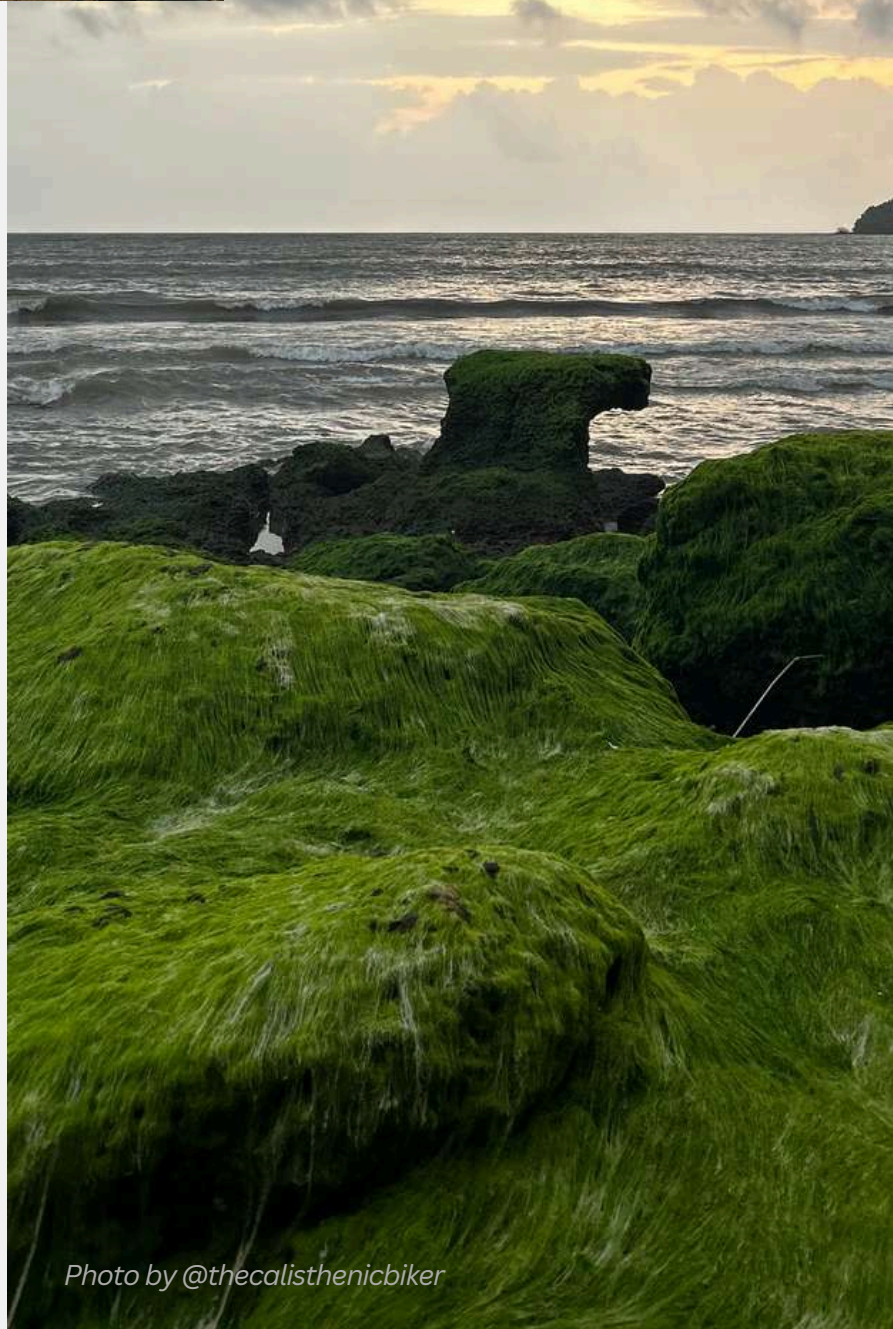
Athira Manoharan
Anupama Madhusudan

Photo by @thecalisthenicbiker

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Photo by @thecalisthenicbiker

The Saltwater Scrolls: A New Tide of Academic and Creative Expression

By Shona Lynn Desilva

The Saltwater Scrolls is the title chosen by the research scholars of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) at BITS Pilani, K. K. Birla Goa Campus, Goa, for our new e-magazine. I suggested this title as I thought that it would evoke the essence of both the coastal environment of the campus and the multidisciplinary spirit of its contributors. This e-magazine is designed to bridge academic thought with the more fluid realms of art and creativity. The title captures this convergence and offers an apt metaphor for the coming together of academic rigor and creative exploration, like the meeting of land and water along Goa's shores.

Goa's coastal identity is woven into campus life at BITS Pilani, Goa, and it profoundly influences both students and faculty. The campus, located close to various beaches, provides an environment that naturally inspires moments of introspection and creativity. The sight, sound, and smell of the ocean provide a backdrop where scholars find both solace and inspiration. For many of the HSS scholars, a walk along the beach offers a reprieve from academic pressures and allows us to clear our minds and return to our research with renewed clarity.

Photo by @thecalisthenicbiker

In this way, the title mirrors the role of the coast as a sanctuary, where academia and creativity meet like the land and the sea. The scholars envisioned the e-magazine as a space that encourages its viewers and contributors to step out of their academic routines and immerse themselves in the ebb and flow of creative ideas. Just as the ocean never remains static, the content in The Saltwater Scrolls is intended to be dynamic, unpredictable, and engaging and seeks to make viewers contemplate the interplay between the natural and intellectual worlds.

Photo by Aritra Bandopadhyay

The name "Saltwater Scrolls" symbolises a blend of academic pursuit and creative expression that defines the vision of this e-magazine. Traditionally, scrolls are associated with ancient wisdom, historical records, and esoteric knowledge. The "saltwater" in the title introduces a sense of the unpredictable and mystical quality that the sea represents. The imagery of scrolls floating in the sea suggests ideas and narratives that are timeless and enduring but also susceptible to the unpredictable tides of interpretation and perspective. Each piece is meant to feel like a discovery—mysterious, layered, and compelling. The concept of scrolls being touched by seawater also reflects an ethos of intellectual curiosity that resists rigid categorization. The saltwater motif points to the unique flavour of the content, which seeks to balance the structure of academia with the fluidity of creativity. Much like scrolls recovered from the sea, the e-magazine's content is meant to challenge its audience, stimulate curiosity, and encourage exploration. The content may provoke reflection or even debate, and may carry a sense of excitement and intrigue.

The content in *The Saltwater Scrolls* also seeks to infuse the distinctiveness of Goa's landscape, culture, and spirit. Goa's unique identity as a coastal state with a rich history of cultural and intellectual exchange provides an ideal metaphor for the magazine's vision. Just as Goa has been influenced by various cultural currents—local, Portuguese, Indian, and other international influences—the magazine welcomes a diversity of ideas and expressions from contributors. The culture of Goa, with its mix of tradition and modernity would serve as an inspiration for *The Saltwater Scrolls*. The e-magazine will reflect Goan culture not only in its aesthetics and themes but also in the openness it cultivates for both academic and artistic voices. Contributors may explore topics related to the social and cultural dynamics of Goa, engage with broader philosophical debates, or offer introspective pieces on the intellectual and creative journeys that intersect on campus and beyond using different media. Through this incorporation of the "Goan flavour," *The Saltwater Scrolls* would be a window into the unique intellectual and cultural landscape of our campus.

The name *The Saltwater Scrolls* was selected by the scholars because as a collective, we agreed that the title effectively represents a philosophy of thought and expression that is as boundless as the sea and as rich as the wisdom found in ancient scrolls. The e-magazine will be a place where the waves of fresh ideas meet the shores of tradition and where each contribution is like a wave that leaves its mark, moves forward, and contributes to a broader sea of knowledge and creativity. *The Saltwater Scrolls* proposes to be more than just an e-magazine. It will be a dialogue, an experience, and a creative and intellectual journey for both its viewers and contributors. It will encourage scholars to question, explore, and express ideas and art in ways that are as liberating and uncontainable as the sea. In this way, it will emphasise the transformative potential of interdisciplinary engagement and reflect the endless possibilities that arise when academia meets the realm of creativity.

My Turbulent Relationship with the Sea

by Shashwat Vikram Singh

I saw the ocean for the first time when I accompanied my father on a work trip to Goa twenty years ago. I was underwhelmed by the sea; however, the variety of Goan bread that was sold by the poder (Goan breadmaker as well as seller) near the hotel where I was staying grabbed my attention. When I moved to Goa three years ago, after my admission into the doctoral programme of BITS, I was the first in my bloodline to live beside a sea. I followed the proud tradition of people from Indo-Gangetic plains moving along the coast for career prospects. I have gotten accustomed to the presence of the ocean, but my feelings for the ocean now oscillate between being underwhelming and unnerving with its vastness and all-engulfing nature. I identify more with the concept of the ocean as being turbulent and brutal, as portrayed in *The Old Man and The Sea* by Hemingway and *Moby Dick* by Melville, not so much with the sea from *Dil Deke Dekho*, *An Evening in Paris* or *Dil Chahta Hai*.
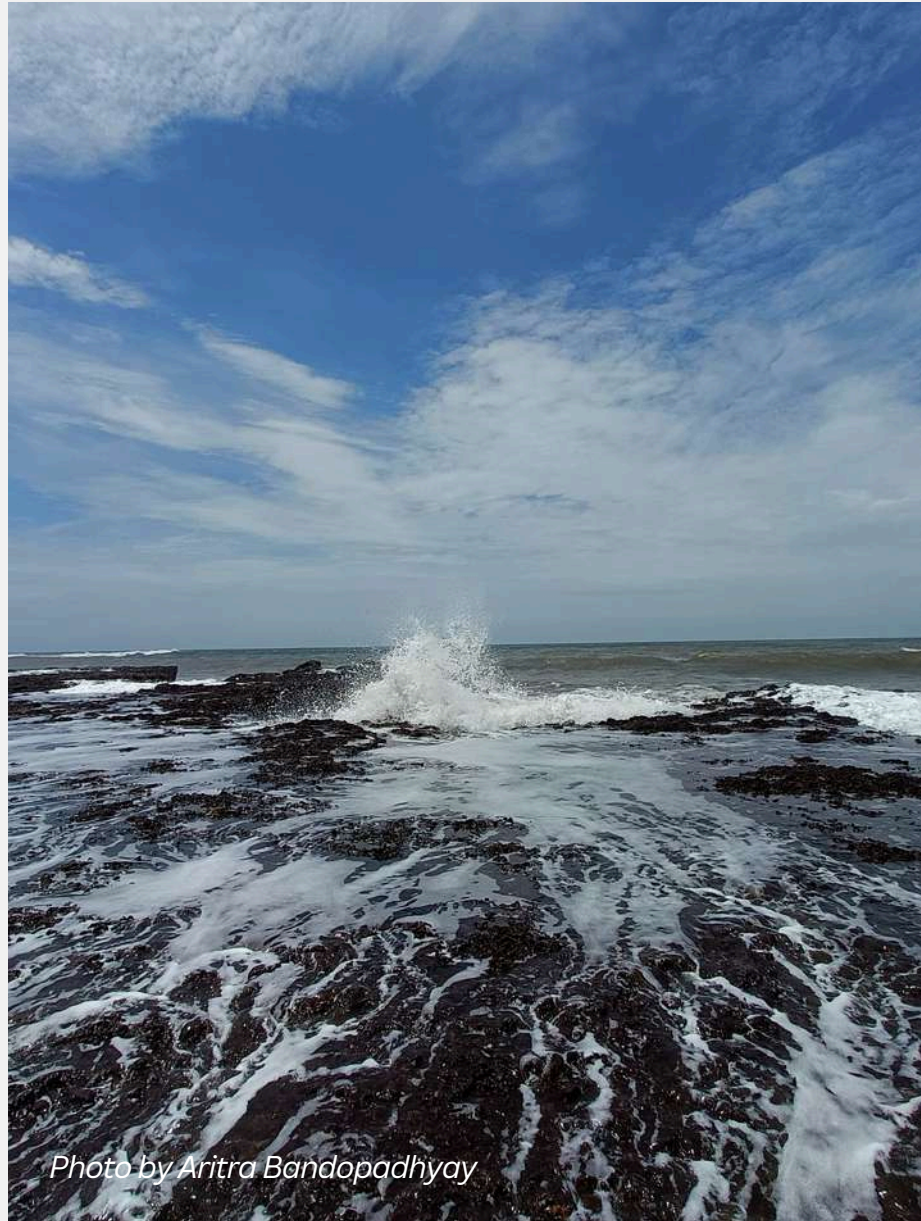

Photo by Aritra Bandopadhyay

For someone like me, who hails from the heart of the Indo-Gangetic plains, the ocean has always felt like a distant and unwelcome force. My roots are buried deep in the fertile lands between the Ganges and the Yamuna. We are children of sweet rivers, not of salty waves. The rivers have sustained and nourished us for centuries, tying us to the earth, while the ocean—faraway, unruly, and alien mostly brought us trouble. Growing up, I'd hear stories of ancient India when we were at the heart of a flourishing network of land and river trade routes. The Silk Route was our artery to the world, carrying silk, spices, jewels, knowledge, and more. It wasn't just about trade but about human connection, with goods carrying stories, cultures, and relationships across regions.

Photo by Aritra Bandopadhyay

In Hinterland: America's New Landscape of Class and Conflict, Phil A. Neel highlights how sea-adjacent cities like New York, San Francisco, and Seattle have become centres of affluence due to their strategic roles in global trade and finance. Their coastal positions enabled them to thrive as hubs for international commerce, technology, and investment, attracting skilled labour and wealth. In contrast, once reliant on manufacturing and resource extraction, inland or hinterland regions have faced economic stagnation as the global economy shifted toward these coastal metropolises. This has created a stark wealth, opportunity, and political power divide between prosperous coastal cities and struggling hinterland areas.

Similar phenomena I can see unfolding here. Once the centre of trade and commerce, the Gangetic plains were reduced to a provincial backwater. With the shift to sea trade and the resulting service sector establishment along the coast, our significance waned, and we were no longer the thriving centre of global exchange. The European colonial machine focused on coastal ports and saw no need to respect the inland routes. They destroyed our

We developed phrases such as "Iran Turan Ki Baat Karna" (literally, "Talking about Iran and Turan", meaning "talking about unrelated things"). The Silk Route fostered cultural and personal exchange, not just commerce.

And then came the time of the ocean. The fall of the Silk Route and the rise of sea-based trade devastated us. Suddenly, we were no longer part of the mainstream world. The coastal ports took over, and the British and the Portuguese found no reason to develop the rivers and land anymore. The wealth and innovation that once flowed through our lands began bypassing us entirely. We folks of the Gangetic plains became the global trade's footnotes. Instead of benefitting from these shifts, we were exploited. The world's powers only came to us for extraction, draining our rich soil, while the profits sailed away on oceanic trade routes. The human connection we once cherished in trade vanished, replaced by greed and plunder. The colonisers brought poverty, displacement, and destruction. Our merchants, once known for their overland journeys and cultural exchanges, were overshadowed by sea routes that cared nothing for human connection. With the end of land-based trade, no more Rahmat "Kabuliwala" from Tagore stories would come to meet Mini. The ocean's rise changed everything.

Photo by Aritra Bandopadhyay

systems, drained our wealth, and left us to suffer. What strikes me as especially painful is that the ocean—so far removed from our everyday lives—has cast such a long shadow over our history. The rise of sea-based trade stole our economic importance, degraded our environment, and severed the deep connections we once had with the land. The rivers that once carried the wealth of civilisations are now polluted by industries tied to global supply chains that don't serve us. Globalization, driven by sea trade, has brought us nothing but exploitation. This convinced us to find refuge in the urban centres along the coasts, which we have not entirely accepted.

Across various cultures, the sea is revered as a nurturing mother figure, symbolising life, fertility, and sustenance. In Southern India, particularly among coastal communities in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh, the sea is affectionately called "Amma" (mother), embodying both the life-giving and protective aspects of motherhood. The sea provides food and livelihoods, yet its unpredictable nature commands deep respect. In Kerala and Karnataka, the sea is Kadalamma, the sea mother, where children check if the sea mother loves them by writing their names on the seashore. If she loves you, she washes away your name quicker. Like a mother, the sea is generous and robust, a force that sustains life while demanding reverence and care. To us, perhaps she is a stepmother who, at best, is indifferent towards us and, at worst, loathes us. Perhaps we wrote our names on the shore a century ago, but Kadalamma still hasn't washed it away.

Photo by Athira Manoharan
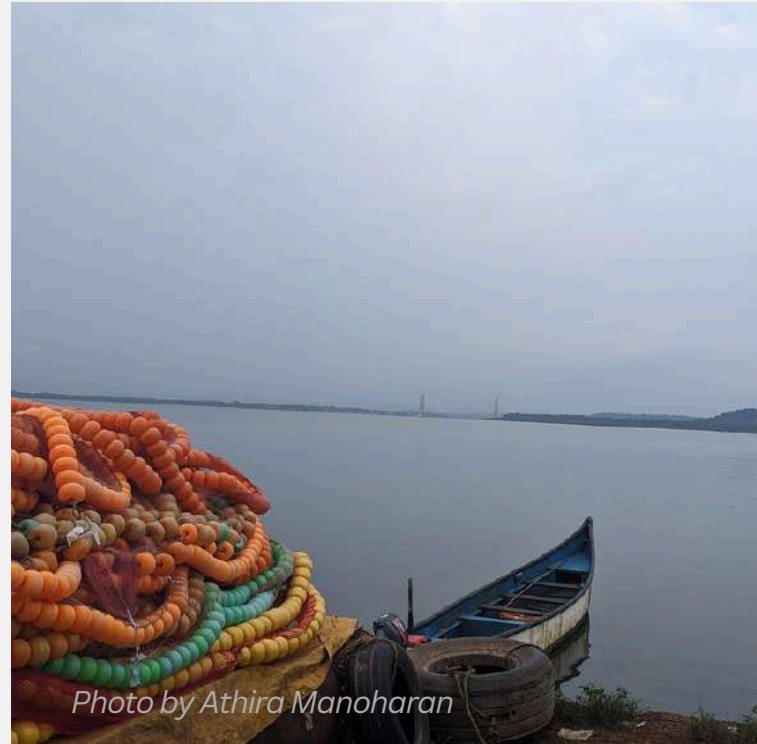
In rural Punjab, near Muktsar city, lies Gurudwara Sri Datan Sar Sahib, where the grave of a man who offended Guru Gobind Singh is struck by devotees with their shoes as a sign of disdain. Similarly, during the Hajj pilgrimage, Muslims throw stones at pillars symbolising Shaitan, rejecting evil at Jamarat Bridge in Mecca. These acts represent the rejection of forces that have brought harm and betrayal. In my own way, I feel the same toward the ocean, which has done nothing but bring ruin to the people of the Indo-Gangetic plains. Whenever I visit Miramar or Velsao in the evenings after my workday, I feel that urge to cast my stones, condemning the ocean for all it has taken from us.

However, the relationship is not one-dimensional. I fell in love with someone who grew up by the ocean and loves it. It's a dear friend to her; she tells me stories of how her parents would take her to the beach almost every day growing up. The children would build sand castles while the elders dipped their feet in the salty water as therapy. I like to see her eyes light up when she speaks of the ocean. Since the two years of our marriage, we often take walks along the beach, and even then, she walks on the side closest to the sea while I stay on the side of the land. She asked if I wanted to take a dip in the ocean and was surprised to learn I didn't know how. I explained that I never had a waterbody where I could learn to swim—the rivers were polluted, and the land mafia had encroached on all the ponds. However, I have grown more accustomed to the ways of coastal people. My wife's grandparents call fish the vegetables of the sea. This is the only kind of vegetarianism that I could see myself subscribing to. The speed at which I eat fish has increased, though the learning curve was steep. She hopes I will come to see the ocean as a friend. Perhaps I will, but I wouldn't ask anyone to hold their breath waiting for that.

(Image Credit: Raina Thomas)

Exploring Goa: The Public Transport Way

by Utsarjana Mutsuddi

Goa is about beaches, nightlife, treks, waterfalls, and all that jazz, sure! But living in Goa honestly feels like living in an eco-retreat, except that the retreat is a whole damn political entity of its own. Travel, for the digital nomad generation of the 21st century has come down to fetishising ideal living spaces like farmhouse ecosystems, fishing villages, mountain villages, as vacation spaces, while normalising toxic over populated urbanscapes, that are literally the address of hell on earth, as ideal living spaces. And how did we get here? Ambition? Generational upward mobility aspiring for an urban life? Prioritising development over sustainability? Who knows!
Enough with my musings on the state of life. Here's the tea.

So, when I first moved to Goa in October 2021, without ever having ridden even a bicycle, everyone who met me, gave me the same piece of advice. Get wheels. But getting wheels was going to become a journey of its own. So, until I could get my own pair of wheels, I had to depend on publicly available wheels. And boy, did they get me places? Now, I know locals can give you much more reliable information but let me tell you about how I travel-hacked my life through Goa's insanely exorbitant private vehicles industry and it's most convenient, even-if-a-tad-inaccessible, for linguistic outsiders, public transport. Also, no hate for the exorbitantly priced private vehicle industry. Maintaining a space like Goa, ensuring fair living standards for locals, sustainable tourism practices, while assuring seasonal income which is used for the whole year, is a capital-intensive effort. Everything that we, as temporary settlers, can do to integrate into this finely woven local economy, we should. And that begins with familiarising ourselves with the local bus routes.

Goa has some of the most beautiful local bus routes, one can access. Here is a list of places you can go from BITS Goa if you are comfortable with hiking and public transport:
Note: For all buses you at least have to walk up to the MES junction.
Google Maps Location: MES Junction

(Image credit: Alina Jolly)

1. Bogmalo Beach: Walk to MES junction. Take a bus towards Dabolim. There are two ways you can do this. All buses going from MES towards Dabolim, go to the Vasco bus stand. In the Vasco City area there are two public bus stands. One at New Vaddem and the other in the main city on the Swanatra Path, diagonally opposite to the post office and adjacent to the Vasco City court. While most of the air conditioned, electric and big government buses, ply through the New Vaddem Bus stand, most privately owned, non AC, small buses, ply through the Vasco City stand. Take your pick. Now, the two ways of getting from MES to Bogmalo, are,

   • Get down at Dabolim, go to the road right behind the "I Love Dabolim" sign, and wait for a bus to come along that goes towards the beach.

- Take the bus from MES to the Vasco City Bus stand, and take the Bogmalo bus at the source. This bus plies once in 40 minutes. There are enough places for you to catch up with a chai and dhokla which you can buy from snack stores at the bus stop, if you're into that.

Personally, even though it is a bit longer, I prefer the second route. The first route can be a bit of a traffic bottleneck sometimes, and in the sweltering Goan heat or the famous Goan monsoon. waiting for a bus, where there is no bus stand, is a real inconvenience. .

To do: Walk to the end of the beach towards the tiny chapel and in the months of August-March, there should be a temporary river which dries up during the hot summer months. Also, water sports, on select days, are subject to ideal weather conditions.

Travel pricing range: Between Rs. 30 and Rs. 100.

Google Maps Location: <u>Bogmalo Beach</u>, <u>Vasco Market Bus Stand</u>, <u>New Vaddem Bus Stand</u>,<u>Dabolim Junction</u>

2. Colva Beach: Walk to MES junction. Stay on the same side of BITS, and wait at the bus stand in front of Indian Overseas Bank. Most buses on that route are headed for Madgaon. These buses have two routes. One which takes the highway, which will give you stunning hillscape views, the other runs from Queenie's junction towards Colva through the Cansaulim Circle route. This route is lined with beautiful Goan architecture, lush greenery, the occasional Church or Chapel, a pretty lake which sometimes has water lilies growing, depending on when you are travelling through. But both routes will take you to Madgaon. If you are very lucky you may land up in a bus that goes directly to Colva from Vasco, through Birla junction, but those buses are unicorns, and if you have a tight schedule, I would not recommend those. The Madgaon bus stand will have a bus leaving for Colva every half an hour, so your ride will be sorted.

(Image credit: Alina Jolly)

To do: Have a shawarma/momos/ice golas, from the carts parked right at the entrance to the beach. Paragliding, Parasailing, Banana boat ride, and other water sports. The water sports are priced at anything between 1200 - 4000 rupees per person, depending on your package.

Travel pricing range: Between Rs. 50 and Rs. 150.
Google Maps Location: <u>Colva Beach</u>

(Image credit: Alina Jolly)

3. Panaji: Walk to MES Junction. Take either the bus towards Madagon or towards Vasco. Take your pick. Both those junctions will have buses going towards Panaji, while the Madgaon-Panaji route largely would be highways and bridges. Though, if you are very lucky you can get one of the village route buses that take the scenic hilly route through Ponda, but this route will take about 1 and half hours. The Vasco-Panaji route has some interesting surprises, while the bus drives past the highway onlooking the Zuari river. Like flourishing coastal mangroves, spectacular views of shipwreck lined river embankments and some of the most hidden idyllic Goan landscapes, this route has to offer. While the Madgaon-Panaji route will take you about 40 to 45 minutes, the Vasco-Panaji Route may take a bit longer. So, take your pick.

To do: Visit Confeitaria 31 De Janiero to take a bite out of puffs and bakes coming from a historic woodfire oven that has been running since at least the 1930s. Walk by Miramar Beach. Take a private bike/cab to Old Goa. Explore the beautiful Portuguese city by foot.

Travel pricing range: Between Rs. 50 and Rs. 150.
Google Maps Location: Panaji/Panjim, Confetaria 31 De Janeiro, Miramar Beach, Old Goa
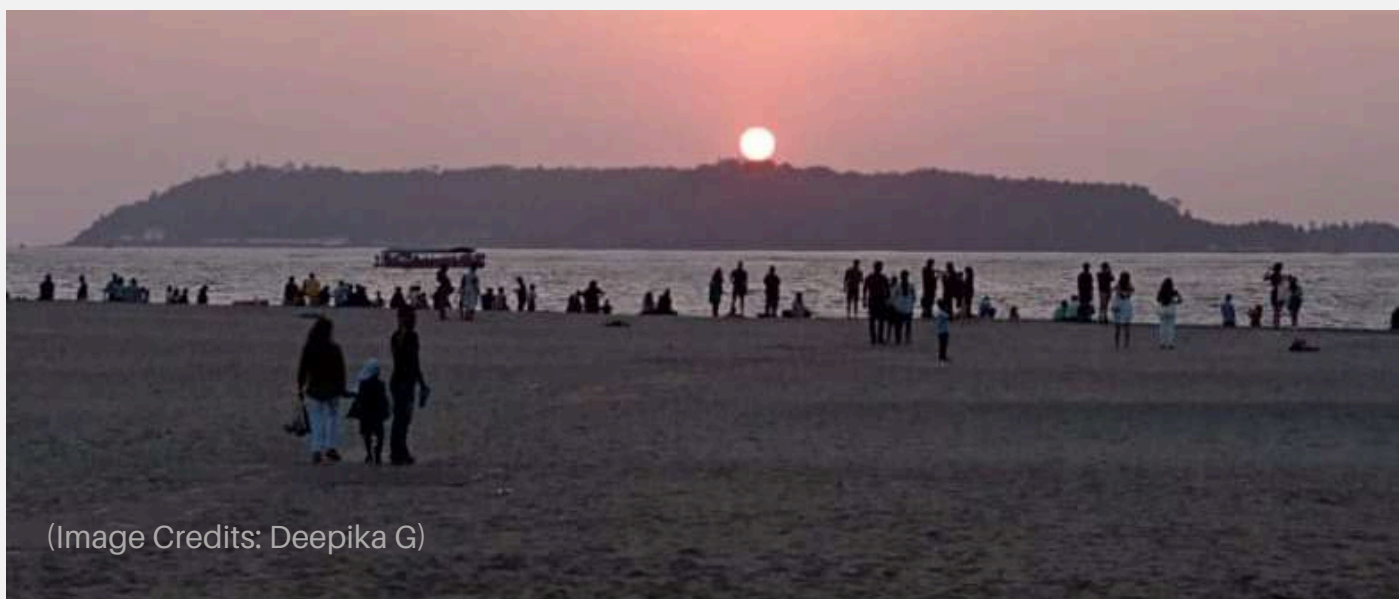
(Image Credits: Deepika G)

4. Palolem Beach: Take a bus to Madgaon. And there should be one bus that leaves from Madgaon bus stand for Palolem, every hour. The bus will take about one and a half to two hours to reach Palolem. The route will be full of valleys, creeks, river bridges, forests, highways and even a bus stand of a village called Dramapur. If, like me, you like a bit of drama, you might want to take a quick snap of that bus stand for the memes. Now, the bus will drop you off the highway, opposite a petrol pump, from where it is about a 1.5 kms walk to the main beach. My advice would be to either book a hostel or hotel beforehand, depending on your budget, and stay over for the night. Because managing a seven-hour journey for a few hours at the beach does not seem like the wisest thing to do. However, you do you, boo.

   To do: Have Gelato at Juno's Gelato. You will not regret it.

   Travel pricing range: Between Rs. 100 and Rs. 300.
   Google Maps Location: Palolem Beach, Juno's Gelato

5. Anjuna-Baga-Calangute-Arambol: Take whichever route to Panaji you are comfortable with. From the Panaji bus depot, take a bus to Mapusa. The bus to Mapusa should take half an hour. At Mapusa, you can check out the Mapusa Friday Market, which is a famous local Goan market, where Goans from different walks of life come to sell traditional Chorizo sausages, pottery, spices, dried fish, etc. After shopping, you can head out to the bus depot and take a bus for any of the beaches. Usually, Calangute-Baga should be one route; Anjuna, a separate bus route, and Morjim-Arambol, another route.

(Image Credit:Shashwat Vikram Singh)

To do: This I will not suggest, for the options here are limitless and you should ideally take your pick based on your own tastes and interests.

Travel pricing range: Between Rs. 150 and Rs. 500.

Google Maps Links:
Anjuna, Baga, Calangute, Mapusa

(Image Credit: Shashwat Vikram Singh)

6. Salaulim Dam: Now, this is an interesting route. Get to Madgaon and look for the buses on the Curchorem-Sanvordem route and ensure that you get off at Sanguem KTC bus stand. From this stand, hire a pilot to take you to Salaulim Dam and ensure that you get their phone number, so that once you are done exploring the dam and its surroundings, you can call him to drop you back to the bus stand.

To do: There is a beautiful botanical garden at the foot of the dam, where you will need an ID to get in. So, ensure you are carrying a government registered ID. If you explore the garden at length, you will come across a gazebo that is placed right in front of the duckbill spoon way, from where you can see the water fall into the stream from the dam. A short walk away from the Gazebo is a beautiful medicinal garden that you could also explore. I would suggest carrying your own snacks for this place.

Travel pricing range: Between Rs. 300 and Rs. 750.
Google Maps Locations: Salaulim Dam, Sanguem KTC Bus Stand, Madgaon Bus Stand

Living in Goa is a dream for many Indians. The social media and popular culture sensationalism of what it means to take that trip to Goa, is something we are all probably familiar with. But, as humans who have the privilege of passing through this picturesque terrain for a phase in our lives, we have the responsibility of loving it and preserving it for the future generations. So, while you set out to explore the public routes of Goa, do remember to do your part by not littering, being kind to strangers, taking care of yourselves and your friends. Happy exploring folks!!

Whim-sea

by Deepika G.

About the Original Painting by Deepika G.
"Whim-sea" is a digital artwork inspired by the styles of Van Gogh and Monet, created during the pandemic lockdown as one of my early explorations in digital art. This piece allowed to experiment with the software's various brush tools. My favorite aspect of the painting is the interplay of blues and greens, with hues that complement each other beautifully. The color palette draws inspiration from Monet's "Water Lilies," aiming to capture the whimsical movement of water and the way it shifts in color based on depth and light reflection across the surface.

**About the AI-generated animation by Saurabh Swami**
The image titled "Whim-sea" was animated and "brought to life" using effectively three techniques. The first is by using an img2vid diffusion model that extends the temporal space across many frames. There are tools using proprietary-trained world models like Runway and Kling and this can also be done locally through open source models like CogvideoX and PyramidFlow. Then we could inject a style-reference for animation. In our case, this was a prompt and the image referred to Van Gogh's and Monet's works in a classic oil painting style. The third and most crucial part was to segment different areas of the image and instruct a direction of motion. These areas and motions were handcrafted by working with the artist's vision of making the fish come to life by swimming in a shoal like pattern under the sea. The net effect is similar to a traditional CGI but is augmented with an AI world model instead of a physics-based rendering system like Houdini.

Watch the enchanting art on our Department Channel:

Click here

or Scan here
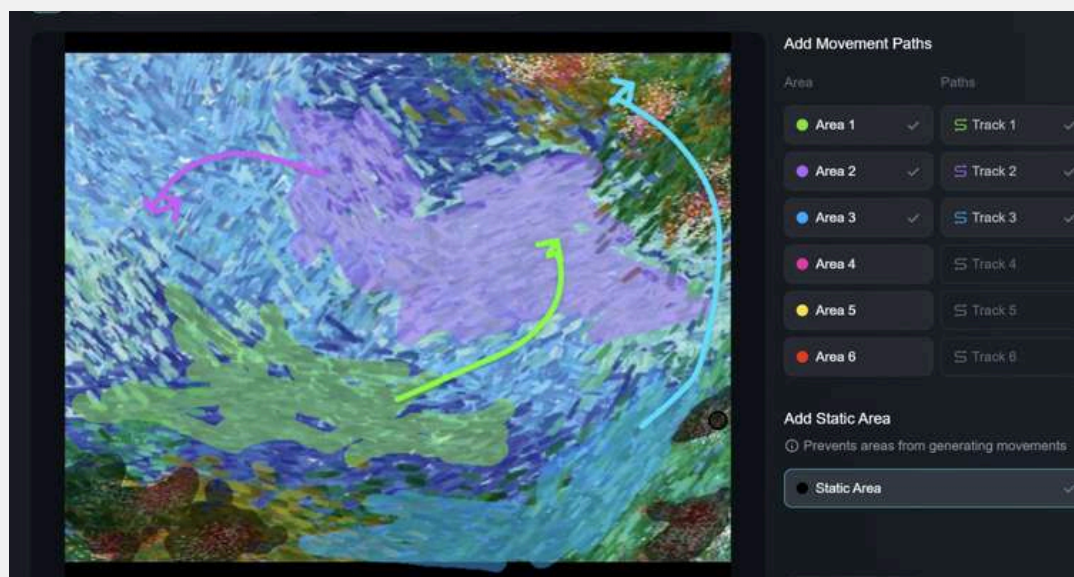
Cover of the Traditional Goan Song, "Hanv Saiba Poltoddi Vetam"

by Athira Manoharan

Residing and researching in the serene coastal village of Goa have made us realise one thing for sure, Goa is not just about beaches and parties. The fabric that makes Goa is much more complicated and rhythmic than that. It entwines the Western and Eastern traditions of music, art, and cuisines. Encapsulating a bit of our lives into the magazine also meant capturing the transient yet unmistakable Goan aura that we acquired through these years. The idea of including a Konkani song came from this desire and was produced with utmost passion. Shivani, one among the three Goans in the team introduced us to the song 'Hanv Saiba Poltoddi Vetam' which translates to 'I'm Going Across to the Other Side of the River'. Composed by Carlos Eugenio Ferreira of Corjuem in 1887, 'Hanv Saiba Poltoddi Vetam' is one of the most popular Dekhnni songs. The song crossed the boundaries of this semi-classical Goan dance form and took various avatars in the socio-cultural milieu of Goa. Apparently, it is rather difficult to find a Goan who fails to recognise this song. We were astonished by the beauty of the layers of its composition, the softness of

Photo by @thecalisthenicbiker

this rendition, and the serenity of nostalgia in it. However, the execution of it was quite tricky as most of us were amateur singers who had no prior experience in recording and producing music. Well, there is always a first time, and we were all excited to do it together and with expert guidance from Prof. Rayson Alex, our faculty in charge and more importantly, an excellent music producer and a documentary filmmaker. The team met over many days for practice sessions. Some of us who were not native speakers of Konkani had to learn the language and waltz over correct pronunciation and accent. Then, there was the question of rhythm and pitch, addressed through sheer practice, dedication, and an immense amount of patience.

Right when we thought we could pull this off, came the real villain of the story, aka confidence. The act of standing in front of a microphone knowing that the length and breadth of our voices, the variations of tones, and the depth of our sighs, and colours of our expressions would be recorded in this little instrument was quite intimidating. Having a headphone around the head and standing in a studio was to many of us a moment quite unprecedented, new, and at the same time fanciful. Following the old Jungle Book saying that the strength of the wolf is the pack, we decided to tackle the problem of intimidation by being there for each other and watering down the recording session into a collective attempt to have some serious fun. It took time and many retakes to get the notes right and even more effort to edit and mix the recordings. Listening to the track for the first time, with infinite gratitude to Prof. Rayson and Sameer sir for making it all possible, was such an experience of gratification as it absolved the demands of time, patience, and pain the process required. Enough with the story. The takeaway is that we had lots of fun recording it and we hope you will enjoy listening to our humble effort.

The Context of the song:

"The dekhni is a song dance genre performed mainly by the Goan Catholic community. "Hanv Saiba" is the best known of the dekhnis, owing its popularity to Mestre Laurencinho Henrique L. Dias, leader of the Banda Nacional de Salcete who introduced it as a dance song in the early 20th century. The song narrates a popular story about a Devadasi, or temple dancer, on her way to a wedding under the cover of night. The boatman refuses to take her across the river and she tries to offer him her jewelry, which he refuses. She finally succeeds when she offers him 'a kiss from my cheek.'" (Hanv Saiba Peltoddi Vetam | Smithsonian Folkways Recordings)

Listen to the song on YouTube

[Click here]

or Scan here

Credits

Singers
Shivani Keny, Mekhla Salkar, Athira Manoharan, Navaneetha Suresh, Divya Ann Abraham and Ferdin Sylvester

Song Track Recording at HSS Media Lab., BITS Goa
Rayson K. Alex

Song Mixing and Mastering
Jithu George, Muzik Lounge Studio, Chennai

Cast
Shivani Keny, Athira Manoharan, Navaneetha Suresh, Divya Ann Abraham, Vijay Lamani, and Snehashis Alam

Video and Photography
Sameer Shivam Redkar
Rayson K. Alex

Art and Props
Navaneetha Suresh and Divya Ann Abraham

Video Editing
Rayson K. Alex and Sameer Shivam Redkar

Grandfather

by Ferdin Sylvester

"AAAAAAN," Rachael screamed out.

Getting no visible response, she screamed out again, "Arrreee AAAAAN!" That's what she called her grandfather, Aan. He was her father, mother, and only friend in this world.

Rachael was watering the plants she grew in their backyard, her herb garden with mint, chives, basil, with a faint scent of petrichor hanging in the air, when she heard a crash from inside. She dropped her water jug and ran in. Noticing the radio on the floor, she let out a sigh of relief. But it was a short lived relief, for on the couch was her grandfather, slumped in dead repose, eyes closed, one hand hanging limping off the edge, the colour drained from his face.

"Wake up!" she shouted as she tried to shake him. His heart without a beat. His skin cold to touch, silent and unnatural. She felt under his nose and found no breath.

Photo by @thecalisthenicbiker

Panic was starting to creep into her. He was the strong one. He would let her sit on his back while he did his push-ups. The one to always wake her up with a cup of tea and biscuit when she slept long into the morning. The one who chase the menacing monkeys away with one powerful yell. The one who made funny contorted faces at her when she was sad, turning her tears into giggles. The one who would make her a glass of hot milk as they waited for the *poder* to come carrying a hot sweet-smelling basket of freshly baked bread.

She would smell the baked aromas of the *unndes* and *poies* even before she heard the *pooonkpoonk* of the *poder's* cycle horn around the corner of their lane. And as soon as grandfather would leave her to go buy the bread she would shout, "Aaaaan, where are yoooouuuu? Come baaack!!"

It was a game for her. Making her grandfather come back to her. He would return with the bread and a frown on his forehead, hand raised as if to hit her but would pat her cheek instead and smile as they both would burst out in laughter.

She would call out to him every night as well when he would leave for work, to wage a war against the wild waves at sea, hopefully to return with a good catch.

She understood the perils of his work and a part of her didn't want him to go.

It was a game for him too. He would stand outside the door, waiting for her call.

"AAAANNNN."

Then acting annoyed and angry, he would come back into the house again to see her smiling innocently looking at him with big brown eyes.

"What do you think re, I have nothing else to do? I must go catch fish. Go do your homework and sleep," he would say feigning irritation as she would run up and wrap.

"Aan, you will come back soon na?"

"Very soon, I promise my darling! You eat and sleep, ok?" he would tell her then, giving her a kiss on the forehead, wishing he didn't have to leave her alone at night.

But he had to go out every night to try his luck under the moonlight. Find a spot among the dancing waves of the great big sea, where the wandering fishes would stray into his net to be sold to the market ladies at sunrise.

"AAAAAAAN," she screamed again, shaking his limp shoulder as tears started to form like dew drops in the corner of her eyes. He had been sitting on the couch all day tying to repair his old, conked radio. They both loved to sing along with the songs that played on it.

"AAAANNN COME BACK!!!", Rachael pleaded, her hands clasped in prayer.

He heard her.
Somewhere far away, across the threshold of a closing door.

"Arrreee Aan come back na!" he heard again her calling for him.

Why does this child always do this? Doesn't she understand he has work to do, places to go? Doesn't she understand that the world doesn't turn according to her whims, and life doesn't go as per her wishes? Silly girl.

"AAAAAN!"

There it was again; he could feel the anxious desperation in her voice heavy tinged with sorrow. He wondered to himself, why does she sound so frantically sad? He never could bear to see a single tear in her lovely eyes. Alright, one last time he would go back. One last kiss on her cheeks and then he would go. Else she wouldn't stop crying for him. A stubborn one she was, so much like him. He smiled to himself at that thought.

"Haan re, I'm coming," he replied as he opened his eyes.

Glossary
Arrreee/re (Konkani): Hey
Poder (Konkani): A baker, from the Portuguese padeiro
Haan (many Indian languages): Okay/yes

Of Oceans with MoG: A Conversation with Dr. Subodh Kerkar

by Mekhla Salkar

The acronym of Dr. Subodh Kerkar's Museum of Goa, MoG, translates to 'love' in Konkani. And love is apparent in every artwork here: love for the motherland, for nature, and for the ocean.

In this podcast, I ask Dr. Kerkar about what the ocean means for his art and for his heart. He talks about some of his most celebrated pieces, and even discusses MoUs signed with the ocean! The talk ranges from nostalgic childhood memories to discussions about responsibility and the purpose of art.

Tune in to see our team engage with Dr Kerkar in an insightful conversation, and discover what it truly means to be Goan and love the ocean!

Watch the podcast on YouTube

Click here

or Scan here

The Prism

by Mythreyi K.

I held on to a memory, like a barnacle on that rock, as waves of loneliness and despair crashed
Into me, battered my soul, bruised my heart.
Until I fell to my knee and scrambled and scratched myself raw
And as the waves receded, oh! I saw
That it was the barnacles and the rocks that had cut me so
That the memory was not a piece of driftwood that saved Sindbad
But more a siren's call of serenity, before her bloodthirsty maw closed around my pulse
So I sat there longer,
Stunned,
As my own weight pressed the sharp edges deeper into the wound
As blood trickled and salt burned
Until the waves rose up again
And it was time.
With that tide, I joined the sea
Let myself be swept out
Float, swim, let go, belong rather than hold on to
Adrift, I lost sight of the memory
Afraid, there was hope
Not the dream sandy sunlit shores or easy green bays
Not a fantasy of easy sated days
It was simply a momentary joy
Of knowledge that while wounds burned I could swim yet
Into unknown waters
Make my own way.
Thus the memory stayed there and frayed through time
Now, it's the soft sand you walk upon
Humble and kind
Warm beneath our feet, yours and mine.

Photo by Aritra Bandopadhyay

Short description

This poem uses the authors experience with the ocean as an analogy for her reflections of
overcoming grief and moving towards new horizons.
Watch the author reciting the poem,: "The Prism" on our Department YouTube Channel

Listen here

Photo by Aritra Bandopadhyay

Awards & Recognition

Sl. No.	Name	Accomplishment	Additional Details
1.	Utsarjana Mutsuddi	Regular Contributor to the award winning Digital Platform Feminism in India. Author Profile: https://feminisminindia.com/guest-author/utsarjana-mutsuddi/ Globetrotting Cultural Studies Scholar who recently got offered the FREETORINO Fellowship to attend a Summer School hosted by the Department of Society, Culture and Politics at the University of Turn, Italy. National School of Drama, New Delhi, certified Theatre Enthusiast. Decision Making Member at Surokkha Istehar a network based out of Kolkata working towards Policy level interventions to assure the implementation of POSH ICC/LCC in Performing Arts Circles of West Bengal.	
2.	Divya Ann Abraham	Institute silver medal holder in Dual degree in Master of Arts in International Development Practice from TISS, Mumbai, and Monash University, Australia (Sept. 2024).	

3.	Shona Lynn Desilva	• Felicitated by St. Joseph's University, Bengaluru, for obtaining second rank in Master of Arts in English examination for the batch of 2020-2022. (2023) • Awarded certificate for obtaining the First Rank at the Bachelor of Arts examination for the batch of 2017-2020 by Goa University. (2022) • Awarded with the "Lions Club of Margao Silver Jubilee Scholarship" for obtaining highest marks at the B.A examination by Goa University. (2022) • Awarded with the "Smt. Manju Ghanashyam Nagarsekar Memorial Prize" for obtaining highest marks in English at the B.A examination by Goa University. (2022)	

Bionotes of Contributors

Utsarjana Mutsuddi is a travel-happy academic who loves to cook, swim, perform and just-be. She is into her fourth year of Ph.D. research in Cultural Studies at BITS, Goa.

I am Shaswat Vikram Singh, a third-year Ph.D. student diving into the wild world of how tourism shakes up neighbourhoods in Goa. With a background in Urban Studies, I am all about figuring out how people, places, and their surroundings mix and mingle—and sometimes clash—in unexpected ways!

I am **Mekhla Salkar**. With the heart of a poet and spirit of a researcher, I have long nurtured a deep passion for humanities and academia. I dabble in the creative and performing arts, in addition to being an amateur author and poet. Professionally, I'm currently in the first year of my Ph.D., working in the area of gender, indigeneity, and caste subalternity.

I'm **Deepika G.** a second year Ph.D. scholar at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani, K. K. Birla Goa campus. I have a passion for literature, art and anime, in no particular order. I love experimenting with different artforms and media, but watercolors hold my heart.

A lover of the ocean, **Ferdin Sylvestor** is just a mangrove. He writes sometimes and reads often times more. He is the founder and chief pirate at OneEarth Foundation, which works on marine conservation and plastic recycling. I am into my first year of Ph.D. research on Mangrove and Climate Resilience.

Mythreyi K. is a jack of many trades, always eager to experience and learn new things (perhaps with the exception of attempting to brew good tea). Education is a way of life for her, through which she shares her passion for all things raw, wild and free. She is into her second year of research on Environmental Education at BITS, Goa.

Rayson K. Alex, an instructor at BITS Pilani, K. K. Birla Goa campus, is an ecocritic, a documentary filmmaker and a musician.

I am **Saurabh Swami**, a computer science graduate from BITS Pilani, K. K. Birla Goa Campus, I have consulted over 50 startups, designed for 20M+ users in two unicorns. Always wearing multiple hats, and ready to do what's needed to ship first is second nature to me. Contact me here: Saurabh Swami | Designer | India

Shivani Keny is a Mental health Professional based in Goa. She is currently a second year Ph.D. scholar at BITS Pilani, Goa campus. Her research is focused on understanding of dysfunctional parent-child relationships. She is passionate about cooking, traveling and exploring different facets of life.

Shona Lynn Desilva loves literature, music, travel, fashion, and all things romantic! She is passionate about the meeting of literature with music and enjoys writing songs based on cultural texts and everyday life. Currently in the second year of her Ph.D., her research, which is grounded in the fields of heritage preservation, nostalgia and performing arts, intends to bring adventure to academia!

I'm **Divya Ann Abraham** a first year PhD student in Artificial Intelligence and Crisis Communication from BITS Pilani, Goa. My love for singing, reading and staying creative has been inspired by the places I've been to and the people I've met along the way. I am a Shutterbug and a lover of cats. If you dum the biriyani for me, we can be friends.

Aranya Laxmi Shekhawat is a Counseling Psychologist, currently in the first year of her Ph.D. at BITS Pilani, Goa campus. Her research focuses on the emotional health of men. Her interests in life include exploring places, adventure activities and knowing people from different walks of life and their stories.

Navaneetha Suresh is a Ph.D. scholar working in the field of Environmental Humanities and Animal Studies. When not downloading research papers she hopes to read in future, she is found watching an unhealthy amount of YouTube food vlogs and sharing Ph.D. memes to her colleagues. She also loves trying out new choreographies and food recipes.

Anupama Madhusudan is a fourth year research scholar at BITS Goa with a passion for ecomusicology. When not diving into the rhythms of nature and research, you'll find her on the couch indulging in some good old fun, frolic, and music. Brainy and breezy, she blends research with a carefree spirit.

Sameer Shivam Redkar, a Fine Arts graduate from Goa College of Fine Arts, pursued a Diploma in Advanced Computer Arts at C-DAC, Mumbai. He worked as a graphic designer at IIT Bombay and Monarch before joining BITS Pilani, Goa. Currently, he leads the technical side of the HSS Media Lab at BITS.

Athira Manoharan is an over-enthusiastic nerd who yearns to try her hands in everything except culinary arts. Distilling art and literature from her would be an easy way to murder her which would sadly leave her one year old research on Kochi Muziris Biennale, orphaned.