



Azim Premji
University

Creative Expressions on Mental Health among Youth

Curated by
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Azim Premji University, 2024

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Preface

Mental health matters to each one of us. It is intricately woven into the fabric of our social lives as it influences our feelings, thoughts, and actions every day. Yet conversations around mental health are layered with several silences that operate at different levels. Despite the World Health Organisation's definition of health that includes physical, mental, and social well-being, the history of health and medicine has always privileged physical well-being. The discourse of mental health has long been situated in an illness paradigm focusing narrowly on mental disorders. For many social groups, mental health conversations are a privilege as they struggle in their everyday material and social realities. Even for those who are diagnosed with mental health conditions, seeking appropriate and continued support continues to remain a challenge given the stigma associated with mental health and due to the lack of accessible and affordable care.

This book is an effort to break silences around the conversations on mental health among the youth. It does this in two important ways. The first, it focusses the conversations on mental health and not necessarily illness. It shows how the youth thinks/feels and conveys what mental health means to them thus expanding the language and vocabulary of mental health. The second, talking about mental health could take different forms including many creative expressions. It is increasingly being recognised that amidst the global mental health crisis impacting adolescents and youth, creative outlets offer a cathartic experience, encouraging individuals to think unconventionally, embrace diverse perspectives, and devise innovative solutions. The creative expressions in the book take the forms of poetry, prose, stories, doodle art, tribal art including Bhil, Gond, Worli, sketches, images, and excerpts from personal diaries. The writings are presented in Hindi, English and Pardhi languages.

This book is based on the exhibition that we had curated at the Azim Premji University Bhopal campus in October 2023. This exhibition titled 'Let's talk mental health' had invited students pursuing their higher education and organisations working with the youth in the city of Bhopal to express what they think mental health and wellbeing mean to them, memories/experiences/artifacts that evoke connotations

of mental health and what are the small steps they have taken/would like to take to keep themselves mentally healthy. Since verbalising mental health (including looking for an appropriate vocabulary) has always been a challenge, this invitation specifically sought contributions in all artistic forms including poetry, sketches, diaries etc. The exhibition drew a lot of enthusiasm among student contributors as well as their friends and family members who came to this event. The exhibition then travelled to Sewagram in Wardha to be part of the 50 years of celebration of Medico-friend circle, a network of socially conscious public health professionals in February 2024.

As readers journey through the pages of this book, they will encounter the compelling creative works of close to forty young contributors including students of higher education and non-governmental organisations working on mental health among the youth such as Muskaan, National Institute of Women Child and Youth Development (NIWCYD) and Aawaj in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. This collection of youthful voices illuminates the lived experiences of its creators. These reveal the often-unspoken nuances of their lives, cherished memories and habits that nurture mental health. These also demonstrate the myriad emotions and thoughts that inspire them to remain positive, motivated, and connected in the face of life's challenges. Thus, from the depths of despair, helplessness, and silent suffering to the heights of resilience, this book embarks on a creative journey through the experiences and worldviews of the youth. Each image and each word encapsulate a story of the hidden yet spoken. For instance, our budding artist contributor Eshita Nimje's captivating designs, inspired by Bhil and Gond art, encapsulate a therapeutic journey through battling clinical depression, Jasu Mangilal's chaotic brushstrokes convey a profound message to readers: not all wounds are visible.

This book would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of many who have contributed in different ways. Thanks to all the faculty members and students at Azim Premji University, Bhopal, the Arts Club on campus which took birth with this exhibition, the counselling team, translations team as well as representatives of civil society organisations who visited the exhibition on campus. We thank our Vice Chancellor and Registrar for their con-

stant encouragement and support. We wish to extend a special note of thanks to our colleague Mukta Gundi for her constant inputs throughout the process of compiling this book. Much appreciation goes to our colleague Juned Kamal who provided the timely coordination support. The book would not have reached its aesthetic appeal without the support of the communications team.

Finally, the book belongs to our young contributors who have braved their minds and hearts to speak about their personal journeys, thoughts, practices, memories that evoke a range of connotations. We hope these creative expressions not only resonate but inspire all the youth out there and all those who work in the field of mental health to initiate, expand and normalise conversations on mental health.

Seema Sharma
Arima Mishra

Foreword - I

In an age where dialogue on mental health is both essential and urgent, creative expression stands as one of the most powerful tools for opening these conversations. The process of expressing oneself through creative mediums creates a unique space—one that is non-judgmental, participatory, and deeply expressive. It allows individuals, especially young people, to express themselves freely, without fear or hesitation, and to tap into their full potential. Through creative expression, complex emotional issues can be explored and processed in ways that overcome the stigma and hesitation often associated with more traditional forms of mental health intervention.

For over two decades, my work in mental health and well-being through Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) and other creative arts has allowed me to witness transformations that can occur when young people are given the opportunity to express themselves creatively. I have seen how creative expression stimulates the imagination, helping individuals to articulate their thoughts, feelings, and emotions in healthier and more constructive ways. This form of expression provides a space where individuals can shape and channel their emotions and behaviours without the fear of judgment. The beauty of creative expression lies in its 'Freedom of Expression'—this space is not about wielding power over others, but rather about empowering individuals to share vulnerabilities, concerns, pain, stories and experiences in their own unique ways.

Youth today are in desperate need of such spaces where they can express their mental health concerns without fear of judgment or stigma. This book exemplifies the power of creative expression in addressing youth mental health. It shines a light on the often unattended and ignored spaces within our society, breaking the silence around issues that are too often left unspoken.

India is home to the world's largest youth population, a demographic often celebrated for its energy and dynamism. Yet, this same population is also vulnerable to a range of challenges and pressures, often feeling burdened by expectations

from their peers, families, and society at large. Many young people find themselves without the space or opportunity to talk about their mental health, unsure of how to articulate their thoughts, emotions, and experiences.

Creative expressions on mental health among youth is a significant publication at this critical time. It bridges between youth mental health and creative expression, demonstrating how creativity can open up space for meaningful conversations about mental health. This book challenges the stereotypical approach to mental health by prioritising creative expression as a central theme. What particularly amazes me about this book is the way it has been designed and the thoughtful arrangement of its content. The engagement of youth in the creation of this book is its most distinctive feature. The contributors have used their bodies, minds, hearts, and souls to speak about their mental health through creative mediums. This publication also breaks down barriers of academic elitism by creating an inclusive space that embraces multiple languages, including Hindi and English, and features contributions from a diverse range of young authors. Each article speaks to youth mental health issues through visual art, poetry, and drawing, offering a window into the inner worlds of young people grappling with feelings of loss, pain, vulnerability, anxiety, and pressure. Each page of this book is evidence to the power of the creative mind, showcasing how young people have used their creativity to express their mental health challenges.

Within each of us lies two spaces: the inner and the outer. The inner space, which represents our mental health, is frequently neglected—not only by ourselves but also by the society in which we live. It is especially true for young people, whose inner lives are often overlooked or dismissed by those around them. Through my work in DMT and Creative Arts Therapy, I have observed many young people seeking out these spaces of creative expression where they can truly be themselves.

This publication is more than just a book—it is a call to action, a source of motivation and hope that encourages new ways of engaging with youth mental health. The book points the way forward, offering a new direction for how we

approach youth mental health, one that is grounded in the lived experiences of young people themselves. I am confident that this book will be a valuable resource for people across sectors, helping them to understand youth mental health from the perspectives of the youth themselves.

I want to congratulate each and every young person who has shown the courage to share their experiences and to contribute to this remarkable publication. I am deeply inspired by the work that has gone into this book, and I believe it has the potential to make a significant impact on how we talk about youth mental health.

I encourage all of you to engage with this book, to start dialogues with the youth in your lives, and to create spaces where they can express themselves fearlessly through creative expression.

Let's talk creatively, and let's make sure that every young person has the opportunity to find their inner space.

Dr. Sohini Chakraborty
Founder Director,
Kolkata Sanved

Foreword - II

Mental health discussions have always remained exclusive either limited to certain privileged social groups or professionals like psychiatrists alone. In my long engagement with community mental health space as a community psychiatrist, and my experience of contributing to shaping mental health policies, I have felt concerned about the lack of enough representation of marginalised social groups including caste, tribal, religious, and sexual minorities. I have found it especially disturbing as most of these marginalised communities suffer from various mental health concerns, while not getting enough opportunities and representation to voice and express their mental health-related needs.

Against this backdrop, when I experienced this book (I say “experienced” rather than “read”), I felt extremely happy and optimistic. This very interesting book attempts to challenge the superficial concepts and dogmas surrounding the mental health of different social groups. Though I have been in the mental health field for more than a decade, I have rarely come across such a book that speaks about the mental health of the youth from different social and economic backgrounds where they themselves get a chance to express themselves in forms and languages they are comfortable with.

Creative expression through art forms offers a powerful voice to many to share their experiences with mental health. Art, whether visual, musical, or performance-based, becomes a medium to convey emotions like pain, resilience, and hope, often silenced by societal structures. By using art, many communities can reflect on their struggles of discrimination, trauma, and identity, opening up conversations that challenge stigma and promote healing. This process fosters both individual and collective empowerment, enabling silent voices to reclaim their narratives and advocate for mental well-being within a broader socio-cultural context.

This book truly offers an inclusive space which not only has contributions of students pursuing their formal higher education but those from the marginalised pardhi communities who have faced economic, cultural, and legal discrimina-

tion for centuries, simply because of their caste. The intergenerational trauma of decades, which directly affects their confidence, self-esteem, and self-image is poignantly depicted in the art forms in the book. It is very rare to see such a wide range of voices and experiences being captured in the same space. This is truly the essence of this book. The content is raw, without any artificial or fancy embellishments. This artistic expression goes beyond the typical norms of conventional art forms. However, every piece of art in this book carries deep meaning and the weight of unheard pain.

I am certain that at certain points, readers will not be able to hold back their tears. I have gone through this book four to five times in the past two days, and each time it offers new insights and learning. I sincerely congratulate the team at the Azim Premji University for thinking outside the box and creating such an impactful book. I am confident that this book will inspire more such efforts, offering a platform for those who are not heard to express themselves.

Dr. Nilesh Mohite

Community Psychiatrist working in the remote areas of north-east region in India

Foreword - III

*Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high...
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit...*

- Rabindranath Tagore

An invitation to write a foreword to this collection spontaneously evoked Rabindranath Tagore's prayer for our country to wake up in a heaven of freedom where the 'mind is without fear'! Through my decades of working with people in both rural and urban landscapes in India, I have had the opportunity of learning about social and economic constraints that impede improvement in health outcomes, and therefore restrict a healthy development of the body and the mind simultaneously. Therefore, I must congratulate the faculty team that has steered this publication for demystifying mental health and encouraging young people to express their real concerns and thoughts that emanate from their socio-cultural contexts, economic un-freedoms and exposure.

In the recent past, our interactions with young people from underserved urban communities have revealed their struggles with their turbulent emotions triggered by poverty, social insecurity, strained parent-child communication, gender stereotyping, violence at home and in the neighbourhood, academic anxieties, lack of employment and over exposure to digital content such as gaming. These social determinants and their direct impact on the mental health and well-being of underserved families point towards the fallacy of a purely biomedical and clinical approach to treating common mental disorders. On the contrary, the evidence establishes the need for a preventive approach through interventions that addresses the structural aspects to reduce the stressors that contribute to common mental disorders.

The content of this particular collection alludes to the social determinants of mental health outlined above, as it creatively outlines aspects of marginality expressed by the young contributors. On the one hand, the reader will find expressions capturing the effects of a negative body image and the inability of girls from rural backgrounds to mingle with urban company; on the other, there are sharp references to structural atrocities inflicted upon young women and men belonging to tribal and other marginalised communities, leading to mental trauma. Each imagery, each word expressed through prose or poetry, speaks

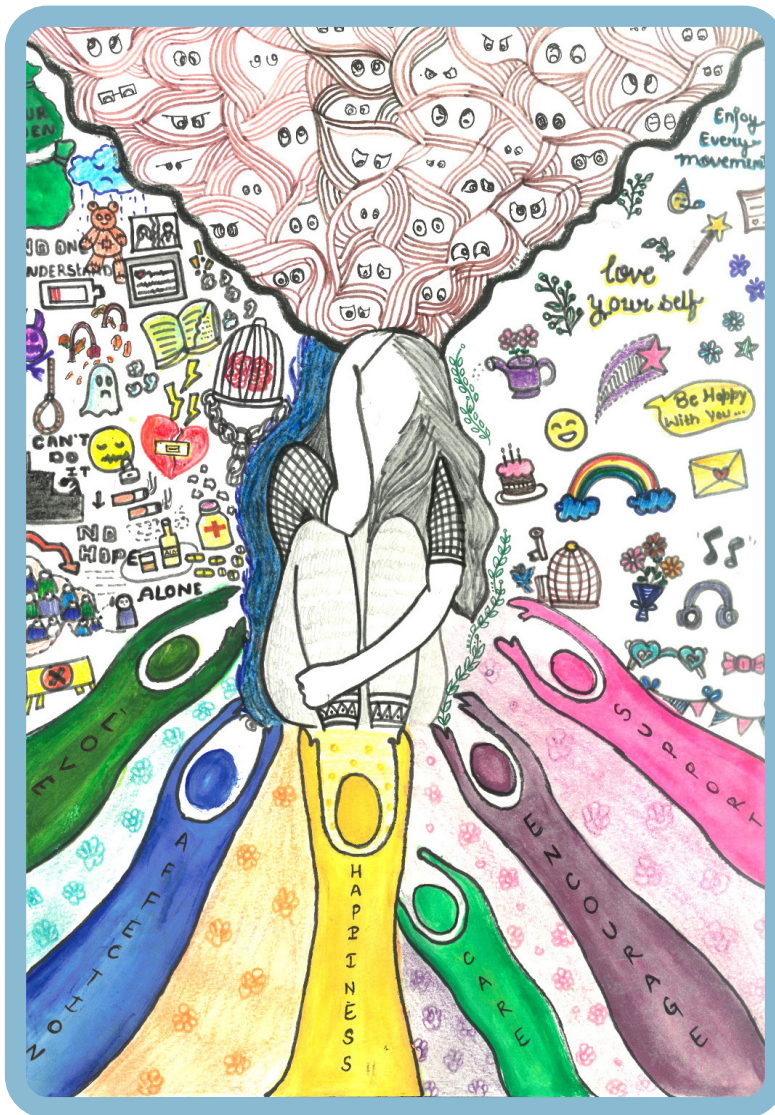
volumes about stressors – everything, but clinical, biophysical or neurological causes! They are testimony of the real, rooted issues of social ostracisation, lack of economic opportunities and disenfranchisement in the name of gender, caste, religion, tribal status and related stigma.

While writing this foreword, I cannot but mention my interaction at the exhibition in October 2023 that brought this collection alive. At a gathering of students cutting across multiple disciplines in the Azim Premji University, there were civil society groups working at the grassroots, addressing mental health concerns of women, young people, vulnerable communities and marginalised social segments. What stood out was the commitment of the public health team to emphasise the voices from the field by inviting frontline workers and field level representatives to share their stories of survival, coping and assisting those in their neighbourhoods to move from distress to well-being. This pedagogical approach to enable students to learn from people at the centre of oppression turns academic elitism on its head and creates equity in the creation, absorption and dissemination of knowledge.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the interdisciplinary team at the Azim Premji University, that dug into their inner conscience to bring conversations of mental health, everyday distress and quotidian narratives to the fore. This collection is an essential read for anybody who wishes to understand the importance of equipping people and communities – all of us – with the awareness and wherewithal to identify stressors and assist fellow human beings through turmoil and adversity. Professional assistance will make meaning, only when the everyday obstacles are addressed and therefore this collection must be accorded the maximum visibility across civil society networks, friend circles, academia, public health systems and networks of mental health professionals.

With the latest evidence citing an alarming rate of suicides, it is collections like this that can help us think through creative ways to enable young people to build resilience, seek help and offer assistance to those in distress. Three cheers for the team and the young contributors who have curated this publication!

Dr. Rama Shyam
Programme Director, SNEHA, Mumbai



Aditi Thakur
Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com)
Sarojini Naidu Government Girls PG
(Autonomous) College, Bhopal



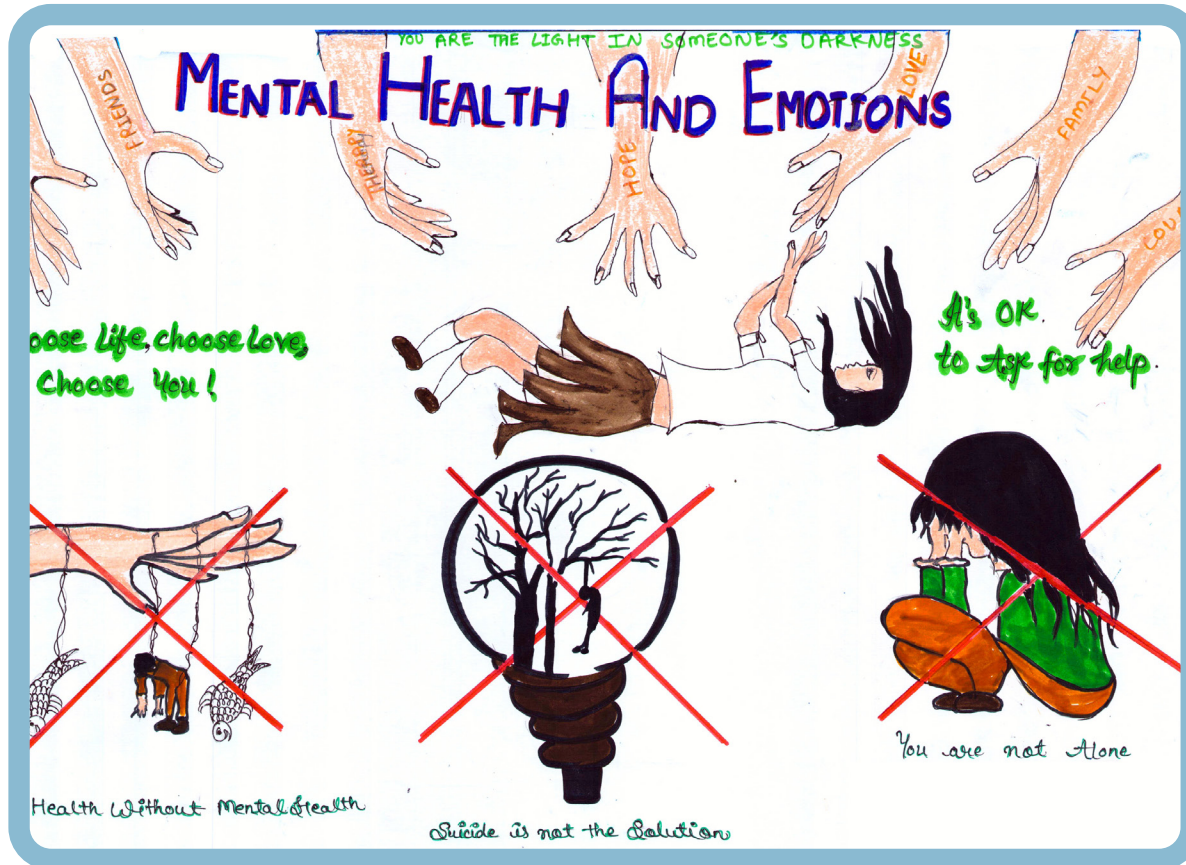
Cultivating Mental Peace

The art depicts the imagery of a full-bloomed flower in its most beautiful phase. Flowers need good environment, care, and essentials like soil, nutrition, sunlight and water to bloom. Our mental state is also like a flower which needs love, compassion and care to thrive. We need to carefully remove negative emotions and thoughts which don't let us bloom. One's good mental health can spread positive vibes around.

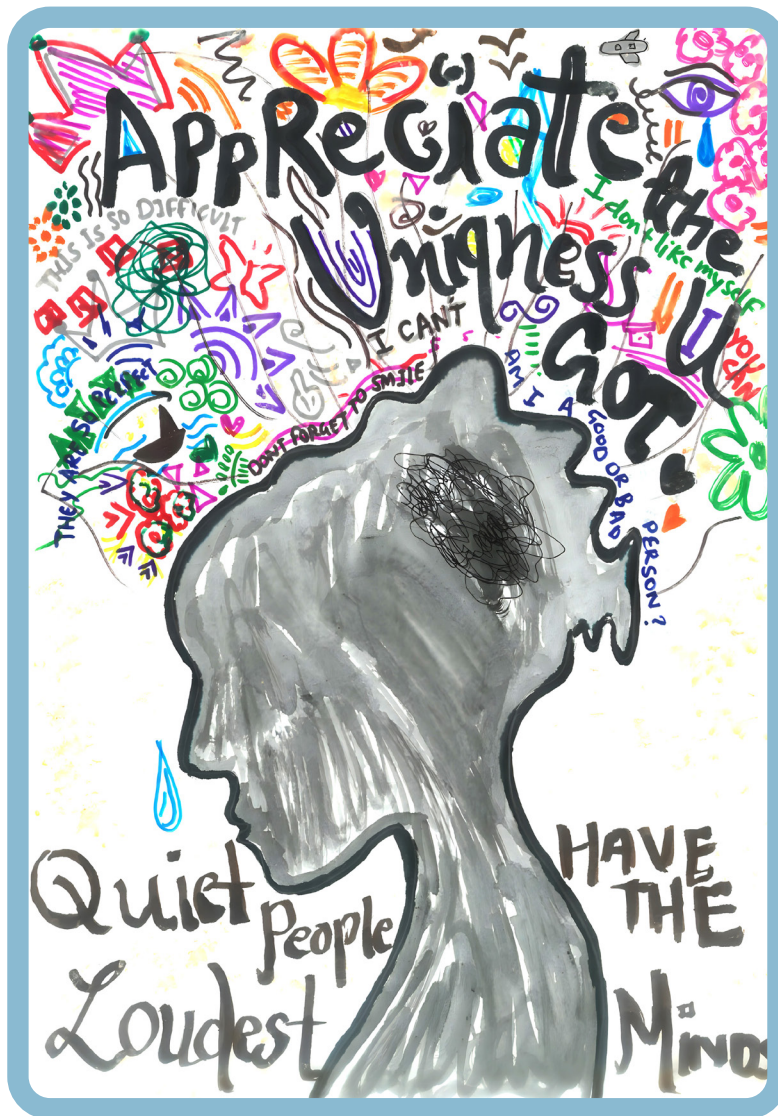
Wamia Sultana
Master of Arts (MA) in Education
Azim Premji University, Bhopal



Aryan Gupta
Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)
The Bhopal School of Social Sciences



Rashmi Sahare
Master of Arts (MA) in Psychology
The Bhopal School of Social Sciences



This art depicts the perspectives of self from the point of view of others. We often compare ourselves with others on the basis of our own insecurities. We forget to appreciate the things that we have got within ourselves - the uniqueness. Each person on this planet has got something different that we don't usually appreciate, be it the colour, the smile, the body shape, the talent, the way of doing or handling things and presenting it to the world. We need to start appreciating these things.

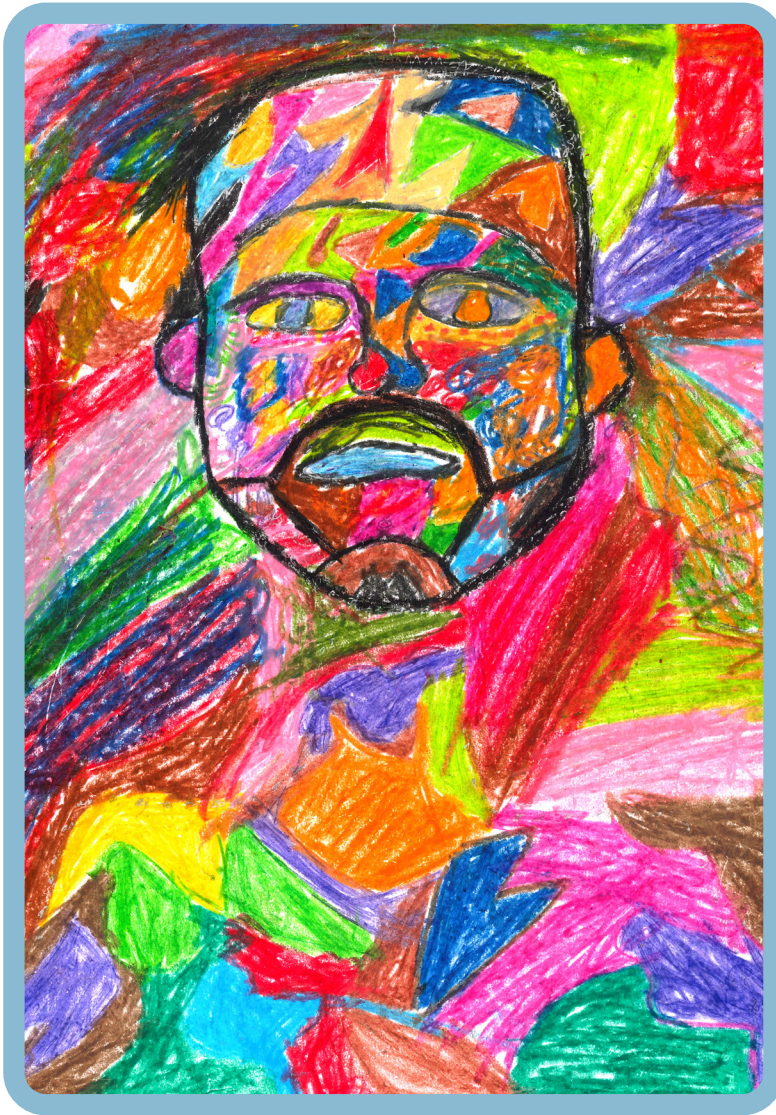
Anushka Patel
Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Psychology
Institute for Excellence in Higher Education, Bhopal



मुस्कान 1997 से वंचित समुदायों के बच्चे, युवक, महिलाएं और सभी वयस्कों के साथ उनके अधिकारों की पूर्ति के लिए एक न्यायपूर्ण और समतामूलक समाज के लिए भोपाल की बस्तियों में काम कर रहा संस्थान है।

हमारा काम मुख्य रूप से आदिवासी, दलित, विमुक्त, अल्पसंख्यक समुदाय के साथ है। कैसी औपचारिक शिक्षा हाशिए पर रहनेवाले बच्चों के लिए अर्थपूर्ण होगी और उनकी पहुंच में होगी - इसी के अन्दर छुपे सवालों और उभरती सोच को साकार करने हेतु हम वैकल्पिक स्कूल और बस्तियों में शिक्षण केन्द्र चला रहे हैं।

पीढ़ी दर पीढ़ी जातिगत हिंसा के अनुभव का असर इन समुदायों में सेल्फ हार्म, खुदकुशी, नशे, ज़िंदगी में लापरवाही से व्यवहार और इसके चलते एक्सीडेंटल मौत जैसे रूपमे बहुत गहरा दिखता है। इसलिए संस्था का मानसिक स्वास्थ्य का काम स्कूल एवं समुदाय में डांस मूवमेंट थेरेपी, नेरेटिव थेरेपी, काउंसलिंग के विभिन्न तरीकों से हो रहा।



डिनोटीफाइड ट्राइब के युवाओं के लिए मुस्कान संस्था ने एक वर्कशॉप आयोजित की। इसके दौरान मेरे बचपन की तमाम यादें ताजा हो गईं। वैसे तो सब लोगों की रोजमर्रा कि जिंदगी में खुशी और गम साथ चलते हैं, पर मैं पारधी समुदाय से हूं, इसलिए मेरी यादों में दुःख, ग़म की कहानियां ज्यादा हैं। यह सेल्फ पोर्ट्रेट मैंने अपनी उन यादों के सहारे बनाने की कोशिश की है। जब मैं इस पोस्टर पर खुद को बना रहा था तब इसके जरिए अपनी यादों को जी भी रहा था। प्यार, खाना, दुःख में हाथ पकड़ने वाला जब नहीं मिलता, पर दुत्कार और पिटाई मिल जाती है तो ऐसी यादें एक कोने में हमेशा के लिए जमा हो जाती हैं। बचपन की यादों को, रंगों और पैटर्न के साथ बनाया। वैसे तो ऐसी यादों को फिर से देखने का मन नहीं होता, पर इस गतिविधि के दौरान मैंने एक तिरछे/ तिकोने पैटर्न में उन्हें उस पल बनाते हुए जी लिया। बहुत दर्द है इन यादों में। जब मैंने अपना पोस्टर देखा तो मैं खुद सोच में डूब गया, कैसा दिख रहा हूं मैं। मैं अपनी यादों में खुशी के पल कम और कड़वी यादों और दर्द को ज्यादा देख पा रहा था। आप लोग भी इन रंगों और पैटर्न के जरिए मेरी जिंदगी और मुझे समझ रहे होंगे।

मैं अभी 12th के एग्जाम की तैयारी कर रहा हूं और मुस्कान संस्था के जरिये मैं बस्तियों में फ्रिसबी गेम सिखाता हूं। मुझे यह गेम बहुत पसंद है। मैं इस गेम का स्टेट लेवल प्लेयर और कोच हूं। इस खेल के जरिए मैं यह समझा हूं कि जब हम इस खेल में होते हैं तब उतने समय के लिए कुछ और ख्याल मन में नहीं आते। एक तरह की थेरेपी का काम करती है फ्रीस्बी।

**Abhishek Pawar
Muskaan, Bhopal**



व्यथा भरी रूह

यह कविता समाज में चल रही आत्महत्या के दौर को दर्शाती हैं। हमारे समाज में लोग पुलिस से प्रताड़ित होते हुए जी रहे थे। पुलिस की प्रताड़ना से प्रभावित हो कर हमारे समाज की दो महिलाएं खुदखुशी करके मर भी चुकी हैं। ऐसे तनावपूर्ण जीवन के दौर में हमारे दिमाग में भी ऐसी चीज़ें चलती रहती हैं। ऐसी बातों का चिंतन करते हुए हम खुद भी तनाव में आ जाते हैं। इस तरह तनावग्रस्त जीते हुए ये कविता मेरे ज़ेहन आई थी।

Sanjay Vishwakarma
Muskaan, Bhopal

ज़िंदगी या फांसी

यह तो पीढ़ियों से चला आ रहा है
परेशान मानसिक स्थिति से गुजरने पर
अपने जीवन की समस्या का
समाधान न निकलने के कारण
फंदा लगाकर अपने जीवन को खत्म कर देते हैं।
लेकिन अब और नहीं..
सामना करेंगे इन स्थितियों का
हरा देंगे इस फंदे को और जीत लेंगे ज़िंदगी को।

Kareena Parmar
Muskaan, Bhopal

मेरा सफर

मैं अकेला रास्ते से जा रहा हूँ।
मैं सभी से मिलुंगा।।
मुसकुराते हुए पेड़ों से मिलुंगा।
हसते हुए बादल से मिलुंगा, ठंडी हवा से मिलुंगा।।
आग जैसे ताप रहे सूरज से मिलुंगा।
उड़ते पक्षी से मिलुंगा।।
बहती नदियों से मिलुंगा।
पेड़ों की छाँव में आराम करते जाऊंगा।।
मस्ती भरे मौसम में खुश होकर ज़ोर से चिल्लाऊंगा।
बीते हुए पलों को छोड़कर जाऊंगा।।
अपने इस पल को यादगार बनाऊंगा।
अपने सफर में मुसकुराते चला जाऊंगा।।

Gautam
Muskaan, Bhopal

व्यथा भरी भावना

अपनी भावना को बचाकर जीने वालों,
भय पैदा होने पर भाव को फेरबदल करने वालों,
तुम हर कुटम्बना रचते हो।
और एक घटिये दोहराव में चलकर,
मानवता का शोषण करते हो।
अपने ही सियासत में व्यथा की भावना से भरा मानव
भी,
अपनी परेशानी की लकीरों से व्यथा भरी रुह को
पुकारता है।
और घटिया दोहराव की सोच में चलता है।
उनकी सोच में,
छत पर लटकी रस्सी नजर आती है,
गहरा भरा समुद्र और नदियां बहती धारा या,
कुयें से निकलता भौतिक नीर नजर आता है,
या फिर छा जाती है, उनकी दृष्टि में
ज़िंदा रुह को राख में तब्दील करने वाली आग।
वह ज़िन्दगी की व्यथा भरी सोच, वह ख्याल ही,
उनकी आत्मा को त्याग दे जाती है।

Kuldeesh Pawar
Muskaan, Bhopal

हक है...

मेरी आजादी का, मेरे बच्चों की शिक्षा का, मेरे परिवार के घरों का, मेरी जाति का, मेरे समाज का |

जिसे आगे बढ़ने नहीं दिया,

स्कूल जाने पर भेदभाव किया |

हमारी जाति कंजर है, मदारी है, पारधी है,

ये हमारी पहचान है |

हमारी पहचान को छोड़ कर हमें चोर बना दिया |

हक है...

मुझे अपने जाति के लिए लड़ने का,

आवाज़ उठा कर बोलने का |

हक है...

हमें अपने भाषा रीति रिवाज में रहने का...

वकील, पुलिस, डॉक्टर, कलेक्टर बनने का

हक है...

हमारी सभी जाति के बच्चों का मां बाबा

जो सपने देखते हैं उन्हें पुरा करने का..

हक है...

हमें इतनी बड़ी दुनिया में बराबरी के साथ हाथ पकड़ कर चलने का...

Simran Uikey
Muskaan, Bhopal

हम कचरा बीन कर अपना पेट पालते,

हम लोगों के पास नौकरी कहा ?

एक दिन कचरा बीनने न जाए,

तो रात का खाना कहा ?

दिन भर कचरा बीनते घूमते,

हमें नौकरी वाला आराम कहा ?

हम एक घर में दस लोग साथ रहते,

हमारे पास रहने के लिए जगह कहा ?

शौचालय के लिए दूर हम जंगल जाते,

हमारे घरों में लेटरिन-बाथरूम कहा ?

सड़को के किनारे हमारे बच्चे खेलते,

हमारे बच्चों के लिए खेलने का जगह कहा ?

हमारे बच्चों के साथ भेदभाव न हो,

हमारी जाति को गाली न दे,

हमारे बच्चों को हमारे रीति रिवाज भाषा सिखाए,

ऐसा स्कूल कहा ?

इतना मुश्किल है हम लोगों का जीना,

इन सब में हमारी खुशियां कहा ?

Simran Uikey
Muskaan, Bhopal

व्यथा भरी रूह

ए शरीर तु घड़ हैं मेरा,
मैं आत्मा हूं तेरी।
तु अंग हैं मेरा,
मैं चाल हूं तेरी।
तु प्रयोग हैं जीवन का,
मैं मस्तिष्क तेरे सोच की।
तु जिस्म हैं खून का,
मैं संवेदना तेरे भागो की।
तु ताउम्र हैं मेरा,
मैं हवा तेरे अंत की।

Kuldeesh Pawar
Muskaan, Bhopal

छोकरी नो संघर्ष

(Dialect Pardi)

मैं एक पारधी छोकरी छुं,
मैं अपना घर नी रोशनी छुं,
मने मारा घर वाला खोवा ती डरे छे.,
मैं अपना सपन्या ना लिए,
मारा घर वाला ती और पूरा ती लड़ी सकूं छुं,
मारी जात नी और भी मारी दोस्तिये,
अपना सपन्या ना लिए खुद लड़ी सके छे ,
मारी दोस्ते परेशान हुडने सुसाइड करीने,
अपना सपन्या खतम कोनी करी सके,
मारी दोस्ते परेशानीयों ती लड़ीने,
अपना सपन्या पूरा करी सके छे।

छोकरी नो संघर्ष

(Hindi Translation)

मैं एक पारधी लड़की हूं,
मैं अपने घर की रोशनी हूं ,
मेरा परिवार मुझे खोने से डरता है,
मैं अपने सपनों के लिए,
मेरे परिवार से और समाज से,
लड़ सकती हूं,
मेरे समाज की,
मेरे जैसी और भी लड़कियां,
अपने सपनों के लिए,
खुद लड़ सकती है,
मेरे समाज की लड़कियां,
परेशान होकर आत्महत्या करके,
अपने सपने खत्म नहीं कर सकती,
मेरे समाज की लड़कियां,
परेशानियों से लड़कर,
अपने सपने पूरे कर सकती है।

Kareena Parmar
Muskaan, Bhopal

मानसिक स्वास्थ्य क्यों ज़रूरी - एक दिल को छू लेने वाली कहानी

कोमल एक आदिवासी गोंड समुदाय व रुढ़िवादी परिवार में जन्मी और पली बड़ी खुबसूरत महिला थी। उसके माता पिता की मृत्यु हो चुकी थी। 12 वर्ष की कम आयु में उसका विवाह सूरज के साथ हुआ था। एक युवा दुल्हन के रूप में वह सुखी शांतिपूर्ण वैवाहिक जीवन की उम्मीद करती थी। लेकिन ज़िन्दगी ने उसके लिए कुछ और ही योजना बना रखी थी। विवाह के शुरुआती 2 वर्षों में कोमल के जीवन में सब कुछ वैसा ही था जैसा वो चाहती थी। पति का प्यार और बच्चे, एकदम आदर्श जीवन जी रही थी कोमल। परन्तु जल्दी ही कोमल का दुखी जीवन शुरू हो गया। सूरज की उसमें धीरे-धीरे रुचि कम होने लगी, उसे यह रिश्ता मजबूरी लगने लगा। अब वह कोमल और उसकी शादी को स्वीकार नहीं कर पा रहा था। उसने अपनी भड़ास निकालने के लिए कोमल का शारीरिक शोषण करना शुरू कर दिया। उसके ससुराल वालों ने भी उसे मानसिक रूप से परेशान व प्रताड़ित करना शुरू कर दिया। वह जिस भी सामाजिक समारोह का हिस्सा होती, उसका मज़ाक उड़ाया जाता और उसकी हँसी उड़ाई जाती, वह अपमानित महसूस करती थी। परन्तु उसे भी किसी अन्य पारम्परिक परिवार की तरह ही, उसे अपने घर जाने या यहां तक कि अपने भाई, बहन या दोस्तों से बात करने की अनुमति भी नहीं थी। उसे करीब 10-12 वर्षों तक इस तरह की मानसिक यातना का लगातार सामना करना पड़ा। समय बीतने के साथ उसे और अधिक परेशान किया जाने लगा। उसे लोगो से बात करने के अधिकार से वंचित रखा जाने लगा। इस तरह के लगातार मानसिक उत्पीड़न से कोमल के मानसिक स्वास्थ्य पर बहुत गहरा असर पड़ा। उसके अपने बच्चे भी उसे समझ नहीं पा रहे थे। फिर एक दिन सूरज ने उसके साथ अपना रिश्ता, एक पत्नी के रूप में उसके अधिकार, उसके बच्चों पर उसका अधिकार सब कुछ छीन लिया। यह अघात कोमल के लिए असहनीय था। जल्दी ही उसमें सिज़ोफ्रेनिया के लक्षण विकसित हो गये। वह अदृश्य लोगो से बात करती। वह एक पल ज़ोर-ज़ोर से हंसती, नाचती, गाती तो दूसरे ही पल ज़ोर-ज़ोर रोती, चीखती, चिल्लाती लेकिन उसका परिवार समाज द्वारा दोषी ठहराए जाने के डर से, उसे पागल बोले जाने के डर से, उसे कभी भी स्वास्थ्य देखभाल केंद्र में नहीं ले गया। उसके परिवार के लिए, मानसिक बीमारी और इसके लिए मदद मांगना एक बड़ा निषेध था। यह कुछ ऐसा

था, जिसे वे कभी स्वीकार नहीं कर सकते थे। ऐसा एक साल तक चलता रहा। जब कोमल की हालत में सुधार के कोई संकेत नहीं दिखे, तो उसके परिवार और बच्चों द्वारा उसे छोड़ दिया गया। उसे सड़कों पर छोड़ दिया गया। समय के साथ

उसकी हालत और बदतर होती चली गयी। क्योंकि उसकी मानसिक स्थिति सही नहीं थी। अन्य पुरुषों द्वारा इसका फायदा उठाया गया, और ना जाने कितने पुरुषों ने उसके शारीरिक का उपयोग अपनी हवस को शांत करने के लिए किया। कोमल को शारीरिक यातनाएं देकर उसके साथ सम्बन्ध बनाये। वह कई बार सड़को पर नग्न अवस्था में चिल्लाती घूमती, उसे चोट लगती, उसके शरीर से खून बहता। लोग उसकी इस हालत को देखकर आश्चर्यचकित होते पर कोई उसकी मदद करने आगे नहीं आता। इसी तरह का जीवन जीते-जीते एक दिन वह ट्रेन में चढ़ गयी और उसके गेट से गिर कर उसकी मौत हो गयी। उसकी देह बहुत समय तक लावारिस पड़ी रही। काफी समय बाद उसके परिवार को पता चला कि उसकी मौत हो गई है। तब रिश्तेदारों ने अनुमान लगाया कि उसे क्या हुआ रहा होगा- कुछ लोगों ने कहा कोमल पर किसी बुरी आत्मा का साया था, जबकि कुछ के अनुमान लगाया कि किसी ने धक्का देकर मारा होगा। पर किसी ने यह नहीं सोचा की अगर कोमल को समय पर इलाज व परिवार का साथ मिल जाता तो आज वह जिंदा होती। शायद उसे कोई सुनने और समझने वाला होता, शायद वह अपने मन की बात अपना दर्द किसी से कह पाती तो वह आज जिंदा होती।

यह वास्तविक कहानी है भारत में इस तरह के मानसिक रोगियों की हालत एक जैसी ही है। लोग मानसिक रूप से बीमार मरीजों की ओर से आंखें मोड़ लेते हैं। ध्यान रखें कि की मानसिक बीमारी, किसी भी अन्य शारीरिक बीमारी की तरह ही होती है। यह किसी को भी हो सकती है। इसका इलाज संभव है, बशर्ते व्यक्ति को सही समय पर मदद मिल जाये। इस तरह के मामलों में प्यार और अपनापन भी बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण है। मदद ना मिलने के कारण मानसिक समस्याएं वा आत्महत्या जैसी घटनाएं सामने आती हैं।

**Jyoti and Farha
Muskaan, Bhopal**



Hush

Hiya Chakma

Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Biology

Azim Premji University, Bhopal



Jasu Mangilal Sutar
Master of Arts (MA) in Education
Azim Premji University, Bhopal



This painting reminds me of the moments I share with my mom. It inspires me to fight against whatever challenges come my way. Being with her always makes me feel peaceful, happy, and content. It is an expression of resilience. No matter how tough the times are, our moment will come soon.

Nisha Gurnule
Master of Arts (MA) in Education
Azim Premji University, Bhopal



Healing minds

Risiki Chakma

Bachelor of Arts (BA) in History

Azim Premji University, Bhopal



Healing minds

Risiki Chakma

Bachelor of Arts (BA) in History

Azim Premji University, Bhopal



Healthy mindset

Kajal L Mahor

Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Biology

Azim Premji University, Bhopal



Murlidhar Sahu
Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Biology
Azim Premji University, Bhopal



We and our Health: The Adivasi Worldviews

This traditional Warli art captures the intricate ways of life of adivasi communities. It depicts their everyday activities such as cooking, farming, tending to cattle and poultry, and celebrating rituals and festivals. This offers a vivid picture of an adivasi world wherein people live in social and ecological harmony, enhancing the mental health and well-being of one another. This art also tells a short story which is open to viewer's interpretations.

Sushmita Rushi Hepate
Master of Public Health (MPH)
Azim Premji University, Bhopal



Unveiling Inner Strength

In this painting, a poignant metaphor unfolds as a majestic tree emerges from the shattered confines of a modern woman's head. Symbolising resilience and inner strength, the artwork challenges the notion that external circumstances dictate our happiness. Instead, it encourages introspection, highlighting the innate power within us to foster growth and positivity. The fractured silhouette mirrors the internal struggles women face, while the flourishing tree signifies the potential for personal transformation. It serves as a powerful reminder that happiness emanates from within, urging viewers to embrace their own capacity for strength and renewal amid the complexities of the modern world.

Eshita Nimje
Independent Artist, Bhopal



Venomous Roots of Emotional Turmoil

In this painting, a woman's nurturing hands cultivate roots that eventually morph into venomous snakes, mirroring the modern reality of trust betrayed. It's a poignant reminder of the emotional toll such betrayal takes on the nurturer's mental well-being. The artwork underscores the need for vigilance in relationships, showcasing how the threat of deception and harm can cast a shadow on one's mental health, serving as a powerful commentary on the intricacies of trust and its consequences in today's world. It also depicts how she continues to grow like a tree and nut.

Eshita Nimje
Independent Artist, Bhopal



Concord amidst Chaos

This vibrant painting seamlessly blends the storytelling patterns of Gond and Bhil Indigenous art, featuring a woman merging with a fish. Amidst the chaos, two birds rest peacefully in a meditative posture, their legs forming a tranquil refuge. It symbolises the idea that by embracing the chaos of life while maintaining inner peace, we can navigate any storm, akin to a fish's ability to thrive in turbulent waters.

Eshita Nimje
Independent Artist, Bhopal



Unveiling Essence

In the fusion of Bhil and Gond art, a woman sits exposed, transcending societal norms. Through her head, vibrant branches sprout, symbolising the hidden beauty within. Amidst a materialistic world, where judgments thrive on appearances, this painting whispers a profound truth. Just as a leafless tree captivates with its raw elegance, genuine human connections flourish when we embrace the essence beneath the surface. Beyond the superficial leaves of perception lies the enduring beauty of understanding the bare soul. In a world obsessed with foliage, discover the lasting allure of authenticity.

Eshita Nimje
Independent Artist, Bhopal



Eshita Nimje
Independent Artist, Bhopal



Embracing Diversity

A fusion of Bhil and Modern Art captures a man suspended like a spider in a vibrant web, symbolising the intricate threads of our individual perceptions. Surrounding him, hands painted in the intricate patterns of Bhil philosophy represent diverse perspectives, each a colorful dot contributing to the tapestry of existence. The artwork urges us to break free from our confined viewpoints, advocating for unity and understanding. By joining hands and fostering conversation, we unravel the complexities that divide us, paving the way for collective problem-solving. In embracing this interconnectedness, we initiate change, echoing the belief that a better world begins with collaborative transformation.

Eshita Nimje
Independent Artist, Bhopal



Shattered Psyche: Layers of Desolation

This artwork on a crimson background depicts a fractured face, its broken pieces intricately adorned with Gond-inspired patterns. It vividly conveys the harrowing journey of enduring mental abuse, culminating in a profound mental breakdown. The deliberate ambiguity of the background and hands leaves room for interpretation, symbolising the perpetual struggle of external forces either mending or further fracturing one's fragile mental state. A stark portrayal of the depths of depression, this artwork captures the tumultuous emotions and anguish within.

Eshita Nimje
Independent Artist, Bhopal



Harmony within Chaos: The Meditative Transformation

This painting seamlessly merges the graceful forms of birds and human legs, representing the tranquil meditation stance. It beautifully illustrates the profound impact of meditation on mental health, showcasing the ability to find serenity amidst chaos, depicted by the cascading water from all directions. As the water touches the meditative figure, it transforms into a calming stream, attracting both fishes and positive vibes. This artwork is a testament to the therapeutic power of meditation in bringing peace and balance to our turbulent minds.

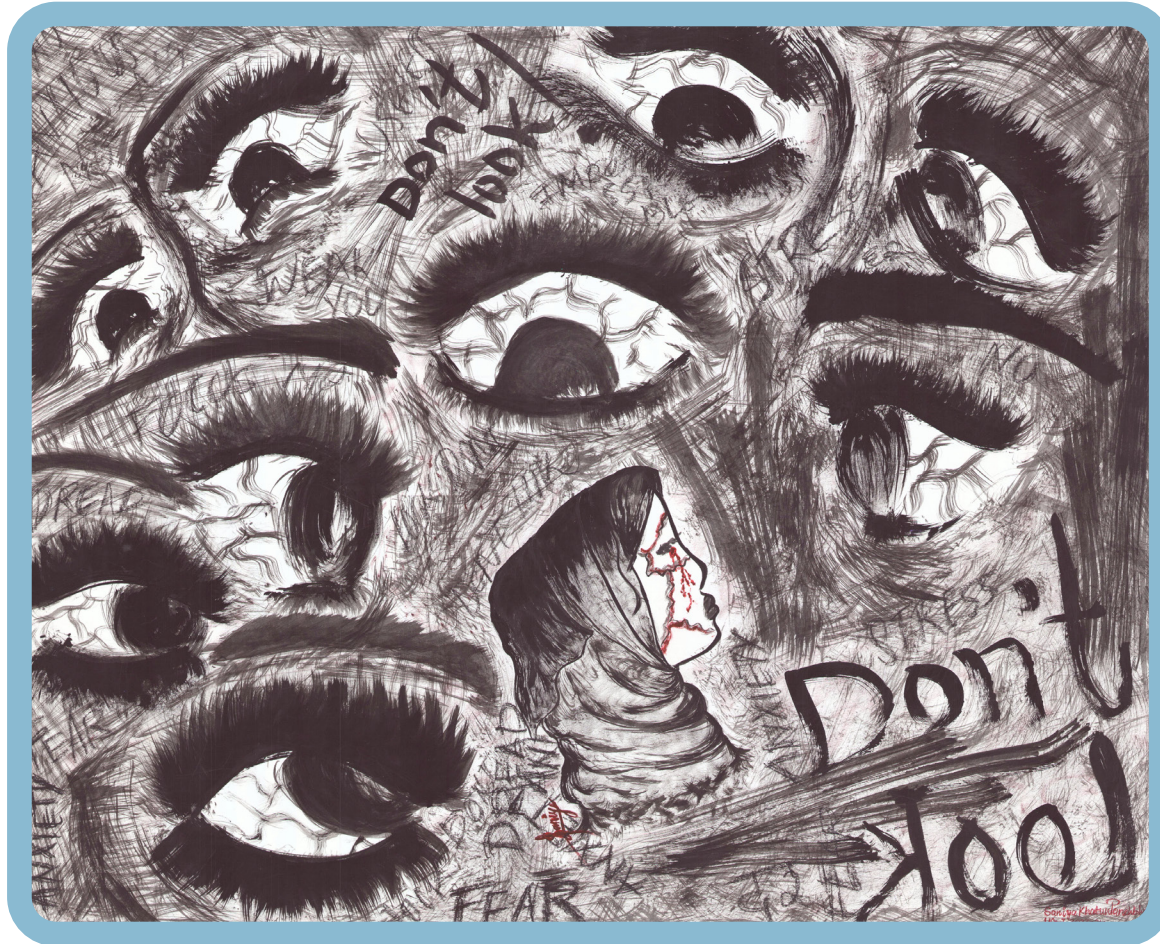
Eshita Nimje
Independent Artist, Bhopal



Freedom from Perception

This artwork is a harmonious fusion of Bhil and Gond indigenous art from Central India. It masterfully combines the essence of freedom embodied by fish in water and birds in the sky. It illustrates the stifling impact of societal perceptions, represented by a trap woven with vibrant Gond dots and safeguarded by the protective gaze of the evil eye. Contradictorily, this trap shields against negativity, enabling free exploration. The serene blues offer tranquility, while the black and white patterns mirror the habitats of these creatures, symbolising transparency and precision.

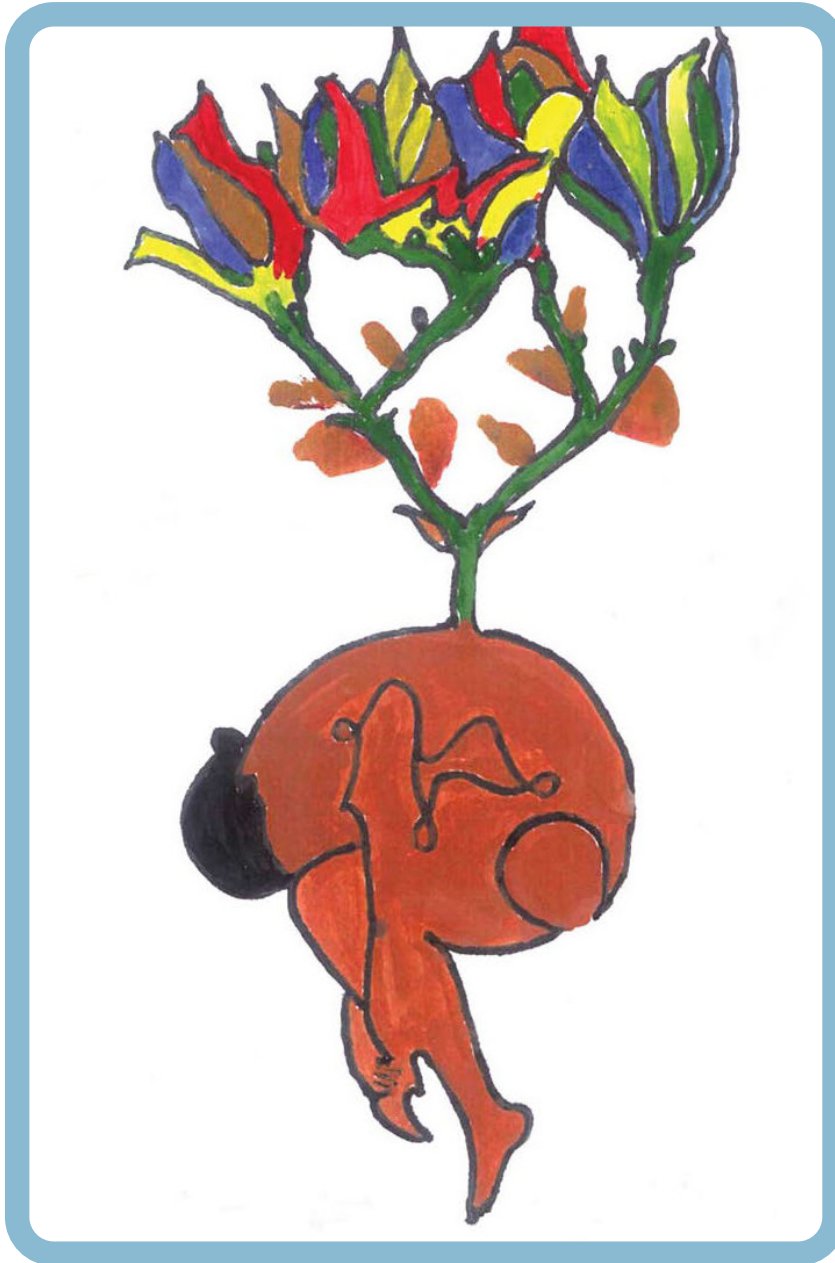
Eshita Nimje
Independent Artist, Bhopal



Social Anxiety

The piece depicts the emotions experienced when dealing with social anxiety. In public, one feels the judgmental looks amplified tenfold by the cold stares. It feels suffocating, as if a prey were being stalked by many predators who are somehow fixated on it.

Saniya Khatun Panchbhaiya
Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Biology
Azim Premji University, Bhopal



Nurture Your Mental Health

The artwork celebrates the significance of nurturing our mental health. It features an illustration of a brain with roots that blossom into colorful flowers, symbolizing how a healthy mind forms the foundation for overall well-being and personal growth. The vibrant hues of the flowers represent the rich, positive life that can emerge from maintaining good mental health. The piece underscores the importance of taking proactive steps to cherish and maintain mental well-being, highlighting its essential role in leading a fulfilling and balanced life.

Vishwamitra Saini
Master of Arts (MA) in Education
Azim Premji University, Bhopal

It was just a matter of time!

On March 4th, 2019, I was admitted to a hospital in Pune. The previous day, on March 3rd, I didn't know what had happened after 3PM. I just remember, someone was touching my face. When I opened my eyes, I saw she was my mother. My younger brother was beside her.

I was still not fully conscious. I asked my mother "where am I". I had no idea that I was in a hospital. Tears rolled down my brother's eyes. I was still unable to understand what was happening. I was asleep because of the after effects of swallowing five sleeping pills.

Financial distress and misunderstandings with a friend were responsible for my condition. My friend never shared his thoughts about me. He didn't intend to hurt me by discussing these things with me. If he could share it with me, it could be helpful for our friendship, and nothing would have got disturbed in our life.

At that time, I was having problems sleeping. I sought help from a psychiatrist. I was also doubtful about the people around me. I was unable to tell my parents about my condition. I was thinking, it might hamper my studies in Pune. I felt totally alone and hopeless in those difficult circumstances. I had active suicidal thoughts, but I always talked myself out of it.

On March 3rd, when I was in my room before going to class, I took a sleeping pill to help me sleep, but my body didn't allow me to fall asleep. I took a few more pills but still couldn't sleep.

I went to class. It was around 3PM. I don't know what happened after sitting in the class. The next day, my mother and brother woke me

up in the hospital. I was not in a good state after that incident. I got really good care from my family.

When I returned to my hometown in Aurangabad after being admitted for three days in hospital, I realized my mother, brother and hometown friends really loved and cared for me. I felt guilty about taking the sleeping pills. I then decided to live for those who love me and love those who care for me.

Since then, I decided not to expect anything from anyone but to support those who are in need, regardless of their situation. I continued with medication for many months. Even today, I really feel bad about the past incidents. I believe I have become a better person, who could stand again after such a long and difficult journey. During my time with the psychiatrist, I felt like my time was up and I could never be a normal boy again. I was deeply affected by the negative gossips some people were making about me.

I sought help by taking therapy from a psychiatrist and searched for things that were making me comfortable. I think there's nothing negative about seeking mental health therapy and counselling. Just as our bodies can feel unwell, our minds can too. It is a support system for people who are suffering, and anyone can go through such phases.

I am leading my life after such an incident. It's truly unbelievable for me. Life is not as hard as we often think it is!

Dipak Mahajan
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Azim Premji University, Bhopal

उम्मीद

मन में तू सच्चाई रख
दिल में अपनी भलाई रख
हर एक क़दम बढ़ाये रख
चूमेगी क़दम एक दिन मंज़िल तेरे
तू उम्मीद की किरण जगाए रख

Niharika Pansoriya
National Institute of Women Child and Youth
Development “Bachpan”, Bhopal

Be Yourself

Some days of love
Some days of hate
Some days of happiness
Some days of sadness
Everyday brings new hope
Everyday brings new expectations
Don't lose your hope, don't lose your expectations
Don't lose yourself, be there for yourself

Find yourself, believe in
yourself....

Don't hesitate, don't be shy
Be a frontier, be bold
Don't think negative
Just think positive
It is not selfishness
It is self love
Don't be cruel
Be kind
Don't rush
Be patient
Don't take stress
Just relax
Be calm
Be happy
Love yourself.

Aniket Rathod
Master of Arts (MA) in
Education
Azim Premji University, Bhopal

The restless vagabond

I find no solace, no respite
With a TEC, I roam through the night
Stashing pills away, hidden from sight
S'il vous plaît, don't you hate, all through
the late night
Done contemplating but can't get the
vibe to groove
N,N-Dimethyltryptamine, Lysergic acid
diethylamide
The vibes are effervescent and delicious,
just how they should be...

I toss and turn I keep
Stressing my mind, mind
I seek the peace sometimes I can't
restrain
To join a rage at night, come out and
play, play
Relieve my heart of malice...
Relieve my heart from malice's grasp

Whatever I consumed, a frenzy amassed
Sipping on purp, a dance so fast
Psychedelics swirling, a mind's repast
Rollin', Rollin', Rollin', stargazing, at last...

In the scorching heat, I burned alive,
Then a storm arrived, my soul did revive,
Out of the blue, you brought light to the
dive.

Withdrawn, I wept, lost in a strive,
Yet, you appeared, my saviour, my guide.

"Did you forget?" the words arrived
A vibe so wondrous, a night to thrive
I held my head, dreams kaleidoscopic,
alive
Almost succumbed to Xans, but you did
contrive
From nowhere you came, my life you did
revive

Seeking solace, battling the tide
In my head, more medicine I confide
Help, help, help, the pain I chide
Sanity slipping, a turbulent ride
Yet, from nowhere, you arrived

Realization dawned, my soul, not denied
That lost broncho, now by my side
In your eyes, forever, love will reside
To witness our journey, love as our guide
Falling and drowning, with sins to hide
Yet, you lead me to a better tide

Emboldened by a kiss, a blissful stride
Sworn in love's oath, side by side
In each meeting, a heart open wide
In your eyes, I find my pride
Forever you'll stay, in love, we'll abide

Look in my eyes, let stories unfold
See the map to my soul, the journey
untold
When the smoke clears, do I seem bold?
Picture perfect or worn, truth to behold

Reliving nights, in memory's hold
By my side, a sea of souls, bold
Creations heavy, seeking balance, gold
Inspiration sought, a tale to be told

Stand on the stage, I give 'em the rage
No turning it down, I can tame it
Won't follow it
We do it for the rights
This ain't for pleasure
I keep looking forward and turning my
life
Into a positive beast cuz im a beast...
If I take you to my past
You would be traumatised
If I gave you a day in my life or a
Day in my eyes, don't blink

Nilav Bhattacharjee
Bachelor of Arts (BA) in English
The Bhopal School of Social Sciences

In the depths of my inner space,
Hidden within a fragile bubble's embrace,
Layered by fears and tears I trace,
Seeking solace, finding my pace,
In life's relentless, endless chase,
I yearn to tread with timeless grace.
I aspire to be at peace with me,
As I am with the world's grand sea,
For within my mind, a garden unseen,
Blossoms thoughts, both wild and serene,
I yearn to nurture, to glean,
The wisdom of each thought's sheen.
At times, I close my doors and windows tight,
In solitude, I find my own inner light,
I separate from the clamor and plight,
Seeking silence in the heart's quiet night,
In those moments, I paint my scars in gold,
Seeking peace, within my story untold.
Having journeyed far, both near and wide,
Now I seek a place to abide,
To settle in my soul's tranquil glide,
A journey inward, where worlds coincide.

Yash Chowdhary
Master of Arts (MA) in Education
Azim Premji University, Bhopal

Are you lost? Because I'm!!

I feel so lost here
It's like I'm losing myself
I need someone to sort me out
But Ain't no one understands me well

I'm losing the track of my life
I'm losing the me in my life
I'm running and running to get something
But I don't even know what I want

This whole life is nothing but just a dark abyss
And my dreams are drowning deep inside
I goof around here and there
But only I know how hard it's for me to prepare

Preparing before playing an act
To make you all believe that I can take care
Take care of myself
Take care of my dream
Take care of everybody's emotions
Those are already hurt by my mental stress

Seems like in order to make everyone believe
I'm losing this faith in myself

I'm lying so good
That in a way even I can't catch my lies

I'm behaving like an absconding prisoner
Who is afraid of being caught by the officers of her life
So to avoid this situation of feeling inmate again
I make up more and more lies

This feeling of lying and hiding thing from myself only
Is nothing lesser than being in a prison
But it's better this way
Being a convict of yourself rather than surrounded by
so many jailors

Gouri Sharma (Aawaj, Bhopal)
Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com)
Barkatullah University, Bhopal

Darkness to Light

The darkness creeps in, uninvited
A heavy weight on my chest, unrequited
Thoughts of ending it all, so tempting
The pain too much, the hurt unrelenting

I try to push it away, to ignore
But it's always there, knocking at my door
The whispers in my head, so loud
Telling me to give up, to throw in the towel

I feel so alone, so lost in the dark
No one to turn to, no one to embark
On this journey with me, this battle within
The fight for life, the fight to win

But then I remember, I'm not alone
May be there's no one who have known
The pain and the struggle, the fight to survive
Will I be able to make it through, and come out alive

I reach out for help, to those who care
To those who will listen, who will be there

To hold my hand, to guide me through
To remind me that I'm not alone, that I'm not through

The road ahead may be long and hard
But I know that I can make it, I can go far
With the support of those who love me

I can overcome, I can be free
So, I hold on tight, to hope and to love
To the belief that things will get better,
That I'll rise above the darkness and the pain, the thoughts of
despair
I'll keep fighting, I'll keep going, I'll keep climbing that stair

Arvind Kumar Sewda
Master of Arts (MA) in Education
Azim Premji University, Bhopal

Anxiety

What is this happening?
What is this pain?

Anxiety is killing me, is this a game!
Sometimes I wonder, why am I suffering
Nothing is working, nothing has changed.

I believe in myself, work really hard
I don't want to be left apart
Knocking the door, to get some embrace
At least people can see, see my face.

But what happened?
No, one can handle, calling me mental!
I just want to get out of this hell.

What is this happening?
What is this pain?

Arzoo Shama
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दिव्यांगता

पंचतत्व की देह बनी, देह का क्या अभिमान हो ।
स्वाभिमान बल उसका है, जो चित से न दिव्यांग हो ।।
अंग भंग हो, भेद रंग हो, कार्य कुशलता गति मंद हो ।
कोई न बाधा रोक सके, कर्तव्य अक्ष पर जो पतंग हो ।।
कर्तव्यनिष्ठ, दृढविश्वासी, विशेष कला के साधक हैं।
चाहे बाधाएं हो जितनी, बाधा की राह में बाधक है ।।
दिव्यांग सही पर कुशल हैं, समाज के बेहतर अंग हैं।
संघर्ष के ये परिचायक हैं, जीवन की यही तरंग हैं ।।
अंग नहीं इनके न सही, मस्तिष्क इनका स्वस्थ है।
दिव्यांग सही पर कुशल हैं, सूरज न इनका अस्त है ।।

Umesh Pansari
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Indira Gandhi National Open University

सामाजिक बहिष्कार

1

वधूली गांव की कहानी, राज्य है बिहार।
दलित है जात इसकी, नाम है विनय कुमार ॥
जात पात में उलझा हुआ, पिता है भूमि हीन मजदूर ।
न दवा न दुआ घर में, न खान पान भरपूर ॥

2

भूखे पेट ही खेल रहा था, ऊंची जात के संग ।
वहां भी वो उड़ रहा था, जैसे चिड़ा निशपंख ॥
खेल खेल सब मन्दिर चले, लेने कुछ प्रसाद ।
नीच जाति का देखकर, पुजारी हुआ आघात ॥

3

आघातों के खेल में, हुआ दलितों को नुकसान ।
जले आशियाने सभी, मच गया कोहराम ॥
आंखों में आंसू लिए, चल पड़े सब, नए गांव की ओर ।
मन में लिए आशाएं और उम्मीदों की डोर ॥

4

नए गांव में पहुंचकर, शुरू हुई रोटी की लड़ाई ।
बाप ने ठान लिया था, पूरी हो बच्चे की पढ़ाई ॥
था विनय कुशाग्र, मिला मास्टर जी का साथ ।
कर दिया सर्वश्रेष्ठ प्रदर्शन, पकड़े मास्टर जी का हाथ ॥

5

मिला प्रतिष्ठित संस्थान में दाखिला, कड़ी तैयारियों के बाद ।
दिखी एक आशा की किरण, पारिवारिक जिम्मेदारियों के साथ ॥
संस्थान है, ऊंची जातियों के गढ़ के समान ।
वहां था वह अकेला, शुरू हो गया उसका अपमान ॥

6

भेदभाव के चलते वह, रहने लगा था परेशान ।
ना लग रहा था पढ़ाई में मन, ना दोस्ती मिली समान ॥
ना चाहते हुए भी गड़बड़ाने लगा था, स्वास्थ्य उसका मानसिक ।
गांव से उठकर आया वो लड़का, वो घोर सामाजिक ॥

7

पहुंचा अवसाद में, भूलकर सारे ख्वाब ।
जीवन के प्रश्न का, ना ढूँढ पा रहा था जवाब ॥
कहता विनय खुद से है, मैं यहां क्यों हूँ अकेला ।
पर जब मैं था गांव में, कौन सा था वहां सवेरा ?

8

ममता छीनी, घर छीना, छीन लिए अधिकार भी ।
एक सहारा शिक्षा थी, हुआ उसका बहिष्कार भी ॥
नहीं मिल रहा था उसे, किसी समस्या का हल ।
दिया समाज ने उसे, फांसी का नैतिक बल ॥
बैठा हुआ विनय कमरे में, रस्सी को लटकाए ।
सामाजिक बहिष्कार से आखिर, कितने विनय मारे जाएं ?

Mudit Joshi and Rakesh Ghildiyal
Master of Public Health (MPH)
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धुन

क्या लिखूँ की मैं बेबस क्यों हूँ ?
क्या लिखूँ के नहीं मिलता अब सुकून ?
है अब जनून मैं क्या करूँ? हैरान मैं हूँ !
मैं क्या लिखूँ ?
की कब से सोया नहीं?
रोया था मैं, पर रोया नहीं !
बस कट रही है ये जिंदगी,
नहीं मिल रही मुझे धुन कोई ।
क्यों कभी फुरसत नहीं, ये द्वंद है किस बात की ?
क्यों चैन नहीं फुरसत में भी, कि फुरसत में ही फुरसत नहीं ?
भावनाएँ ना रही, जो है वो भावना नहीं !
क्या मैं सही हूँ, या नहीं? यहीं पूछता हूँ हर घड़ी,
घड़ी घड़ी लगे सही, घड़ी घड़ी लगे नहीं ।
मैं खोया सही पर सोया नहीं ।
मिली है जिंदगी, तो मुझे है यकीन
वो क्या है जो मेरे बस का है ?

क्या है जो मेरे बस में नहीं ?
कल रातों में जो चलता था, अब दिन में भी बस
सपना वही,
नहीं कटते दिन, रातें भी नहीं ।
मंजिलें अब मिलती नहीं!
क्या लिखूँ कि लिखते ही मिल जाए मुझे कोई धुन
नया, जो गुनगुनाए लोग सभी ।
ये कैसी आग जल गई ? जो दे जलन पर रोशनी
क्या लिखूँ ? कि डरता रहा पूरी जिंदगी
कि मुझे सब पता है या कुछ भी नहीं ।
मैं लड़ रहा हूँ हर घड़ी, ना रुक रही है ये द्वंद भी, जो
सर चढ़ी...जाने, कब से ही !
कहता रहा है बस हर घड़ी, करता कभी, कभी
कुछ नहीं।
खुद में ही मैं भांग हूँ कि संग मेरे अब कुछ नहीं?
चाहूँ कभी, कभी कुछ नहीं
चाहूँ कभी, कभी कुछ नहीं,
मेरी आत्मा क्या कह रही।, मकसद सुनने की है
यही ।
पर धुन नहीं ।
क्या लिखूँ कि लिखते ही मिल जाए मुझे कोई

धुन नया, जो गुनगुनाए लोग सभी, धुन में आ जाए
सुनते ही ।

शब्द कई ...शब्दार्थ भी ...पर दिल को भाता कुछ
नहीं ।

कहने को कहते सभी, पर वो मेरा मतलब नहीं..

कहानी नई, हो अनसुनी, जो गुनगुनाए लोग सभी,
धुन में, आ जाए, सुनते ही..

मकसद यही, मिले सबको अब मकसद कोई,

उसके बिना है क्या जिंदगी?

जीना ही बस, जीना नहीं।

है फर्क बड़ी, कोई तर्क नहीं।

मिली है जिंदगी तो मुझे है यकीन।

फिर गुनगुनाता क्यूँ मैं नहीं ?

कोई धुन सुनाता क्यूँ मैं नहीं?

जो हो नई।

Shubham Singh
Master of Arts (MA) in Education
Azim Premji University, Bhopal

एक हक

“एक बचपन का हक था मेरा,
जो मुझे कभी मिला ही नहीं |
वो रोने का हक था मेरा,
जो मुझे कभी मिला ही नहीं |
एक लड़का था इसलिए हक मिला नहीं,
तुम भी रो सकते हो, ये सुनने को मुझे कभी मिला ही नहीं |
जनाब,
ख्वाइश तो की थी कई बार रोने की
पर कोई कंधा कभी मिला ही नहीं |
एक हक था मेरा,
जो मुझे कभी मिला ही नहीं।”

Aryan Gupta
Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)
The Bhopal School of Social Sciences

Notes from our contributors

Painting is my favorite work, especially when my mind is in chaos. I just grab papers and colors, spilling and pouring out my chaos to ultimately create something meaningful. Participating in this creative endeavor meant channeling my feelings of anger and confusion into a piece that reflects several painful internal struggles. Despite initial doubts about its impact, I found solace in the freedom to express myself through unstructured, spontaneous color application. The most rewarding aspect has been the freedom to use colors in any way I wish, like an excited and angry child, allowing for an uninhibited and cathartic artistic experience.

Jasu Mangilal Sutar
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I am truly grateful to Azim Premji University for giving me the opportunity to present my work on World Mental Health Day. This event is crucial, and one we should all pay attention to. I consider myself an artistic person and am familiar with the works of artists like Edvard Munch, Van Gogh, Louis Wain, and Goya, who faced mental challenges of their own. Through their art, they often expressed things that might be overlooked by casual observers, but those familiar with their struggles can discern deeper meanings. A well-known example is Munch's *The Scream*—many recognise it, but few understand that it represents a panic attack and anxiety. In literature, H.P. Lovecraft is another example; he suffered from extreme depression and died young. In my work, I aim to bring out such cases, framing my writing in ways that capture the essence of these deep, often fleeting, moments. Creative outlets are crucial because they

allow artists to express themselves freely, offering a glimpse into the mind's inner workings. This can also encourage others to delve deeper and understand these mental states better. Participating in this event provided me with valuable exposure and an outlet to share my work with others.

Nilav Bhattacharjee
Bachelor of Arts (BA) in English
The Bhopal School of Social Sciences

Participating in this creative process holds great significance for me as it helped me express my views on mental health. The audience at the mental health exhibition appreciated my artwork, which made me feel that I can be more creative, and it also motivated me to hold the interest in creating more artworks like this

Risiki Chakma
Bachelor of Arts (BA) in History
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Initially, I hesitated, but I soon realised that expressing my emotions was the first step towards addressing my mental health. Visualising the boundaries of my problems, particularly with mental health, was crucial for overcoming the emptiness I felt. Understanding this emptiness, which seemed colorless, helped me confront it. Pouring my raw emotions onto a blank page with a black paintbrush felt incredibly liberating, like having a deep conversation with my inner self. The process felt like I was in a trance, with music playing in the background and feeling the brush strokes as they glided across

the rough surface. Addressing these long-neglected feelings was like soaking in a hot spring on Mount Fuji after a long spectacular adventure—an experience so profound it now stands out as a cherished memory.

Saniya Khatun Panchbhaiya
Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Biology
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Creating artworks on mental health for me was like writing in a diary at the end of the day, but encrypted with colors and patterns. It became one of my safest forms of expression. Each intricate pattern I created was a reflection of my emotional journey at that moment. I can vividly recall the times and emotions I experienced while crafting these pieces. The process allowed me to deeply witness, accept, and process my feelings, making the artwork a personal and therapeutic record of my mental and emotional state. It was a way to communicate with myself, offering both clarity and comfort and ultimately serving as a safe space for self-exploration and healing. As an artist, I believe it's never just about making art or expressing oneself. We hold an impactful tool for communal connection and healing. The most rewarding aspect of the opportunity that Azim Premji University gave was the ability to connect with and deeply impact others emotionally. It's about sparking conversations, fostering empathy, and offering solace or inspiration. I've now aligned myself with a purpose—to ignite dialogue and awareness through often undermined and underestimated aspects of society. My goal

is to create a deeper understanding and promote tribal artworks by weaving them into contemporary themes that resonate with today's world.

Eshita Nimje,
Independent Artist, Bhopal

मेरे पास आई एक महिला के अनुभव ने मुझे इस कहानी को लिखने के लिए प्रेरित किया। मैं इस कहानी के माध्यम से उसके अनुभवों को लोगों तक पहुंचाना चाहती थी और लोगों को यह बताना चाहती थी कि कभी-कभी एक छोटी सी जरूरत का अभाव कैसे किसी को मानसिक समस्या की ओर ले जाता है। आज भी लोग इस विषय में खुलकर बात करने से कतराते हैं, विशेषकर जब बात खुद के आस-पास के रिश्तों की होती है। मैं चाहती थी कि लोग इस बारे में जानें, पहचानें, समझें और इस पर बेझिझक बात करें। संवेदनशील एवं जटिल मुद्दों पर बात करने के लिए और उसमें जिज्ञासा बनाए रखने के लिए रचनात्मक अभिव्यक्ति एक मनोरंजक तरीका है। यह तरीका लोगों के इमोशंस रिलीज़ कर पाने के श्रेष्ठ तरीकों में से एक है। मेरी कहानी का इस प्रदर्शनी का हिस्सा बनना, उस महिला की कहानी लोगों तक पहुंच पाना, लोगों का इस कहानी को पढ़ना, जानना, समझ पाना, और इस पर चर्चा करना मेरी भागीदारी का अहम पहलू रहा। अजीम प्रेमजी विश्वविद्यालय के माध्यम से मैंने दूसरे लोगों के विचारों को भी सुना और समझा। प्रदर्शनी में सभी प्रतिभागियों को समान स्थान दिया गया था जिससे वे एक-दूसरे को सुरक्षित जगह देकर सुनने और समझने की कोशिश कर रहे थे। यह सकारात्मक पर्यावरण अपने आप में विशेष और प्रभावशाली था।

Farha Khan
Muskaan, Bhopal

मेरे लिए रचनात्मक अभिव्यक्ति इसलिए महत्वपूर्ण है, क्योंकि इससे व्यक्ति खुद के इमोशन्स से कनेक्ट हो पाता है और सोच पाता है। इंसान उस वक्त खुद के साथ होता है और बिना बोले अपने इमोशन्स को बारीकी से फिल कर पाता है और सृजन रचना के माध्यम से अभिव्यक्त भी कर पाता है। इस अभिव्यक्ति के जरिए मैं उस गौंड समाज की महिला की सच्ची कहानी को लोगों तक पहुंचाना चाहती थी। मेरी कोशिश यह थी कि लोग उन अनुभवों के बारे में जानें, समझें और अपनी अवधारणा से निकल पाएं। मैं यह भी बताना चाहती थी कि उस महिला के साथ जो हुआ, वह गलत था। मैं चाहती थी कि लोग यह समझें कि समाज का तिरस्कार, परिवार का असहयोग, और अपनेपन की कमी की वजह से कैसे कोई व्यक्ति मानसिक बीमारी का शिकार हो जाता है। इस रचनात्मक प्रक्रिया में भाग लेने से मैं सोच पा रही थी, अपनी भावनाओं से कनेक्ट होकर उसे निकाल पा रही थी, और अंदर से खाली और सुकून महसूस कर पा रही थी। इस प्रदर्शनी में अलग-अलग प्रतिभागियों से मिलने, उनके अनुभवों को सुनने और समझने का मौका मिला। उनके अनुभवों को सुनकर मुझे खुद में एक पॉजिटिव एनर्जी मिली।

**Jyoti
Muskaan, Bhopal**

मैं ड्रॉपआउट बच्चा हूँ। बड़ी यूनिवर्सिटी में ये मेरा पहला पोस्टर है जिसे जगह मिली, इसलिए मैं और भी ज्यादा एक्साइटेड था। हमें कभी-कभी अपनी बात को सीधे तौर पर बोलने में हिचक होती है। इसलिए मुझे अपने विचारों को अच्छे से अभिव्यक्त करने में रचनात्मक तरीका ज्यादा बेहतर लगा। इससे मुझे खुद को आगे लाने का भी अवसर मिला। इससे प्रेरित होकर मैंने और भी पोस्टर बनाए और दूसरों को भी प्रेरित कर पाया।

**Abhishek Pawar
Muskaan, Bhopal**

मैं पारधी कम्युनिटी से बिलॉन्ग करता हूँ। पुलिस और समाज आज भी हमें एकदम अपराधी की तरह देखते हैं। ऐसे प्रताड़न की वजह से हमारे पारधी समुदाय में बहुत अलग-अलग प्रकार की हत्या हुई है और लोगों ने खुदकुशी भी की है। मेरे समाज के बीच में हो रही असमानता और अन्याय को दूसरे लोगों के बीच पहुंचाना बहुत जरूरी

है क्योंकि हमारे जैसे समुदाय की खबर लोगों तक, मीडिया तक नहीं पहुँच पाती है। एक गलत तरीके की बातें मीडिया में छापने से समाज एक पूरे के पूरे समुदाय को अपराधी बना देता है। यह सारे घटनाक्रम जीते जी यह कविता मेरी स्मृति में आ गई थी। रचनात्मक अभिव्यक्ति इसलिए महत्वपूर्ण है क्योंकि इस प्रकार की अभिव्यक्ति लोगों के बीच समझ को बेहतर करती है और साथ ही साथ लोगों को प्रेरित करती है। मैंने यह सोचकर इस रचनात्मक प्रक्रिया में भाग लिया कि मेरी कविता अपने समुदाय की हकीकत बयां कर हमारी कम्युनिटी को गलत नजरिए से देखते उन लोगों को अपने उस दृष्टिकोण को खत्म करने में प्रेरित करेगी। इस तरह के सोच-विचार अगर लोगों तक फैलेंगे तो लोग अपने स्वास्थ्य को बेहतर तरीके से समझ पाएंगे, और दूसरे लोगों की मदद कर पाएंगे। इस प्रदर्शनी में दूसरे सामाजिक कार्यकर्ताओं के काम के अनुभव सुनकर भी मुझे बहुत अच्छा लगा।

**Kuldeesh Pawar
Muskaan, Bhopal**

मुझे दुख, खुशी, और मन की भावना को दर्शाती कविता और शायरी लिखना बेहद पसंद है। अपने परेशानी को बताने के लिए, खुशी को बांटने के लिए, और हमारे अंदर दबी हुई ज़िंदगी को हम कैसे शान से जीते हैं, यह बताने के लिए रचनात्मक अभिव्यक्ति को मैं अच्छा माध्यम मानता हूँ। अज़ीम प्रेमजी यूनिवर्सिटी की प्रदर्शनी में मेरी कविता शामिल हुई, इससे मेरे अंदर के हौसले को बढ़ावा मिला।

**Gautam
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