

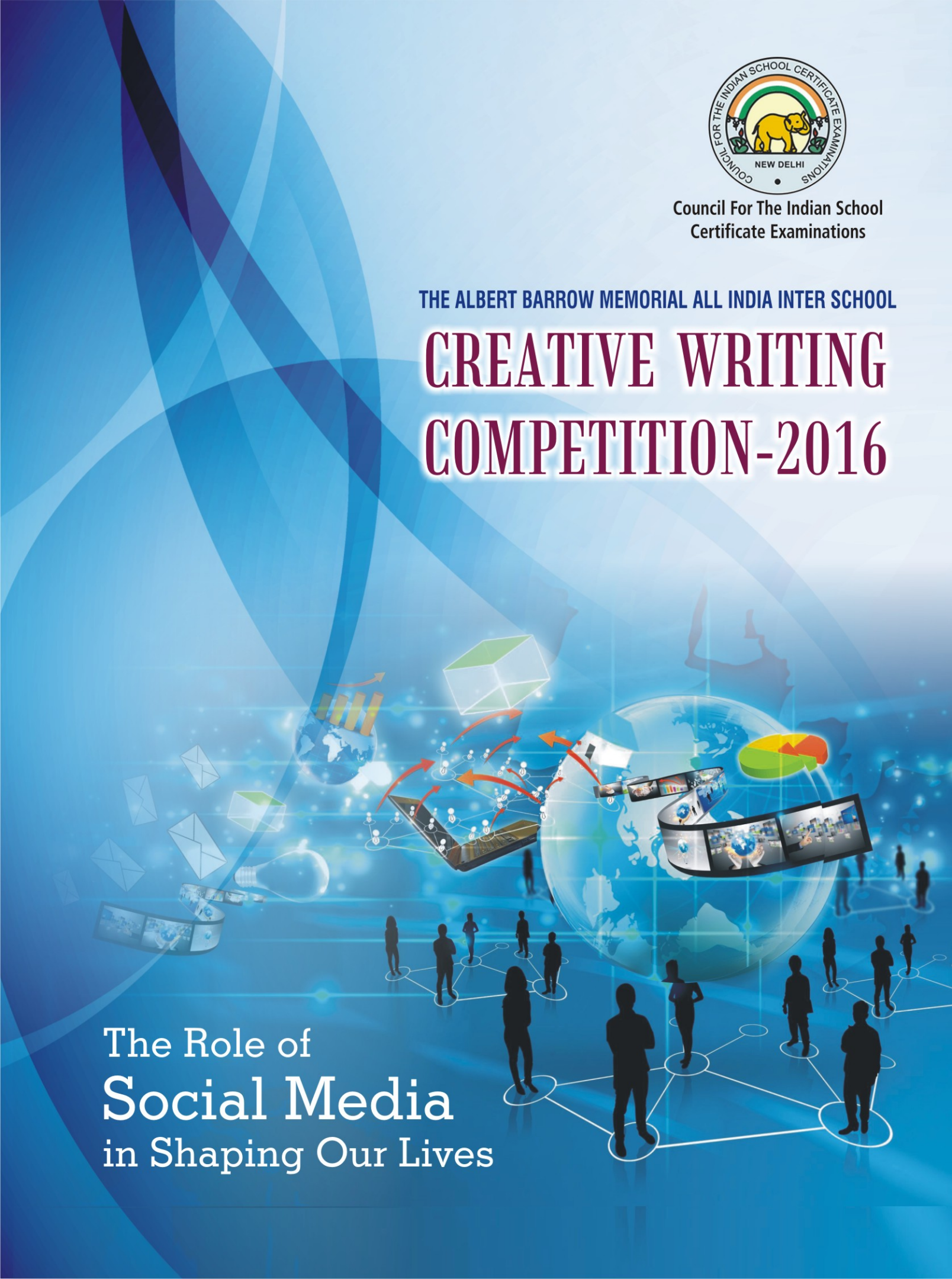


Council For The Indian School
Certificate Examinations

THE ALBERT BARROW MEMORIAL ALL INDIA INTER SCHOOL

CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION-2016

The Role of
Social Media
in Shaping Our Lives



Albert Barrow
1918-1990



FOREWORD

The Albert Barrow Memorial All India Inter School Creative Writing Competition is held every year by the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations to encourage the students of the schools affiliated to the Council, to go beyond their syllabi and texts. The competition provides them a platform not only to showcase their talents and creativity, but also to express their views on a variety of subjects that are of concern in our society today. It is their concerns which help us to identify the way forward.

The theme of this year's competition was, **'The Role of Social Media in shaping our Lives'**. The theme was chosen keeping in mind the great hold that social networking has over the lives of everyone, young and old. The efforts of the students who participated in the competition have revealed great depth and maturity in addition to creativity and command over language and expression. I would like to take this opportunity to urge more schools to participate in the competition.

Reading the contributions by the students has been an enriching experience as it offered us a glimpse into their minds. We have been impressed and humbled by the ability of the students both in Category One and Two, to express balanced, rational views. They showed considerable insight in identifying the pros and cons of social media. It is evident that the students are becoming more and more articulate every year.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Heads of Schools for encouraging their students to participate in this competition and the teachers who trained the students and encouraged them in their efforts. I would also like to express my appreciation to the participants for their enthusiasm and zeal. I commend the hard work and dedication of the team at the Council Office in making this edition of the volume of essays of the Albert Barrow Memorial All India Inter School Creative Writing Competition 2016, possible.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gerry Arathoon'.

(Gerry Arathoon)
Chief Executive & Secretary

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Category **1**

*It takes discipline not to let social
media steal your TIME.*

Alexis Ohanian



TANVI RATTAN

Class XI
The Shri Ram School
Aravali
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THE SHRI RAM SCHOOL, ARAVALI, GURGAON

The Shri Ram School, Aravali, Gurgaon, is a progressive school that designs its curricular and co-curricular framework keeping its four core values in mind: pursuit of excellence, sensitivity, integrity and pride in one's heritage. Through events, activities, the Student Council and exchange programmes, it provides opportunities to students to polish latent capacities, discover new ones and pursue passions, in addition to developing academic skills. The endeavour is to respect the individual and inculcate independent thinking and community and global responsibility. The school strongly believes in ensuring a safe and secure physical, emotional and intellectual environment to facilitate a diverse education.



CYBER BULLYING - THE NEW MENACE

THE MIND OF THE BULLY

I sat in front of my tormentor, my hands shaking uncontrollably. This time however, it was not because of the fear, the horror of being bullied. This time it was anger that flooded my veins, every nerve in my body, as I realised that the cause of the worst six months of my entire sixteen years of existence was my best friend, my childhood mate, my partner in crime all these years, my confidante, my 'go to' person whenever I was in any trouble, Kavita Patel.

Cyber bullying is one of those sinister crimes which we are often warned about. I had always shrugged off the dire warnings of my parents and cousins. Surely it would not happen to me! Why I was universally loved and popular! Naturally I could not even begin to fathom how it could affect the mindset of a person till I became a victim of this scourge myself. The gravity of this issue did not bother me until I

was shredded into bits and pieces in the past six months. Those six months when I found myself plunging into a deep dark abyss, haunted by the bullying tactics of my unknown menace- a time when I lost all self-control and self-confidence and was only full of fear, apprehension, confusion, self-loathing and unbearable sorrow. The stress of being subjected to such bullying overwhelmed me and my grades fell. My parents could not understand why I had become so dispirited and their well-meaning concern only intensified my stress, so that I started withdrawing into myself, into that dark, frightening world where only those unnamed fears existed. Soon, one of the most popular girls in school was desperately searching for a lone friend in whom I could confide. Paranoia was a vice like grip which would not let me go. I felt as if I was being stalked and watched all the time. Cruel words which would pop up on my screen

destroyed my self-esteem. Thoughts of suicide and self-destruction would crowd my mind. This seemed the only way out. And still those words, those terrible words would pop out of nowhere, taunting, insinuating, criticizing, bullying.

I felt I had reached the end of my tether, till an unexpected twist of fate revealed to me the identity of the person who was bullying me. Kavita had come over to my house as she needed help with an assignment. Her new Smartphone, one that she had got after endless pleas to her parents, after my requests were added to hers, lay on my bed. Kavita had left the room to fetch some water. Absent mindedness fiddling with her phone, I found out the horrible secret. It was like a bolt from the blue. I could not believe what I was seeing. Entering the room, Kavita took one look at my shocked face and knew that everything had been revealed.

"Why?" I whispered. Kavita looked up once but could not meet my eyes. The truth was out and there was no way that she could deny it. Then she began speaking. Her voice which had always been strong and confident shook as she said,

"Didn't you realize or even understand? We have been friends from third grade, ever since you lent me that eraser. But you were always that much more popular, well liked and loved. As much as I tried I could never be you. Living in your shadow, I became prey to the strongest envy. The envy I could deal with. After all I had long practice. But a prank played on you revealed one way in which I could get the better of you."

"Remember in ninth grade how you scored a whopping ninety percent in English topping the entire grade? The teachers could not stop singing your praises. Your proud parents gifted you a brand new Smart phone. I was so jealous! You had become somewhat pompous. One day when you laughed out in class just because I could not give the correct answer, I decided to play a prank on you. I decided to create a fake account of a boy to annoy you with. Believe me I planned to tell you everything after you had been properly frightened and then we would

laugh about it. However, when you came to me after the first message, with terror written large on your face, I started feeling an odd sort of satisfaction, a sense of power over you. Now I was the one in control. I knew which buttons to push, exactly what would reduce you to a trembling mass of nerves."

"Oddly enough, once I started, I couldn't stop. I knew that of all the people around you, you would suspect me the least. After all, I was your friend. My suppressed sense of inferiority found expression in all the cruel hurtful words and pictures that I uploaded on your wall. As sadistic as it sounds, I began to enjoy picking on you. After each bout of hatred I enjoyed seeing the fear and bewilderment growing in you. I would target your weak spots and since you confided everything to me, I knew exactly how to bring you down. I felt powerful and dominant. At last I was your equal, no, your superior. I ensured that you would not be able to turn to anyone- your parents, teachers, no one. Then one day you told me that you had gathered courage and would inform the school authorities. You felt your tormentor was someone from school."

"I panicked and resorted to more bullying tactics over Facebook and internet. I felt that if I harassed you enough you would lose all courage. Morphed pictures, nasty limericks, what did I not resort to..... I hated what I was becoming in the process but I could not stop. Until you found me out. I am sorry for the agony I have caused. These months have been terrifying for me as well. The trust in your eyes as you told me about your terror burned me to my soul. But hatred was too strong for me to control. I know that I have ruined a beautiful friendship." As she spoke, Kavita broke down and sobbed pitifully.

I looked at her in pity. I could feel no anger, only deep regret that a person could be capable of so much hatred and ugliness. I felt strong and whole again. I vowed that I would never again cow down to the spectre that is cyber bullying.



Sanskriti Shrivastava

Class XI

The Shriram Millennium School

Noida

Uttar Pradesh

THE SHRIRAM MILLENNIUM SCHOOL, NOIDA

The Shriram Millennium School in Noida, is enshrined in the pedagogical philosophy of The Shri Ram Schools and has made a mark in the field of education. The school is known for its value based innovative and child-centred approach to education. Latent talents are nurtured and allowed to blossom while young curious minds are stimulated to question, think differently and voice original views with confidence in an environment of empathy and encouragement. Our students are encouraged to develop sound ethical values. Sensitivity, integrity, the pursuit of excellence and pride in one's own heritage are instilled within a safe and nurturing environment



2nd Rank

CYBER BULLYING - THE NEW MENACE

Shut all your doors and windows,
Keep all your secrets safe;
Now, it is not our secrets
But our privacy that is at stake.

A new era has been shaken awake,
It has moulded everyone, changed their make.
It's an era of 'technology' as they call it.
It brings in some a smile in others a fit!

We had entered into this cyber age
With hopes of having everyone on the same
page.
In this mission social media has played an
important role
It has made a niche for itself in all our souls.

Social media has become an important part of
our lives.
Once, it used to help us learn and thrive
Today, it not only fulfills its aim,
But we have to admit that along have come
bad habits all the same.
In the beginning all seemed good and well.

There was no problem as far as one could tell.
Then one day the devil hidden inside arose,
And sent a jolt through everyone's toes.

Technology was invented to help us all connect.
Not to be used in ways we would all regret.
It was meant to bring people's lives into the
light.
Not to keep them up all night.

No one had thought that such hatred was
hidden within.
Everyone thought the world was free from sin.
And all it took was one sharp remark,
To trigger those feelings with an angry spark.

Now all people do is shower hatred upon each
other.
They rob that innocence that we received from
our mother.
Videos, comments, chats, "unlikes" are all just
ways
To express all the horrid things one wants to
say.

The misuse of technology leave marks deep in our souls,
The evils in social media now show themselves bearing fruit.
All of a sudden how has it appeared?
Breaking all barriers, making their way into the air.

There was a time when disagreements happened face to face.
Now these happen quietly without leaving a trace.
Harsh words were shouted, now they are typed.
All clues and traces cleanly wiped.

Everything now takes place behind invisible walls.
Even in this world which has become so small.
The rash words leave deep stains.
They cause not one, but many great pain.

All good habits and manners are forgotten.
Their dark side awakens in us all that is rotten.
People now see no reason to be nice and kind.
The need to hurt is all that goes through their mind.

As I sit staring at my shining screen,
I can express all that is cruel and mean.
After all there is no one who can see me.
So I shall do as I please.

Imagine! A few comments and a couple of lies,
Can cause someone to die.
To some it means nothing more than a game,
But look at all the harm it can cause all the same.

Had it all been planned this way?
Had technology been meant to be used in this way?
Have we misused the liberty given to us all?
In doing so, brought this misery on us all.

What is this problem that we face?
It only causes humiliation; it is such a disgrace.

It's a real menace, this thing,
Even its name- 'cyber bullying' - has a horrid ring.

Such crimes should meet a swift end.
There is no reason, no excuse, before it to bend.
So many people today are victims of this scourge,
Let us resolve to hunt out all those who use this to be a rogue.

There must be a way out of all this.
We all have to resolve to find a way out and to take the risk.
The ones using this must be taught to take a step back.
To understand that this attitude is born out of some lack.

Though everything seems dark now, all is not lost.
That there is light somewhere is what we must realize.
Have hope and continue in goodness to believe
Only through strong resolve can we make all this evil leave.



**Sumedha D.**

Class XII

Chettinad Hari Shree Vidyalayam

Chennai

Tamil Nadu

3rd Rank**CHETTINAD HARI SHREE VIDYALAYAM, CHENNAI**

Chettinad Hari Shree Vidyalayam is managed by the Chettinad Group under the auspices of Gandhinagar Education Society. The school is an abode where knowledge in its manifold forms is imparted. The curriculum is designed to foster an intellectually challenging learning environment. The school believes in providing a comprehensive support for the students so that early intervention can take place where necessary and extension opportunities can be provided. It encourages a positive relationship between teachers and students and students and their peers. Aiming at a holistic development of an individual's personality, the school also provides its students a wide range of leadership, sporting and cultural activities to hone their skills.

SOCIAL MEDIA HAS SHAPED MY VIEWS AND OPINIONS

"Hey there! I'm using WhatsApp." Well, this is not quite my status currently as I am not really registered in any social media except for Google + where I have posted nothing. This being said, in what way am I qualified to comment on how social media has shaped my views and opinions?

Ruskin Bond often said that he always had ideas aplenty for his stories because he was never in dearth of crazy relatives! Drawing upon this analogy, my experience of social media comes from my friends and family, but mainly my father, who is an actively participating member of every kind of social media platform.

So, has social media shaped my views and opinions? Yes, definitely, even if it is restricted to my views on other users I interact with! This is the reason why I have not posted anything

on my Google + page as yet. The question that nags me is, "what would others think of me?" As a consequence, I have also not started "following" anyone because it doesn't make sense to get in touch with people without having anything useful or important to say. Therefore, in my opinion, social media makes us more image conscious than ever. I am sure that the users of Instagram and Snapchat will agree with me.

Forwarding messages and videos thoughtlessly, 'liking' or '+' ing posts without actually understanding them has become a fad which the average social media groupie follows thoughtlessly, to be considered part of the crowd. If this is the trend of things, how can social media really shape our views and opinions? Given what has been written so far, it may come as a surprise when I assert that social media can most certainly shape our

views and opinions. If social media has the power to bring together people who have lost touch with each other ages ago, it can without a doubt shape our views and opinions. Having said this, I would have to add the proviso that this can only happen if this powerful medium is used with discretion and with a sense of responsibility.

Social media has great potential for acting as a platform for intellectual, philosophical and ethical discussions. However when it comes to issues of politics religion, gender issues and other such sensitive areas, a certain amount of discretion and good judgment is necessary even in democratic countries where freedom of expression is taken for granted. My own views and opinions on subjects as varied as the lacunae in the education system and the consequences, to even the wonders of social media have been shaped to a greater extent by my father's Facebook posts rather than my oral discussions with him!

Social media is an amazing way of sensitizing people on social issues. A famous example would be the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge. Messages and warnings travel at such remarkable speeds through social media, that after a point it becomes difficult to decide which message is genuine and which one a hoax.

It is only fair to state that many of us would be quite lost without social media. We only have to witness the despair of people when their WhatsApp contacts disappear quite suddenly due to a malfunction, to understand this ground reality. Their condition is very akin to the withdrawal symptoms of those who are being weaned off drugs! WhatsApp has become a lifeline to many. The posts range from requests for organ donors to announcements of lifestyle exhibitions!

Cynicism and sarcasm apart, social media does give us food for thought. In the past few months the events highlighting the right to dissent in educational institutions, the devastation of the Assam floods, India's role in

world politics, Britain pulling out of the EU, have all reached us through social media. The opinions and positions posted on the various forms of social media have led to us forming our own opinions on these matters. We feel validated when we see others echoing our views and thus a great invisible bond is formed with people whom otherwise we would not have known.

On a different note, I feel that educational and interactive platforms such as 'Duolingo', 'CourseEra' and 'Futurelearn' are more qualified to be called social media than Instagram and Twitter. Even though they don't fit the template of what one understands social media to be, there is a much more meaningful social exchange on these platforms, which definitely plays an important role in shaping the world view of people like me.

In conclusion, if I were on Snapchat, this is how my latest Snap story would go....

Excited look I've been selected to represent my school in the Creative Writing Competition!

Intellectual look Gathering my thoughts and being all philosophical!

Disgruntled look -- I was asked to write on social media without being a part of it!



'The power of Social Media is that it forces necessary CHANGE'.

Erik Qualman



Rithika Abraham

Class XII

Mallya Aditi International School
Bangalore
Karnataka

4th Rank

MALLYA ADITI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, BANGALORE

Founded in 1984 by Anne Warrior and a group of committed teachers and parents, Aditi remains true to its values and to the continuous development of its core competence: teaching and learning. Its ways of working are democratic and decentralized. The school celebrates creativity, excellence and a social conscience and is consistently ranked among the best co-educational day schools in the country. Aditi graduates attend some of the best colleges and universities in India and around the world.



SOCIAL MEDIA HAS SHAPED MY VIEWS AND OPINIONS

She started a fire hoping for but a little heat

They stoked it further, to save the whole fleet.

It started small like it always does. I could only feel it in the depths of my stomach, until it began to grow. Slowly it expanded, like a raging flame, ensuring it hit every fibre of my being. When you ignore it, it will make itself known, until it becomes all- powerful, all-consuming and devastating. They often say curiosity is a lot like fire. This curiosity that I felt was towards the elusive world of social media. This world that seemed so real, yet it was abstract in every sense of the word. Like a fire, this curiosity eventually triumphed, and I, virtuous to a fault, had given in. Thus began my rendezvous with the online world. This is the story of how I allowed social media to influence my opinions.

She played with fire, knowing it would hurt

They encouraged it, despite the burn.

As an only child, my parents knew I would eventually seek the company of another. They hoped it would be a dog, or a friend of my age. I am part of the growing population of those who sought refuge and comfort not in concrete walls, but firewalls, the windows that we wanted were not the kinds made of glass that you could look through. This need to connect meant that social media would provide me with that window of opportunity. Of course, I connected with friends in school, but did I really want to limit my boundaries to this real world where nothing seemed new or exciting? Besides, everybody did it. Everybody was a part of this vast new world. This is where my competitive streak resurfaced. I was not willing to miss out.

It was a wonderful world. Everyone seemed to understand my crippling need for approval. They seemed to know better than I did about my emotions, how I should feel, why I should feel it and when the right time was to feel it. Fire was catching. The first embers touched my tongue and I rejoiced in the sweetness of it. This fire, that others warned me would destroy, only destroyed the shackles of political correctness and limitations that I was bound by, in the offline world. This world did not need me to be conservative. There was no grandmother telling me to sit with my legs firmly together or an uncle telling me about his views on marriage. 'Liberal, free and unique' was the catchphrase, and I loved every moment of it. Social media was young. I am young. Obviously it meant that I was on the right track.

She danced around it with gaiety

Irresponsive to the world around her.

This was when the unthinkable happened. There was a terrorist attack in Paris. Leading militant organizations claimed responsibility. The world was shocked, and with it, I too shed tears for my unknown brethren who were far away. Social media was aghast; they cried out in despair for the people in Europe, sought speedy justice, and shouted that they would not allow this fear to consume them. The flames continued to ravage everything in its path, while we continued to 'Pray for Paris'. The same soon happened in Baghdad, thrice. The cries of frustration were fewer this time, and social media was called out for this hypocrisy.

As a student of Political Science, my opinions on political matters should be based on

research and understanding. The onslaught of political propaganda that is available on social media and every third blog claiming to have authentic statistics and expert opinions, has made this difficult. Surely Donald Trump was a terrible fascist and Bernie Sanders the savior of the masses, so said everyone on Twitter. Narendra Modi had spent far too much money on foreign tours. Facebook has the statistics to prove it. The messages forwarded on WhatsApp cannot lie. The younger Castro is much worse than his father, irrespective of dictatorial tendencies. I do believe that Dilma Rousseff did a good job during his term as the President of Brazil.

She ignored the viscous fluid

That startled those around her

She was the girl who played with fire

A little blood never deterred her.

My mother and I never had the 'talk'. She knows that I am aware of much more than she was at my age. However, why, and from whom, she still does not know. My mother and I did not discuss how I was to be raised. I was to be the decorous young lady, whom other mothers looked at and instructed their daughters to emulate. My mother and I did not mutually agree when I expressed my views on marriage, relationships and life. She knew that social media had worked its charms on me. I had my opinions and she could not stop me. However she had managed to teach me not to accept everything blindly. I should analyse and argue and after a brief period of slavery to social media, that is exactly what I did. I decided to forge my own path and let others follow.



'Facebook was not originally created to be a Company. It was built to accomplish a Social Mission - To make the world more open and connected.'

Mark Zuckerberg



Rasmika Ghosh

Class XII

Our Lady Queen Of The
Missions School
Salt Lake, Kolkata
West Bengal

5th Rank

OUR LADY QUEEN OF THE MISSIONS, SALT LAKE, KOLKATA

Our Lady Queen of the Missions, Salt Lake, is one of the most revered educational institutions of Kolkata. The school was founded on the 9th of February, 1997, and started functioning in April, 2001. The strength of the school is nearly 1500. The students not only excel in the field of academics but



also participate in various co- curricular activities. The average result of the school in the ISC and ICSE boards is one of the best in the city. The motto of the school is "Virtue and Knowledge." The school not only aims to provide top quality education but also to help the students grow into responsible individuals.

WHAT IS THIS LIFE WITHOUT WHATSAPP?

W.H. Davies had written," What is this life if full of care, we have no time to stop and stare?" I think he would have been rather impressed to see that now a days, all we do is stop and stare. Although what he wanted us to 'stare' at and what we actually stare at are vastly different.

What is this life, if full of care,

All we ever do is stop and stare

At the bright LED screen,

Displaying messages that would be better

If heard, than just be seen?

Human beings are considered to be the most intelligent creatures on earth. They have been blessed with minds of their own. If they are so smart and well informed, then why is it that they are so easily controlled by a mere application? WhatsApp is the new age Pavlov and we are the dogs. Every time Pavlov rung

the bell, the dogs would drool in anticipation for food; the food that might or might not be there. In the same way, every time our phone beeps, our hands immediately grab it and check for a message; the message which may or may not be vital to our very being. This has become a conditioned reflex with most Smartphoneusers. The first thing we do upon waking up and the last thing we do before sleeping is check our WhatsApp.

Our lives revolve around technology these days. We cannot even begin to imagine what life would be like if our phones stopped ringing. Now a days a family gathering is incomplete unless someone starts off with, "The other day, I read this joke on WhatsApp...." And then follows a narration which others listen to with bored interest as the same message must have appeared on their WhatsApp too! Every gathering ends with the members reminding each other to "WhatsApp" the pictures clicked.

Unrealistic things are said to be unimaginable. Life without WhatsApp is said to be unimaginable to people today. The funny thing is that we have forgotten that life without WhatsApp did exist! Yes, there was a time when people used to send letters to each other, when they did not wait impatiently for the blue ticks to ascertain whether the message had reached their friends. There was a time when people did go out to dinner and spend the time talking to each other and enjoying a good meal instead of sitting silently reading their WhatsApp messages, or clicking pictures of the dishes being eaten so that they could 'WhatsApp' these pictures to their friends who might be only a few tables away! There was a time when shopping was fun. A parent, a friend, or even the salesperson would help us to choose our clothes. We didn't immediately send the pictures of the clothes to our WhatsApp friends for approval. There was a time when we actually sat together and talked!

As a result of this overdependence on WhatsApp, people are losing the ability of having real conversations. WhatsApp is a great convenience no doubt. Apart from aiding communication we are exercising our fingers a great deal! But to be honest, I still think that WhatsApp is a sad substitute for actual conversation. The charm of actually talking to a person, noticing his or her expression, gesticulation, making eye contact, listening to tonal variations is a different experience altogether. Of course WhatsApp has provided us with a thousand emoticons to choose from, but it never the same. I find all of this rather contrived and superficial as if the person at the other end is making the desired politically correct response.

We are obsessed with putting up the perfect "DP" or display picture on our WhatsApp profile. We turn into narcissists, continually self-obsessing and thinking only about ourselves. Parents blame our lack of concentration and our slipping grades to our constant interaction on WhatsApp. We barely return from school and rush to our phones. Within

seconds our fingers are flying over the virtual keyboard as we exchange thoughts and reactions about the day. Not only teenagers, but adults also spend a great deal of time exchanging jokes on WhatsApp. As a result of all this much valuable time is lost.

What if we all decided to spend a day without WhatsApp? What if we got up in the morning and rushed to check the newspaper headlines? What if we did not click pictures of every waking moment and send them to our friends and acquaintances? A day when the WhatsApp notification button is on mute so that we did not constantly glance at the phone in our hands? Would we exist? Can we conceive of existing in this fashion?

Don't get me wrong. WhatsApp has unparalleled benefits but today we have become slaves to this application. We should use this app with restraint and caution. There is an entire world waiting to be explored. WhatsApp is only a part of our lives. Our lives should not become a part of WhatsApp. What is this life without WhatsApp you ask? Well I would like to reply, it's just the same, perhaps better.



Relationships are harder now because conversations become texting, arguments become phone calls and feelings become status updates.



Kishaloy Chakraborty

Class XI
Don Bosco School
Park Circus
Kolkata
West Bengal



DON BOSCO SCHOOL, PARK CIRCUS, KOLKATA

Don Bosco School, Park Circus, Kolkata (DBPC) was founded in the year 1958 as a Secondary School for imparting education to students while forming them to become men of character, competence, conscience, compassion and commitment. The aim of the institution is to impart sound value based education by forming in the boys habits of piety, virtue, discipline and self reliance during the years of their studies, thus enabling them to be dutiful sons of their motherland, India. The method of education followed in the school is the Preventive system taught and practiced by St. John Bosco. It is based on Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness.



CYBER BULLYING – THE NEW MENACE

Man- the race that towers over all fauna through his supreme intelligence – has always striven to better his lifestyle, to make his life something worth living for. Man's dissatisfaction with his present mode of existence is what has propelled him through the centuries into a world where voices and signals traverse thousands of kilometers, where fancy inventions have conquered the three realms of the air, the seas and the land, a world in which we can communicate with our fellow human beings at the touch of a button. Yet one revolution in the field of science and technology has caught the wonder of the human race- the Computer Revolution. The world has indeed come knocking at our door.

However, as the great Bard has said already, the fault dear reader is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that a few of us have revealed our beastly selves in this business called Life. These creatures, denizens of the human race no doubt, but with devious minds and insidious

motives, try to exert their superiority by using this great invention of the human mind to the detriment of human beings. Yes they use the gift of communication through technology for the despicable occupation which is known as Cyber Bullying.

What is the defining feature of Cyber Bullying that sets it apart from regular forms of bullying that everyone has suffered at some point or the other in their lives? Unfortunately Cyberspace gives bullies the opportunity to avoid many of the risks and difficulties associated with their offline transactions and this is what is disturbing and menacing.

Picture a typical ten year old schoolboy. Let us name him Ravi. It would not be unusual for Ravi to receive a mobile phone or a computer as a gift in this day and age. After all this is an age in which a youngster is expected to find out information for himself on the internet. A young boy is eager to jump on to the bandwagon at the earliest opportunity. All his

friends boast of being on social media so why not he. He would naturally log on to the social networking sites in vogue and connect with 'friends' often from the most unexpected places in the world.

Mephistopheles, in the garb of cyber bullying, now takes centre stage. Some of Ravi's friends – perhaps seniors- with very attractive profiles- now pick on Ravi as the recipient of some electronic messages. These messages have images describing someone like Ravi engaging in activities which, if publicized, could leave him in dire straits. Needless to mention, this would be the feat of freely available digital photo editing applications. The next step? Threats, blackmail and even worse. Like boa constrictors and black mambas, these bullies would wait to pounce on the hapless Ravi anytime and everywhere. Intimidated and scared out of his wits, he caves in and cannot even think of informing his parents as the dire threats of what would happen to him in such a case ensures a conspiracy of silence.

Even if the parents are informed there is precious little that they can do. The evil perpetrators often get off scot free as they create misleading profiles describing nonexistent people. Regular school bullies would appear almost humane in comparison to these denizens of hell. And what becomes of Ravi- the innocent victim of these twisted perverted minds? He is left a shattered wreck bereft of courage confidence and self-belief. A joyous life is shattered and ruined. Afraid and insecure, he can never trust again. The mockery and sarcasm of the comments and remarks can leave a scar that refuses to heal. In many a case the victim, unable to live with himself takes the only way out- suicide.

Instances like this point all too clearly to the gigantic proportions that this menace has assumed. Cyber bullying gives these terrible creatures the ability to strike unseen and unheard anywhere and at anytime. The Internet gives these ruthless demons the ability to expand their domains, for the Internet and the

World Wide Web have reduced the world to a global community. Most activities on the Internet are in an unregulated environment and afford bullies the right to wreak havoc as they please. They have little fear of being apprehended – the relatively few arrests made in cyber bullying cases stand testimony to this fact.

It is also worth mentioning that the victims of cyber bullying are not only children or teenagers. Adults, working professionals, businessmen, teachers, traders and so on, can also fall victim to this menace. Women and girls, sadly, are the major victims of this deformed mindset that turns people into cyber bullies. They are trolled with utmost cruelty and this bullying can take the shape of body shaming or character assassination. The terrible fall out of cyber bullying forces me to misquote, "As flies to wanton boys are we to cyber bullies; they kill us for their sport."

It is now time that the members of our global community who want to make the world a better place, join hands and act proactively to combat this menace which has entered our lives. We ought to counter this as seriously as we counter terrorism for this too is terrorism of a sort. It terrorizes people to the extent that they cannot call their lives their own. A coordinated effort to regulate social platforms, hold awareness campaigns, tighten security measures online and educate all internet users, young and old, will go a long way in making the cyberspace a more healthy arena.





Gayatri K. Shenoy

Class XII

Sarvodaya Vidyalaya

Thiruvananthapuram

Kerala

7th Rank

SARVODAYA VIDYALAYA, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Sarvodaya Vidyalaya is one of the leading educational institutions in Trivandrum. It is run by the Major Archdiocese of Trivandrum of the Syro-Malankara rite



and has around 4000 students on its roll. The motto of the school is, "Let there be light." The mission and ministry of the school is to expel darkness from the minds of children and to replace it with the light of knowledge. The school provides the necessary ambience for each student to develop into a wholesome personality. A sense of social awareness and responsibility is created in the minds of the children to undertake global challenges in academics, sports and cultural activities.

SOCIAL MEDIA HAS CHANGED MY VIEWS AND OPINIONS

WARNING: The following ideas in the piece presented below have not been copied and are original (wink!) And oh yes! Smoking Kills!

The page is blank as is my mind.
And I am at a loss for words.
My thoughts are random and scattered,
As is a terrified flock of birds.

Now gushout the words
Like a dam burst,
I don't know how to put them down.
I expect before anything else,
I will have to arrange them well.

Before Facebook and Twitter,
I was just ordinary and plain.
With no opinion about anything.
Not even about things in my domain.

I could not come forward with any ideas.
Without any knowledge who could?

But then came in social media
And for me opened the wide world.

Now I have a say in almost everything,
I even get a 'like' or two for my posts,
They show that I at last have an opinion
Often based on what others have already
written.

I have learnt to be fast as this world is
quick
There is no time to think
The topic under discussion
Changes with every blink.

Back then I was really lame,
But now I'm not the same.
I know whoever's in the game,
Almost every 'in' person's name.

I went with the trend, followed Modi first.
I knew every word of his "Maan ki baat"

Then other heroes stole the limelight
crying
'Hey man! Don't only talk of the upper
crust!'

There's a new hangout in the city, I learn,
Where else but over the latest status.
I too wanted to go there, though it was not
much,
I wanted my name tagged with the word 'cool'.

The phase of a new kind of slavery I
entered,
Believing of 'Facebook' every word
If Fb said it was right, it was,
If something was declared as 'in'
Not to follow it was a sin.

Even at school, discussions were changing.
Everything was about the latest status update.
Was one happy or sad at a certain place?
Was that a pout or a duck face?

One either 'liked', 'shared' or 'commented'
To declare that one had arrived.
One was part of the gang and accepted
A post a day was the least that was
expected.

I often wondered whether I was the same
person,
Whose world had been the latest work of
fiction?
The library had been a safe haven
Now all that seemed a forgotten story.

About everything I now had an opinion,
It had to be posted as soon as I thought of
it.
Whether it received likes or not was a
tension.
My quotes began to be followed.

Soon I was a minor celebrity.
This world is as instant as instant coffee.
There is no time to form an opinion
Or reflect, for tweets were necessary from me.

This instant recognition may be heady,
However it comes with so many cons.
Social media became my world
And cut me off from all reality.

In a way it is good, in another, not.
Like every coin has a flipside.
Social media is a giant, a virtual tsunami
Once you are in, there is nowhere you can
hide.

I become a lump of clay in its hands,
As social media begins to shape me.
It rules my life, my thoughts,
Do you want to 'like' 'poke' or 'tag' me?
Do!

My family I have left far behind,
As the flickering screen obsesses me.
At times my brain feels scrambled
As I drown in a sea of pictures and words.

I don't read editorials for my news.
It's much more exciting to read tweets
No need to read, comprehend, analyse
Too much work for the brain you know.

Why not just play follow the leader,
Agree to what the majority says.
Don't try to delve beneath the surface
You might not like what you see there.

Like a hypnotist social media holds you in
thrall.
Of course if you want out, you can delete
your account.
But then you will no longer be part of the
crowd.
A needle in a stack of hay.

A needle that nobody cares about.
The butt of all the pitying jokes
The object of ridicule as one who
Could not keep up with the rest.

But hey! Social media! Don't feel bad,
I'm never ever gonna leave you.
There are times when you do make a
difference.
We will inspire each other for the best,
Ignoring the rest, we will make it through.



Hima Kriti

Class XI

Sheiling House School

Kanpur

Uttar Pradesh

SHEILING HOUSE SCHOOL, KANPUR

Originally known as the U.K.C.A. (United Kingdom Citizen's Association) School, Sheiling House School came into existence on 20th December, 1958. The school prides itself for being an educational institution with a heart



and soul. It incorporates knowledge, self-learning techniques, social and human values and prepares the students for a competitive world order. In addition to academics, the school has made its mark by excelling in co-curricular activities with special emphasis on environment conservation and upholding social causes. Value education constitutes a major part of the school curriculum, inspiring the students to live up to the school motto "For Others."

8th Rank

THE SOCIAL MEDIA - OUR CONSCIENCE KEEPER

"You need to decide what you would like to be remembered for. You should write it down on a page. That page may be an important page in history, whether it is a page of discovery, invention or fighting injustice." – Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam

It is said that nothing is as troublesome as a conscience. It keeps on urging you to do the right thing, go the right way, and be a good person. In a world where one's conscience seems to be a forgotten thing, it is a pleasant surprise to find that there are some people who think the same way that you do and have the same morals. What better way to come across similar minds than on social media! The world is shrinking very fast and most people depend totally on internet connectivity. I don't think that we have yet realized how vital a role social media has come to play in our lives. Most of us think that it is merely a platform to air our views. In actuality its role is more wide

and significant. When used the right way, it can be used to show solidarity, protest against injustice, and even garner support for the downtrodden. In today's world, social media has become the conscience keeper of the masses.

Social media is often used to display solidarity. The biggest example would be the reaction to the Paris terror attacks. Yes, social media was not the only medium used. The statue of Christ the Redeemer, the Empire State Building, and the Washington monument were all decked in French colours. There were candle light marches, public speeches against terrorism and so on. Every country came forward to aid France through the horrific time. Most of this, however, would have gone unnoticed had it not been for social networking sites. These actions were highlighted, brought to everyone's notice and commented upon via the social media. Practically everyone on Facebook and

WhatsApp had the French colours as their display pictures. This helped everyone to sit up and take notice of the outrage against humanity. It would have remained an isolated incident among several such incidents if social media had not played such a pivotal role.

The Brussels attack also evoked similar reactions. The posts on the social networking sites served to awaken our conscience and made us realize the necessity of speaking out and acting against these acts of terrorism. Social media can thus become a powerful force which cannot be easily ignored.

This year's Academy Awards was criticized because there were no African- American nominees, despite stunning performances from actors from that community in several movies. Prominent film personalities spoke up against this on social media. Actors like Reese Witherspoon and Tom Hanks publicly expressed their disappointment at such discrimination. This, coupled with the angst of thousands of people prompted the members of the Academy to take proactive steps to prevent such occurrences in the future.

The floods in Chennai last year, were a harrowing time for all concerned. The people living in Chennai as well as people who had relatives living in the city, suffered from intense trauma. The Indian Army was instrumental in conducting relief operations no doubt but help also came from unexpected sources. People on social media highlighted the plight of those stranded in the floods and managed to secure money and help for those in distress. This also occurred during the Nepal earthquake. The pitiable pictures posted and the heart rending accounts of those in distress were posted in social media and served to rouse the conscience of people.

As our conscience keeper, the social media is certainly effective but it still has a long way to go. There are still many issues both social, educational and cultural which need attention. Social media can play a very important role in awakening our awareness about the discrepancies, injustice and cruelty in our environment so that our conscience is touched and we are roused to take action. May I, as a user of social media, make a plea that instead of using our platforms for trivial things and worrying about likes and comments, we should make use of social media to ensure that we have a better tomorrow?



‘The strength of your SOCIAL MEDIA is determined by the strength of your CONTENT’.

Haroon Rashid



Yusra Khan

Class XI

St. Agnes' Loreto Day School
Lucknow
Uttar Pradesh

ST. AGNES' LORETO DAY SCHOOL, LUCKNOW

St. Agnes' Loreto Day School established in 1904, is a Catholic institution, being run under the management of the Lucknow Loreto Educational Society. Situated in the heart of the city, its premises accommodate about 150 girl students, catering to their academics and all-round development.



9th Rank

CYBER BULLYING – THE NEW MENACE

Ayushi's computer screen blinked a dull colour, and she got up from her desk, rushing over to her favourite spot. She browsed through the webpage, checking her notifications as she did religiously every day. Ah, a message from her best friend Nikita! Nikita and Ayushi had been best friends ever since their first encounter on Facebook. They had bonded over their mutual dislike for loud makeup and marmalade. They interacted regularly, sharing their daily anecdotes and lauding their favourite teams during the IPL matches.

Miles away from Ayushi's sprawling villa in Mumbai, Nikita rocked back and forth in her chair as she allowed her mind to spiral uncontrollably, her eyes staring at the bright flickering light of her digital screen. A flurry of contradictory emotions arose in her mind, erasing her self-will, heightening her hesitation. "Should I just drop the idea?" she wondered. She had speculated that it would be frightening to say the least, as it always is,

when one puts oneself at the mercy of an audience. "Will people like it?" Her hands hovered over the mouse. Again she thought whether backing away for fear of criticism was worth it. Making up her mind, she resolutely submitted her dance video, the video that she had prepared for the competition.

Immediately she sent a WhatsApp to Ayushi informing her of her decision. Ayushi knew of Nikita's desire to share her first professional dance performance on YouTube, a popular video outlet where millions could spot her talent. "A decent enough attempt," thought Ayushi, as she watched the video uploaded by Nikita. Immediately she commented on the performance, "mesmerizing!" "Just wait till the video gets the popularity it deserves."

Happy, flushed with a sense of achievement, Nikita was completely unprepared for the barrage of criticism and negative comments, some terribly cruel, which started to pile up. They began as a trickle, some even constructive

in nature but soon the trickle became a flood of negativity even abuse. A dance instructor advised her not to be so stiff and to feel the music while dancing. Though the insinuation that she was stiff pricked, she took it in good spirit. Soon there were comments telling her to go and find another hobby. Others declared that her dancing was ugly. Ayushi told her not to let the comments matter so much. But it wasn't easy. Day after day the ugly face of social media began to show itself as the comments from a particular group escalated from the nasty to the downright insulting and obnoxious. A stranger in particular who had been sending suggestive and lewd messages now started body shaming her. The person's latest comment was, "Hey ugly thighs, you hurt my eyes!"

This was the latest of the fifteen other comments which lewdly commented upon her appearance rather than her craft. Try as she would, she could not ignore them or delete them at once. They chipped away at her self-esteem and gave a fillip to her insecurities. She was called fat, ugly, plain, mediocre, dull, chubby, inexperienced and other cruel things.

Nervous, uncertain, hurt, the once bubbly girl who had harboured dreams of making it big in the world of dance, shut herself away from the world. She disappeared from the social media sites in which she used to take such pleasure. The very thought of dancing now made her have a panic attack. Ayushi felt her friend slipping away and desperately tried to restore her self-esteem. But Nikita retaliated of accusing her of being in league with the tormentors as she had given Nikita the idea of uploading the video on the net. . Thus another talent was lost to mankind.

Cyber bullying is rarely recognized and even more seldom seen as a major social problem. The internet harbours people of diverse mind sets. Some have very weird and twisted motives and use social media to give expression to their sadistic selves. We have to learn how to counter act such people if we encounter them in the cyber world. Otherwise we will have many more Nikitas in our world. Nikita at least had a friend to stand by her. Some have no one to turn to and the consequences can be disastrous.





Soumya Choudhary

Class XII

Agrasain Balika Siksha Sadan

Howrah

West Bengal



AGRASAIN BALIKA SIKSHA SADAN, HOWRAH

Agrasain Balika Shiksha Sadan is a crusade launched by the Agrasain Seva Samity towards education of the girl child and women's emancipation. It offers Nursery to Class XII level English medium ultra modern education and unique co-curricular training. During the last 20 years the school has grown not only in student strength but also in educational standards. The main objective of the school is to empower the students so that they may identify their strengths and weaknesses and distinguish between dreams, desire and destination



CYBER BULLYING – THE NEW MENACE

Wrapped in a sheet, covered in dust, and unable to breathe, Kashica opened her eyes wondering what had led her to that dark, dusty storeroom of the old, ruined building. Traumatized with fear, she ran out of the scary place and managed to reach her hostel room while it was still dark. Unable to relate her nightmare to any other person, plagued by insomnia, Kashica sat by the window, trying to connect the scattered pieces of the puzzle of her life.

"A small town girl with a limited mindset," was the sum total of the constant barrage of taunts and jeers that Kashica had to endure from her classmates. In her hometown, Kashica had led a simple, uncomplicated life. Being an extraordinarily brilliant student, she was sent to a reputed school in Delhi so that she could pursue her dreams.

The atmosphere of the school was quite contrary to Kashica's expectations. Instead of making new friends, she found herself shunned

by everyone and her nights were spent in crying her heart out. Her classmates were experts on social networking sites whereas poor Kashica did not have a clue about all this. Desperate to be a part of the 'gang' she started visiting various social networking sites, spending the tuition fees that her hardworking parents sent her every month on trying to 'upgrade' herself. Her laptop, meant to aid her in studies was aiding her in an entirely different way. The dreams of making it big in life acquired an entirely different meaning.

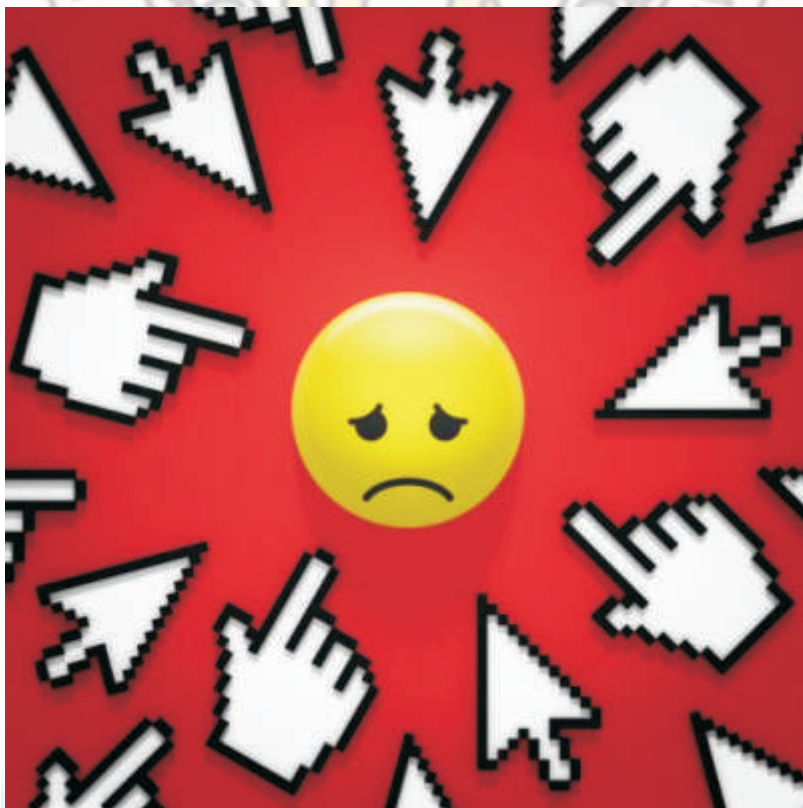
Kashica was a shy introvert in real life but her social networking profile which she started operating under a fake name, portrayed her as a 'party girl,' ready for all kinds of 'fun'. Very soon she was interacting with Varun, a young man she met on cyberspace. Her filled her fantasies, seeming to be the kind of man every girl dreamt about- smart, good-looking, funny and outgoing. His gentle persuasion and little barbs at her self-esteem led to Kashica posting

several unsavoury pictures and videos of herself on the net. Very soon his persuasive requests turned into subtle threats which escalated into direct demands. She wanted to meet him to ask him why he was demanding such things from her, but he remained a shadowy figure on the net completely controlling her life and making her live in an atmosphere of terror. Try as she might, she could not get out of the abyss that she had fallen into.

Thinking back to one day, she remembered how Varun told her to dress prettily and meet him. He even promised to delete all the pictures of her that were now in his possession. She went to the spot but there was no Varun. Instead her message box popped up with his demand for money if she wanted her pictures deleted. Desperate, frightened she did not know whom to turn to or confide in. Her parents would be devastated. She could not confide in them. The thought of approaching the police and showing the texts sent by Varun did occur to her but she could not muster up the courage to do so. The only way out was to end her life.....

Varun was eventually caught by the police while harassing yet another girl but this did not console Kashica's grieving parents. So many lives were lost. Kashica's only fault was that she did not know about the dangers of the cyber world. To her it had seemed to be something that was dazzling and brilliant, something that would help her to come out of her loneliness and make a few friends.

Social networking sites were not created to provide an opportunity to people with sick minds. However it has become a way of our world that everything that is positive is turned into a negative by some individuals. From our youth we should be educated about the various dangers of Social Networking Sites. People do make friends but everyone should proceed with caution. No stranger should be accepted easily for we do not know their intentions. If only someone had taken Kashica under her wing, a life would not have been senselessly lost.





“We don’t have a choice on whether we DO social media, the question is how well we DO it.”

SOCIAL MEDIA EXPLAINED



TWITTER

I AM EATING A #DONUT



FACEBOOK

I LIKE DONUTS



FOURSQUARE

THIS IS WHERE I EAT DONUTS



INSTAGRAM

HERE'S A VINTAGE PHOTO OF MY DONUT



YOUTUBE

WATCH ME EATING A DONUT



LINKEDIN

MY SKILLS INCLUDE DONUT EATING



PINTEREST

HERE'S A DONUT RECIPE



LAST.FM

NOW LISTENING TO "DONUTS"



GOOGLE+

I AM A GOOGLE EMPLOYEE
WHO EATS DONUTS



Category

2

PLEASE RESHARE! JEFFHESTER.NET



Dimitri Mallik

Class X
Auxilium Convent School
Dum Dum, Kolkata
West Bengal

AUXILIUM CONVENT SCHOOL, KOLKATA

Auxilium Convent School run by Salesian sisters of the order Daughters of Mary Help of Christians(FMA) was founded in the year 1872 by St. John Bosco and St. Mary Mazzarello. The school has its guiding principle in the 'Preventive System of Education' as envisaged by St. John Bosco. The system requires the educators to facilitate both the Moral and Spiritual growth of young children so that they make meaningful contributions to civic society. The academic sessions of the school are interspersed with numerous co- curricular activities that aim to equip the pupils to face challenges in life with confidence.



1st Rank

A WORLD WITHOUT FACEBOOK

Clang, smash, boom! "Why does it have to be so congested?" Omi got up terrified. The room was shrouded in darkness, so dark that it appeared as if someone had poured liquid pitchblende into the room. The only light that dazzled his eyes came from a rectangular screen where his photos were arranged and several emoticons and text greeted his bewildered eyes. It was then he realised that he had fallen asleep while chatting on 'Facebook'.

But something else startled him. By the faint white and blue light coming from screen, he noticed two burly figures duelling with a lance. Omi jumped out of his bed and switched on the light. What he saw made his eyes pop out of his sockets. Was he dreaming? As a singular shriek escaped his mouth, General Edward Harry Dyer and Adolf Hitler turned towards him. So did Louis XV and Abraham Lincoln. Omi felt the mosaic floor slip from beneath his feet. He sat with a thud on the floor. At once, Mother Teresa, came to his rescue. Omi started

screaming hysterically, "I am getting mad!", "Help!", "Ghosts!". After an unsuccessful attempt to quieten Omi, Hitler intelligently stuffed his Lufthansa embroidered handkerchief into Omi's wide mouth. "Mmph, gaw, mggh" came Omi's gagged response. Clearing his throat, the dreaded 'Führer' began, "As you know, ladies and gentlemen, this young brat here with my prized hanky in his unhallowed mouth finds himself incorrigibly addicted to Facebook – so much so, that he considers the American Revolution or the Civil War, the French Revolution, the Rise of Nazism, the Crimean War and even his country's own 'JalianwalaBagh Massacre' inferior to... er... well Facebook. He doesn't have any regard for even the charitable work done by Mother Teresa. He sits up whole night and goggles at the blasphemous Facebook screen on Monday when he has to study us... I mean his history book for his history test on Tuesday!" "He must be immediately executed in the guillotine," chimed in Louis XV politely. Abraham Lincoln with his

insatiable desire for knowledge said, "Calm down Hitler, I have always experienced an attraction to this Facebook glue which adheres the young generation of today to their desktop screens. And as we have stepped back on earth today through the worm hole in the fourth dimension, I think we should try our hand at this blue and white messenger."

So, while Omi sat with a handkerchief in his mouth, the magnanimous characters of class VII, VIII, IX and X history textbooks brought out their laptops and signed in to a world which was very different from their world of duels, battles, luxury and prattles... so very different.

Hitler, Louis XV and Napoleon Bonaparte found themselves adjusting their collars and frills and carefully parting their hair to cover the baldness just to get a few more "likes". Lincoln and Mother Teresa started on a heated argument on whose picture would look better on the social media's global platform. In fact, they all sat addicted to that very blue and white screen they had all condemned.

Meanwhile, Omi had managed to free himself. He raced to his history book and found that the pages of History had rewritten themselves.

He opened to Chapter No. 13

American Civil War (13)

With the no "great emancipation", there was no freedom from slavery. Suddenly in the first scarlet and saffron beam of dawn he recognised some black 'niggers' or slaves carrying coals outside his house.

He shrieked. He turned to Modern History. The name of Mother Teresa had just vanished from all the thirty pages he had been asked to memorise. He looked out of his window. The 'Missionaries of Charity', near his home had vanished. The spick and span avenue outside his home was filled on both sides by sick, diseased and the destitute people. Two lepers were lying just near his courtyard. Flies swarmed around them.

Omi got up and smashed the laptops in front of everybody. All these historic stalwarts disappeared in a whiff of smoke. Omi realised that his world has to be one without Facebook. There were millions of needy, poor, tortured and downtrodden people everywhere. He and his real friends needed to reach out to them. He needed to hold them to his heart and get the blessing of their toiled and soiled hands on his head. Surely that would make up for the hundred "likes" he would miss on Facebook.

He realised he needed to study hard, earn a living and work for the underprivileged. The battle drums of charity were ringing and beating in his heart. In the new bivouac of life that he had just envisioned, he saw how unsocial the social media had made him, how much indifferent he was to the needs of other people and how detached he was from his own parents and friends. He wanted to go and give a hug to his parents just at that time. He realised that he would have to later explain to his teacher how his history book was different from the others. Nonetheless, he was also thankful to those noble souls who brought before him a world - a good new invigorating world without Facebook.



*Face your PROBLEMS,
Not FACEBOOK them.*



Ravleen Kaur

Class X

St. Joseph's Convent School

Jalandhar

Punjab



ST. JOSEPH'S CONVENT SCHOOL, JALANDHAR

St. Joseph's Convent School, Jalandhar, more than an educational institution for girls, is a scholastic temple that aims at the total formation of the human being. Established in 1958 under the management of the CMC Sisters, it

aims at imparting meritorious and selfless service in the field of education. Here, tender minds are transformed into well-integrated, mature, patriotic, compassionate and socially conscious model citizens. The school also runs a Special School for the slow learners and differently abled children where their inherent talents find an outlet through various activities. The school is committed to upholding the tenets of a virtuous life while upholding the school motto "Learn, Dare to be Wise."



A WORLD WITHOUT FACEBOOK

"Oh! Dad please let me post my photo on Facebook, and I will have my dinner later", said Adil to his father, while carrying an opulent palate of luscious food. These are one of the statements and the common dictums that are rife in most of the modern households. 'A world without Facebook' is just like a body without a soul, for quite a few. This trend that has been ratcheting up quickly, can be analysed and intercepted in numerous ways.

In the languages of many polyglots, the world might be defined as a communiqué of people living together on the same earth sharing the indispensable sources of the cosmopolitan. When we intercept the term 'Facebook' perspicaciously, we define it as a social hub of tech-savvy people who have taken to computer as a medium to orchestrate their views and their ideas. For some it has quintessentially become the most wanted and celebrated means of communication. They firmly believe if they have to go without Facebook, they would have to swallow bitter pills. Indeed it is veracious to its fullest sense but as

the saying goes, 'A coin has two sides', so is the same with this catchy hub of modern people.

'A world without Facebook' would affect our lives to the deepest, raising the hackles and arousing ire and flak from tech-savvy people. A world without Facebook can be visualised and interpreted from different nooks and angles like personal, psychological, political, emotional or medical.

Personally a world devoid of Facebook would lead to the loss of an integral source of communication. It would naturally make the people of those secluded regions despondent and sad where there is no telecommunication. This would prove to be retrograding factors for the aspiring entrepreneurs and youngsters who wish to showcase their potentials or means of this much magnanimous platform. Moreover the talent of the deft and dexterous people are much likely to go in vain if they can reach out to the common consensus and gather accolades from different sections. They would be compelled to tout their talents at a much lower value to debasing their

fiends. Moreover the individual personality development would stand on a rickety platform, especially for those introvert students who shell themselves and do not get a chance to meet different people and socially mix with their fellow agemates. Interaction on Facebook provides a chance to express your feelings in textual expression. Its removal from this world would be depressing for those who are not niche with propagation of their feelings in verbose format.

Its evasion from the world would have certain psychological effects and would leave mental scars on those people who are conservative and are not likely to express their inner feelings and emotions to their parents. Eventually, they might go in a state of dysthymic depression and produce negative results on the forefront- be it personal or the professional front. The chances of the development of brain that gets fuelled by facing seclusion on Facebook might be reduced to nil leading to consequences of reduction of depression and alcoholism when a person might meet different people when he is in his adolescent years.

Politically we can chalk out the effects of the deduction of Facebook from the world by analysing it. Without any trace of doubt one can say that pros would definitely exceed the cons but the gristly nature of cons would surely make one stand on one's nerves. The social and much-acclaimed medium like Facebook provides a better and indeed a perfect platform for advertising government policies and programs and advocate their policies to the common people. It provides the government a better stage for campaigning for their parties during elections. But hark! If Facebook is not available then these perfect standards, the propagation of thoughts and policies would all end in spurious chambers becoming an ideological dreams for parties including and adjusting young thoughtful minds. Indeed it would become fractious to reach out to rural consensus which thrives on social networking in this era rather than on the archaic means. What will happen to the ideas and aspirations of the politicians of the finest calibre? Indeed they would be riven and disappear in a plume of smoke. Who would then quote the

chinks in the armours of the ruling party? The opposition's aspirations of once again scurrying through the corridors of power would be demolished and obliterated. Who would gibber about the problems and onus of the penurious lot of the country? Not a man who gives voice to their pains on Facebook. What would happen to the much acclaimed and appreciated programme of 'Make in India' whose Department of Industrial policy and promotion makes use of Facebook to implement its curriculum? How would the cumulating of the problem of 'digital divide' be reduced or nullified? So many quandering queries arise just with the idea of removal of Facebook?

As no one is oblivious about the fact that the technically educated terrorists make use of encryption techniques to spread terrorism and we also are aware of the fact that Facebook is used as a tool for cyber crime, child pornography and plagiarism. The removal of Facebook would help to reduce these terror spreading activities and these online crimes.

Lastly, it would lead to serious injury leading to complications in the matters when people require blood of compatible to save the lives of the loved ones and also when organ donation is integral to save one's life. Who would spread awareness about newly discovered pathogens?

Indeed we have different social platforms, but keeping in mind the growing fame in today's world one can dish out these problems with ease. Of course there will be pros at all the levels like its removal would bring the old notions of spending free time on the forefront like playing and engaging in physical activity and help to strengthen the bond of love between parents and their child but according to my viewpoint the removal of Facebook from the world would spray and infuse disdain in the environment. I am aware of the fact that people used to live without this utility in older times and some even consider chatting on Facebook as taboo, but the expulsion of Facebook from the voguish world would make the tech savvy people living corpses with hearts and the different policies dead in this mortal age. I would like to quote a line, "Man is the prey of his own passions and victims of his stupidity."



Namrata Nair

Class X

Christ Academy I.C.S.E. School
Bangalore
Karnataka

3rd Rank

CHRIST ACADEMY I.C.S.E. SCHOOL, BANGALORE

Established in 2005, Christ Academy focuses on creating citizens who are valuable to society and conscious about ecology and nature. Striving for excellence while upholding our core values and traditions, is second

nature to the students. Co- curricular activities form an integral part of the curriculum thus ensuring the holistic development of the child. There is an exciting mix of modern with the traditional in all our endeavours in the school. All this is done in consonance with the educational vision of St. Chavara as the school is run by the Fathers of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) - a congregation of Catholic priests.



A PEEK INTO THE WORLD OF 'DP'S AND FACEBOOK STATUSES

The streetlamp near the highway bathes everything in an artificial yellow glow. Cars speed by, the high glare of their lights adding to, the brightness. The air here on the balcony is still but cold, and I can feel goose bumps prickle down my arms. My mother slides open the balcony door and looks at me, curled up on a beanbag scrolling through Facebook on her phone, probably the poster child for the 'I-have-homework-I-should-be-doing-right-now' brand of arrogant laziness.

"Namrata"

"Hmm?"

She sighs, exasperated but with an inimitable fondness in her voice.

"I'll need the phone back in fifteen minutes"

I murmur my assent and my mother goes back inside, silently reaffirming that this is why I'll never get a phone of my own.

I pause abruptly in my endless scrolling. One of my favourite parts of social media is looking at people's profilepictures and statuses. To be more specific, I like looking at Diana's profile pictures and statuses. I'm not entirely sure how or why I have Diana's contacts. I am sure that her constantly changing photos of cats and ducks-faced selfies never fail to make me smile, even if I only message her to confirm homework. Today, though Diana doesn't have a photo up or one of her positive, rather trite statuses (things like "stay beautiful!" followed by a colourful range of emoticons). There's just nothing there.

Why am I so unsettled by this? I really don't know. My finger, however, only hesitates for a moment before hitting the call button next to her name.

We're friends I guess. It's my job to look out for her. It rings for an unnaturally long time.

My palms are beginning to sweat. Just when I was considering putting the phone down, she picks it up.

"Hello?" she says warily.

"Hey." I say, feeling ridiculous "i just wanted to see how you were doing. Are you okay?"

There's a slight pause. Then her answer comes, too casual to be true, "Yeah, why wouldn't I be?"

I sigh. Maybe I haven't been talking much recently to Diana, who was strange and fascinating in her own way. The lingering familiarity for the past nine months is enough to make me drop all formality. "It's eleven-fifty in the night, Diana, and I still know you well enough to know you're blatantly lying."

There's a long pause. I grip the phone uneasily.

"I'm just tired. Do you ever feel tired?" she laughs a bit bitterly here "No, I bet you don't."

"Of course I do, I'm tired all the time now that we're in tenth."

"That's not what I mean," she says.

"Diana, where are you?" I ask. I can hear rustling through the scratchy connection.

"The roof" she says eventually, and what kind of tired she is.

Suddenly its unbearably cold. I go back inside, shutting the glass door behind me.

"I get tired too," I confess. The secret seems to expand in my throat until it chokes me. "That kind of tired, your current kind" I start clarifying, and hear her huff. It's a laugh.

"I understand that," she says dryly.

"I miss your profile pictures," I snort out "That's why I called, honestly."

She starts laughing, full-blown, breathless laughter, and I bite back a smile.

"You called me because of the profile picture?" she asks, incredulous.

"And to talk to you," I add, trying to salvage my dignity.

"I'll put up a new one up," she says.

"Should probably get down from the roof for that," I say.

"Yeah?"

"Wi-fi would be terrible up there."

"All right," she says, and I listen to her climb back down. Statuses and 'DP's might seem like an exercise in vanity. Maybe sometimes they are. It's strange, though, that people think our generation collectively is shallow and silly but what if you have a generation that has different reasons in finding small comfort in being able to express themselves in some way – a method of saying 'this is who I am and this is how I'm feeling'

"I'm down," she says.

I check the time. 12:05.

"I'll be waiting by my phone until I see that profile picture," I say threateningly. She laughs, and it's cut off by a yawn.

"Am I that boring?" I tease.

"No," she says "I'm just tired."

A different kind of tired; a better tired.

"Go to sleep," I say.

"Picture first?" she asks.

"Picture first," I confirm.

Six minutes after I hang up, the phone screen lights up. I can hear my mother snoring softly in the next room, her fifteen minutes deadline forgotten. Diana's picture is of the night stay outside her window. She lives further north, where the people are scarce and orange streetlights don't erase any evidence of the worlds beyond our own. I can see the constellations Diana could see from her window. I can see, in my mind's eye, Diana taking the picture, pale skin lined with blue veins, before falling asleep, still alive and able to post her ridiculous, endearing DPs and statuses.

I fall asleep feeling unbearably content.

**Vedaa Jain**

Class X

Avalon Heights
International School
Mumbai
Maharashtra**4th Rank****AVALON HEIGHTS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, MUMBAI**

Established in 2000, in Navi Mumbai, Avalon Heights International School, with a strength of 1200 students and 110 teachers, aims at creating a dynamic and interactive learning environment where a lasting love



for learning is cultivated. To see the freedom of the child on the football field, to feel the concentration written on his face while playing chess, to watch the fine control over her muscles as she whizzes past on skates, to admire the twist of a wrist painting and bringing the inner imagination to life, to witness the oneness of man and machine as the child works at the computer – all this is Avalon's purpose.

THE UNSOCIAL SIDE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

It was dark-almost as dark as the hearts of those who revel in the beauty of destruction. The verdant canopy basked in the tepid warmth of the scarlet orb that dipped low into the sky, and then disappeared altogether like a pantomime villain sneaking away from the scene of crime. The mellifluous crescendo resembling a Vieuxtemps violin could be distinctly heard in the village, its chords carried by the gentle zephyr. The silhouettes of the pine trees grew, and the twilight peeking through their leaves, cast a myriad of distorted shadows upon the forest floor. Somewhere deep in the jungle, the striped beast's adenoidal grunt could be heard. Foreboding, malevolent eyes glinted in the dark, their depths like a catacomb of dead memories. At edge of this haunting yet beautiful jungle, lay a small village, its timorous voice a small cry in the loud cheer of the world.

The uneven, cobbled paths that lacerated their way through the village came to a halt at the foot of a tiny, ramshackle hut. Inside, the grandmother, a wise woman who narrated

enchancing stories to her grandson, was in the midst of another tale. The young boy, his brown eyes refulgent under the dim light of a cracked bulb that hung from the ceiling, listened in rapt attention. His mother, a demure woman, was cooking a meal in the dark on the broken stone that resided in the back of their hut. A little further up the path, a group of men shared ancient folklore about rumoured man-eaters, their loud voices breaking the silence of the night. Two children, a boy and a girl, played with broken stubs of sticks, their laughter echoing and ricocheting off the trenchant cliffs of the hills that lay yonder.

On the other side of these hills, was a concrete jungle of towering skyscrapers that seemed to kiss the high heavens. Scintillating lights lit up the streets that ran deep into the city, an endless labyrinth of the beguiling sights and sounds. A local MLA stood on the side of the street, surrounded by reporters who were curious to know about his latest online nosy campaign. A few blocks away, outside a cafe, a girl stood

In a cramped apartment, atop a tall building, a small town maid gazed wistfully at the voluptuous models that were splashed across the front page of glossy magazines, desperately wanting to escape into her perfect utopia of flashing cameras and fame. In another house, where a cracked teapot held a lukewarm concoction of water and herbs, a young man was

Away from the hustle and bustle of an unfamiliar world, the village treaded on slowly towards strengthening bonds and building relationships. Their fortitude stood gallant in the storm of the time, fearless of the reckless and tempestuous wind that threatened to sway them. The prosaic world of gadgets, reporters and social media, although pervasive, found it difficult to penetrate the walls of their vibrant hearts. Their lives were like ululating sounds in this poignant world, desperate to see true meaning.



Some people are not ANTISOCIAL, they are just very selective when it comes to who they associate with.



Sasha Agarwal

Class IX
South City International School
Kolkata
West Bengal



SOUTH CITY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, KOLKATA

South City International School is a New Age School that was established in the year 2009. The school is child centric and the teachers ensure that learning is relevant, engaging, challenging and significant to meet the diverse



needs of the student- intellectual, physical, social, cultural and aesthetic. SCIS teaches the young learners to love challenges, be enterprising, adventurous and creative. They are urged to develop a global, liberalized mind set and passionately engage in socially relevant issues like gender equality, public morality, issues of anti-racism, multi culturalism considering the fact that we have students coming from diverse backgrounds and nationalities.

A PEEK INTO THE WORLD OF DPs AND FACEBOOK STATUSES

She rolled her pristine, azure eyes as her phone beeped incessantly, yet again. Once the seemingly never-ending flow of notifications and messages ceased, she unlocked her phone, with her ever-present expression of blatant chagrin.

Routinely, she opened Facebook.

‘Sarah Jasper and 694 others recently liked your profile picture,’ it read.

A smug smile revved up her flawlessly contoured cheeks. The number had clearly exceeded her expectations. Blatantly ignoring the various posts and comments she was tagged in, she proceeded to look through the sea of messages that had come flowing in, proclamations of affection from her numerous modern day suitors. Reading the comparatively superior ones that caught her attention, she blatantly ignored others.

She then proceeded to check upon the array of other social media accounts she had, dismissing the notifications that continued to pour in.

All of a sudden, the most recent notification caught her precious attention.

‘You have one memory to look back upon today.’

Her fingers were trembling. She clicked on it. As she was directed to Facebook, she breathed out heavily. A picture of her appeared on the screen, from two years back on that very date.

‘Happy Birthday to the best father I could wish for! I love you, papa’ the caption read, displaying a photograph that was the embodiment of happiness – a twelve year old balancing precariously on her father’s back.

As her eyes stayed, fixated, on the screen, tears

began to well up in them. She was nearly unrecognisable – her face displaying not a single hint of makeup, but an ocean of emotions as she looked towards her father, her happiness mingled with touches of admiration and awe.

She looked into her father's eyes, filled with assurance, as he looked back lovingly at her.

A lone tear trickled down her porcelain skin, as she shut out her surroundings, the photograph capturing every fragment of her attention.

Just two years, and she's almost forgotten how he looked. Despite her best attempts at not parting, she no longer knew how he smelled – the sensation of assurance and protection that over-whelmed her as she buried her head into his arms.

She slid down to the ground, as a hurricane of memories clouded her mind. As her armour of nonchalance and insensitivity crumbled, she found herself in a helpless heap on the mahogany floors, sobbing her heart out.

She'd built these seemingly impermeable walls around her, ever since the fateful day. Ever since the inevitable hands of death, cloaked in a robe of fate, snatched away everything she held dear to her. That dreaded call from the military base on that ominous day, sent her mother spiralling into insanity.

She was practically, an orphan with her father dead and her mother unable to recognise her own daughter. Since the last two years, her mother hadn't uttered so much as a word, other than eerie painful wails of grief at night.

She'd mummified herself in bandages of numbers, covering her omnipresent wound-of grief, of sorrow and self-harm. She was like a sealed earthen vessel, the contents of which nobody knew. She was an enigma – a broken heart stripped of the ability to feel any positive emotion- wrapped in the guise of popularity, the seemingly 'ideal life'. She liked being this way – nothing could affect her. The emotion couldn't get in, it couldn't get out. But today,

her walls had cracked, her bandages had torn apart.

The hundreds of people who liked her profile photo didn't know that it was the last photograph her father had ever captured of her. The thousands who had read her recently updated Facebook status were oblivious of her real life.

'Checked into Paradise Hotel two hours ago.' They knew nothing of the annual tradition her family had, of visiting this very restaurant, her father's favourite, each year on his birthday. Not one of her ardent followers on Facebook knew of the tears she cried every night, her sobs muffled by her blanket. Only her drenched pillow was a witness to her bruised soul.

They only knew of her plastic identity – the armour she'd constructed herself. They only knew her shield of popularity. She led the perfect life, for them. She was best at everything she attempted. Popular, charming and exquisitely beautiful, but under the veneer of an exuberant persona, she was every bit real, as broken, as humanly flawed as each one of us.



I am thankful my childhood was filled with imagination and bruises from playing outside instead of apps and how many likes you get on a PIC.



Poorvika Mehra

Class X
Dhirubhai Ambani
International School
Mumbai
Maharashtra

6th Rank

DHIRUBHAI AMBANI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, MUMBAI

The Dhirubhai Ambani International School is a K-12 Co Educational International Day School established in 2003, with a view to offering world- class educational opportunities in the city of Mumbai. It is affiliated to the Council for the



Indian School Certificate Examinations and CIE (Cambridge International Examination). In years 11 and 12 the school is authorized by the IB (International Baccalaureate) to offer the IB diploma Programme.

The school recognizes the imperative of imparting an educational experience that is world class in every respect and prepares children for global citizenship. The school directs all its efforts to inspire and enable each child to believe in and practice the school's motto of 'Dare to Dream- Learn to Excel.'

SOCIAL MEDIA HAS EMPOWERED THE GENERATION

TITLE FOR TOPIC: #AidForIndians

"Turkish Prime Minister is unavailable, however, the honourable President Mr. RecepTayyip Erdogan now conducts what is the first national address via Facetime, broadcast with the help of CNN Turk, urging the citizens to ignore the unlawful military curfew and actively thwart the military coup. The Twitter hashtag ' # MilitaryMania' is tending world-wide as the citizens of Ankara, Turkey take matters into their own hands. Meanwhile, expatriates in Turkey are in a state of panic and are under threat by the out-of-control military"

The words of the news reporter faded away as I sat motionless on the kitchen chair, my eyes unfocussed, unseeing, as the harsh breaths of my father and the frustrated arguments and pleas of my mother came into focus.

"No, I will not wait any longer! My child is missing andI have no idea, if she is alive. She is more than a thousand miles away from in a city that just became a warzone!" My mother paused to catch a breath as the man on the other end

replied.

"I understand you have a lot to do, you are in the International Affairs department - I understand. But I am sincerely requesting you to contact the shelters and seeto it that my daughter has made it there. That is the least you can do for me." My mother frowned, tears streaming down her cheeks. "Thank you."

My father ran a hand down his face tiredly, looking as if he had gained ten years in the past three hours alone. "She is still not answering the phone."

My parents sat on the couch, tired and fearful, the worry starkly evident in their eyes.

It had been almost eight hours since the military had forced a curfew onto the people in Ankara, leaving 180 people - those who resisted them - dead eight hours since the city my sister lived in was reduced to state of utter chaos. Eight hours since we had last had any contact with her. The last sound during that phone call was a shrill scream that was unmistakably hers.

My movements were heavy as I silently rose and walked into my room. My throat was dry and my eyes were dry. The Indian government was waiting to locate and bring Indians in Turkey back to safety, while the Western governments were already sending out flights to Ankara to evacuate Americans.

A wave of anger and helplessness tore me apart. I could not do anything for my sister or any other Indian living there. My wandering eye landed on my laptop, as a tiny ray of hope festered deep inside my heart.

Firing up the laptop, I quickly logged into my 'change.org' account.

It was time to write a petition.

Drawing in a deep breath I typed: "EVACUATION OF INDIAN EXPATRIATES IN TURKEY. Turkey has just seen a major upheaval in its political machinery in the form of a coup. Mass hysteria grips the nation with a cloud of uncertainty looming above the heads of the citizens.

Expatriates in Turkey have been threatened and no longer have a safe place or shelter to turn to – and so today! Write to urge the government to send #AidForIndians immediately and fulfil our role as their mother nation and fellow brothers and sisters.

We must aim to at least locate and gather, if not evacuate these Indians immediately! Please sign my petition so we can save the lives of the 36,000 Indian citizens in Ankara, Turkey."

The words, written from the bottom of my heart, were posted reaching millions of people with one click and the power of social media.

I posted my petition on my Facebook wall, on my WhatsApp groups and my Instagram feed with a picture of my dear sister, hoping and praying that I got the needed signatures. For once, in that moment, I was not helpless. In that second, as I posted and reposted the hashtags '#AidForIndians

#TurkishTakeout #MilitaryMania' I was, in my own way, raising awareness and spreading word of the condition of the expatriates' and so, in my time of need, it was the empowerment provided by social media that activated my fear and gave me a medium to amplify my voice.

A week passed full of fervent phone calls and myriad conversations with the government departments and tears.

It was also during this week that my social media campaign took flight. Friends supported it, and a startling 100,000 signatures were on my petition. My post on Twitter and Facebook were reposted time and time again around 12,000 times. The people were stirring, and I could feel myself getting closer to obtaining my goal.

It was a Thursday, three weeks after my first post, that my petition was displayed on national news.

It was written in the passing, but written. Nonetheless, it was acknowledged, my words heard.

My tiny ember of hope became a small fire, and the joy on my parents' face reflected their hope too.

It was then, at 8-o'clock on that Thursday evening, after weeks of struggling, that the phone rang.

"Hello?" My mother said softly.

"Madam, the government has acknowledged your petition and has taken action to find and gather the expatriates. You would also be glad to know that we have located your daughter Ms. Ishita Mehra and she is safe here with us."

"Can I talk to her?" My mother cried, ecstatic.

"Yes, here she is."

"Hello?" My sister's voice broke my heart, the joy and relief clear within me.

That's when I shed my first tear.



Aashna Agarwal

Class X

Loreto Day School, Elliot Road
Kolkata
West Bengal



LORETO DAY SCHOOL, ELLIOT ROAD, KOLKATA

Loreto Day School, Elliot Road was founded on the 10th of January, 1956 by Mother S. M. Gertrude O' Keffe. This school is a Catholic institution under the management of the Sisters of the institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loreto Sisters), founded by Mary Ward who recognized the significance of education for women and the importance it plays in society.

Integrity, Justice, Freedom and Love are essential values in this school. The school cherishes the most deprived of God's children and enables them to take their place in society. Loreto Elliot Road is indeed a 'School with a Heart.'



A WORLD WITHOUT FACEBOOK

I looked at my phone as the screen glowed with light,

A smile filled my face as my friend's picture came in sight.

Grandma stood beside me asking, whether we could go for a walk,

I refused and that's when she said she needed to talk.

She said to me, "Ever thought of a world without Snapchat, Instagram or Facebook?"

No Facebook? Was she serious? I gave her a blank look.

2056, we could travel back in time,

And that's when we heard the church bell chime.

We had pressed the button and the atmosphere zoomed to 1942,

We landed on the ground. The world was green and sky azure blue.

I gasped, as I saw children laughing and jumping on the ground.

No phones in their hands, they were just hopping

around.

They were talking to each other like the best of mates.

How were they doing this? What about status updates?

What about selfies? Would they just let this moment fade?

Won't they click and upload it as if were their accolade?

Grandma smiled as she looked at my face,

Full of disbelief, I followed her as she walked with grace.

We went around from street to street and it astounded me as I saw,

People without phones, as if carrying it were a punishable law.

Teenagers sat at restaurant without a single cell phone,

No pictures at all! What a loss not to treasure each moment gone.

Sitting together they seemed to enjoy the small talk that they share.

How they looked or what they wore, no one seemed to care.

But how do they exchange news without a post?
About their achievements, how would they boast?
How would they know whether they are admired without likes?

What suits them best, French plaits or spikes?

And how boring were the books,
Sans touch screens, sans graphics, sans music, oh,
such shabby looks.

I asked grandma, "Do they not chat?"

"Yes," said she, "On a sunny day, sitting on a mat."

No one was ignored, everyone offered a smile,
They basked in pure fun, without artificial style.

It all looked surreal, a complete surprise to my eye,

I had always thought that life without Facebook was almost a lie.

I asked in end, "So they have no idea who lives on the other side of the world unfurls?"

"No," she claimed, "They have plenty of friends here both boys and girls."

They all seemed to be happy, the world looked like a fairy tale.

But that was how it was without facebook, no chatting, no mails.

Indeed life was better, less botheration, less health problems, less stress.

Grandma nodded, life without social media was less of a mess.

I whispered, "It almost seems untrue."

Grandma chuckled, "That's life without Facebook for you."

And indeed the people were healthy, they woke up as the sun showered its light.

They slept earlier, just as the stars shone bright.

For hours they didn't wait for that one reply.

They went and directly conversed, without any ego or lie.

This world looked inviting, it was filled with ecstatic sound.

Happiness and positivity were the emotions around.

The world in future in comparison to this looked rather tragic,

For a world without Facebook seemed like a world of magic.

Why can't we make the world today a better place?

Civilization seems to have corrupted the human race.

We all have flaws, social media does too,

But let's belike Santa, he too comes with clause.



Life is like Facebook

People will like your problems & comment,
but no one will solve them because
everyone is busy updating theirs



Priyansi

Class X

J. H. Tarapore School

Jamshedpur

Jharkhand

8th Rank

J. H. TARAPORE SCHOOL, JAMSHEDPUR

J.H. Tarapore School was inaugurated in 2002. The school lays emphasis on the all-round development of the students and has the vision to make its students confident, compassionate and competitive to face life's challenges

through value based learning. The school endeavours to fulfill the vision through a rigorous academic programme and a range of co- curricular activities. It has left no stone unturned to give its students the best, be it the latest methodology of teaching, various facilities and a state of the art infrastructure. The school is a part of TEEP i.e. 'Tata Steel Excellence in Education Programme' and the proud recipient of the 'Best Practices' award for its "developmentally Based Childhood Programme" in the Kindergarten Department, Process mapping and Safe Dismissal to name a few.



A WORLD WITHOUT FACEBOOK

"Your order is ready, madam. Two diet cokes and grilled fat-free sandwiches. It's good that Natasha came over. You hardly have friends here. Thanks to that virtual friend that's stuck to your rear," giggled Mom.

"Stop it Mom, I'm trying to have a good time with my friend," I snapped back.

"But you two are hardly ever talking. Look at you glued to the screens of your smart phones."

"Oh yes, we are. We are texting back and forth. It is so not uncool."

"Why don't you just use a thing called 'mouth' to make a conversation?"

I ignored her as Natasha beamed "How can she get so many likes with a duck face?"

"It's called a pout, you know," I tried spreading my useless wisdom.

"Come on, you guys. Okay let me tell you a story and I promise it won't take much time," Mom crawled her way back into the conversation.

We gave in with a feeble yes.

"I come from a time," she began, "When people fought for a mere five minutes on a swing, when the cherubic laughter of a newborn was amusing, when we would play till we were clothed in sweat and mud stuck on us superficially. That was the world without Facebook, it was a world without unwanted dementia, a world without 'LOL', a world with hysteria and ecstatic paranoia.

"The updates or statuses that you put up all day, was alien to us. We never knew what it was to brag others about the simple food that we ate or the excitement in letting people know, where you were, all the time."

"What we knew was how it felt to stay up late at night and talk about life and a recent infatuation like the joy of walking a mile just to hear any advancement in French fashion or a little gossip about Madonna. When time was spent bullying rather than trolling, when stalking was not online, when commands were face to face, when short forms were overrated, when poking was physical and when games meant to exercise your entire soul and body, not just your fingers."

"Have you sniffed the moist mud after rain? Have you ever stared at the blank sky at night and counted stars instead of likes? Have you ever run so fast that you felt like your lungs are going to burst? Have you ever had true friends who were happy to do anything for you? That was a world without Facebook. Standing on my mama's porch, I wished that fleeting moment to last forever. Sadly change is inevitable."

"Don't you ever feel claustrophobic in this abyss of Facebook? Don't you want to soar high in the sky? Don't you want to stumble down and fall just to get back up on your own feet? Don't you want your own opinion to be the topmost and ignore the world? Don't you want to have the time of your life? Don't you

want to spend your time strolling down the streets and meeting someone? Or do you want your 'Time out' in exile and shove it all away just because you are checking out a silly Facebook fight."

"Get out of this smoky room or you'll die in suffocation. Be out on the verge of this cliff of life. Seize the moment, darling. Don't let the creations take over the creators. Get a taste of a world without Facebook, a world with glistening light and hope, a world where you can do it all, break free from shackles of Facebook. Trust me, you'll feel like dynamite."

I was bemused though Natasha fell asleep. I think I lost her somewhere near nature talk. Anyway, it's true. I do feel like an antiquated slave of Facebook. I looked up and shut the display. I want to live life my way. What will be the use of the virtual society when I know that one day I'll have to face the reality? This desire for popularity and followers is killing me alive. It's time for me to make some genuine companions who would truly be beside me without any chance of treason. Let the drapes be drawn aside because it is time for the phoenix to rise and for me to move from the shadows into the light. A world without Facebook is a world where I want to live in peace.

facebook

WASTING PEOPLES LIVES SINCE 2004



Tashneet Kaur

Class X

Swaraj India Public School

Kanpur

Uttar Pradesh

SWARAJ INDIA PUBLIC SCHOOL, KANPUR



'Swaraj India' is a private co-educational English school established in 1998. Its name testifies to its inspiration from the freedom struggle as also the globally relevant need to be self-dependent. The school lives by its motto: "Strive to Achieve" and participation is the byword of its philosophy. Swaraj India follows the premise that participation generates positivity which in turn accelerates progress. The aim is to bring out the best in each student rather than to showcase only a few to the exclusion of the rest. While academics thrives, co- curricular activities have been so nurtured that Swaraj India has won laurels at the National level in Declamation, Debate, Quizzing, Creative Writing and Basketball.

9th Rank

SOCIAL MEDIA HAS EMPOWERED THE GENERATION

"Knock, Knock. May I come in?" someone calls me. My friends and I are interrupted. The glass dome we are in, shines with iridescent hues. The little glass dome, which separates us from the real world, and makes us more engulfed in the worldly issues. "You have a new friend request," displays the notification panel. Another notification flashes on the screen. "Should I accept this request of Rohan Arora?" I sigh, get out of bed and leave my virtual escape for a while.

Wandering around the house was not a very desirable hobby, so I went out to my bed and got completely immersed in my thoughts.

It is vibrant daze. I open my eyes a bit wider. I am in the glass dome and my friends are here, too. All around us are snaps of our Facebook news feed, floating around us as like clouds in the sky.

"This is Euphoria", my friend exclaims and all of a sudden, we hear a gruff voice and turn around to see a weird creature, with claws as sharp as knives, and eyes flaming with anger. Metaphorical resonances are endless and so we assumed him to be Satan.

I sulk, and in a winding mumble say, "Social media can't be an instrument of Satan!"

The creature turned his eyes on me, "Haha, ofcourse dear, why would I bother? I have come out of the reverse of our guardians, they are the ones to believe that social media is the Knave of your lives!" He laughed wickedly.

"No way, this is our world, and we don't want any creation of our parents here!" I scream.

All my comrades and I push him out and pump up in the badges of our intrepidity and crinoline of victory.

But we debate, wondering if the truth had, after all been exemplified the Hellion.

And I go back in my mind, to the time when I was a child. Shadows of the past always intrigued me, and one delusion which I have had willingly embraced, was a train engine whirring past me, the ground I was on, moving and not the train. I was a supernatural being until the train was out of sight and I felt abashed. How years later the world seemed to be moving past me! I could never catch up.

I snapped out of my thoughts as the news of a famous politician caught my eye. His veil of glibness had fallen off and there was repugnance all around. The emasculated farmers were ecstatic. The number of likes increased as if people linked their hands against the insidiousness of all such men.

What is this? This sad women and empty eyes, we saw long ago, her face disfigured by acid attack, and her heart decayed by the poison of those heartless attackers? How has it changed today? The light of her soul shines through her scars, as millions of women enveloped in the aura of pride and their capes of femininity enrobing them as if to create and amalgam of love and support for the woman.

The musician explains, "I was only a tiny drop of water clinging to the brink of my leak, I was too tender. My music shines through me as the tiny sun in a dew drop; my tenderness has drawn so many close to me." The fans blessed him. What a beautiful thought of love indeed!

On a red silken pillow, the magic worked to freeze time and present the most wondrous show of our unity. The substance on the pillow was bathed in splendour with the light radiating from it.

We saw a curtain, which was pulled back in the fraction of a second.

"We could see a bird chirping in a busy city, too unobtrusive to be listened to. But soon the sympathy of her voice attracted thousands and she was heard.

Social media was the platform for so many, the unheard voices who never articulated their feelings but loved to be in the virtual company of others.

The battles of sciamachy came to an end, the near drum was silenced. Ignorance was defeated and the victors enrobed in the most beautiful gabardine ever seen radiated benediction. Their visages were overcast with a sheer expression of equanimity.

An immaculate light radiated from the unfathomable depths, melting away the heavy chains of religious infamy, and the truth which had been long denied, were now on the lips of each one. The light shone around everywhere and then penetrated in the dark and glistened on radiant faces of Buddha, Christ, Prophet Mohammad and Guru Nanak.

Humanity and peace were returning and so was love and religious tolerance. No one was left unheard and none wronged, alone. The adulteration for those who practised sophistry to cover the blackness of their heart and their enfeebled moral, changed to disdain.

I came back to reality with the phone ringing. I began checking on the cell phone next to me....

"Social media, has indeed empowered our generation."



Social Media is not about the exploitation of technology but service to COMMUNITY.



Roopsha Deb

Class X
Chatrabhuj Narsee
Memorial School
Mumbai
Maharashtra



CHATRABHUJ NARSEE MEMORIAL SCHOOL, MUMBAI

Founded in 1997, Chatrabhuj Narsee Memorial School was the dream project of Late Shri Mukesh R Patel. Over the years the school has progressed in the fields of academics and sports. The state of the art infrastructure and top class amenities has made it the most sought after educational institution in suburban Mumbai. The school offers a modern, holistic, child - centric, integrated system of education that moulds the students into global citizens. CNMS strives to provide an environment conducive for creating progressive, analytical thinkers, able leaders and team builders. Our motto, "Education – A Treasure Beyond Measure," reflects the commitment of our institution to keep pace with the ever evolving trends in education.



A PEEK INTO THE WORLD OF DP'S AND FACEBOOK STATUS

"So how are you feeling?"

"I'm extremely and spectacularly nervous."

"Don't worry, Roopsha. This is your forte. Your real stage. Your time to shine!"

"Easy for you to say father, you did Honours in English and were top of your class. Me on the other hand, I've hardly read anything remotely close to what you have read!"

"Shh, let her concentrate," mother interrupts. I'm still nervous, so jittery. "Oh, I know, I'll change Facebook status! It'll distract me, I think." I mumble as I pull out my phone.

I was on the way to Albert Barrow All India Creative writing competition with over-the-top excitement settling in! I punch in on the touchpad.

"Concentrate on the essays, honey," my mother rebukes.

"Yes, just a minute mother, I need the good wishes. While I'm at it, might as well update my display."

I snap a picture with my mother and change my current display- a vase of sunflowers. As I'm about to close the App, a notification pops up. I skim over it quickly and then turn off my phone.

"Hey, father. Remember that TedX talk we attended on Quantum Loop Theory? We really liked AbhasMitra's presentation?"

"Yeah. Why?" asks my father attentively.

"He just updated his status. He's coming to Mumbai again! And guess what, the talk is at mother's college!" I let out all in one breath. I adored Quantum Physics and leapt at any chance to attend lectures.

"I'll check if I can get tickets," concedes mother.

"Hurray!" father and I scream in union. I start revising my material again. I had written about five short essays, succinctly describing five emotions.

"I have booked the tickets." announced mother.

"Hurray!"

"By the way, Hirak, have you seen Ileena's new profile picture? Is she visiting Lucknow?" My mother plunges into a conversation with my father about one of my relatives.

"Yeah, it's a beautiful picture. The backdrop of the golden sky against the Badalimbada really makes me want to visit that place again. Do you remember when" father launches into one of his boring stories.

I start thinking- it seems to me that everything we know about our relatives now-a-days stems somehow from their display pictures and statuses.

My phone rings. It's my closest friend in the whole wide world, Shikha. Hers was a spirit akin to mine. And in the words of L.M.Montgomery, "The race of Joseph call to their own"

"What a wonderful, unintentional pun! I think to myself as I receive the call.

"Hey. Do you remember that nice quote about coincidence on your bedroom wall, the one by Dr Manhattan? Can you tell it to me exactly, word-by-word?"

"Calm down. Why exactly do you need it?" I ask.

"I had just seen 'Lost in Translation.' What a wonderful movie! Anyway, I have a lot of feeling about 'coincidence' now, and you are the only one who can frame them articulately into a discernible string of words," says Shikha, a little excitedly.

"Thanks."

"Coincidences happen, that's what everyone says. But in this world, there are only

possibilities and probabilities, folded into perception by occurrence," I finish.

"Status updated! Oh, look, three likes already."

I smiled inwardly. Shikha was quite popular.

"Anyway, have you seen the picture my mom posted of my brother and me? We look like twins!"

"You are twins." I laugh.

"That's why! I had a nagging feeling. "Shikha jokes. "I saw your status. Best of luck! I know you'll be great. Love you, Bye!" She hangs up.

"Was that Shikha again, asking for advice on her status or DP?" my mother inquires.

"Yes." I smile sheepishly.

Mother laughs.

I start revising my essays and plug in some music. I feel it relaxing me, easing the shoulders that I hadn't realized, were stained. 'Selpie' by Chainsmokers starts playing. After so much DP talk, it was a great coincidence.

I let my mind wander. Display pictures and statuses have assumed so much meaning in our daily lives. They almost seem to be their own language. They can be a mother subtly hinting at her child achievements, an elder sister rubbing in the splendid tie she is having or an indirect hint at our own feelings. So are statuses-indications of events and disguised forms of the unfathomable constellation of thoughts. A dig at a friend, a joke or even the emotions a movie gives rise to.

My chain of thoughts is broken. We've arrived at the school. I am ushered in and in no time, I bid my parents goodbye.


It's nine thirty. The topics are announced I gaze at the question paper.

3. A Peek into the World Of DP's and Facebook Statuses

After so much DP talk, this is a great coincidence. I smile to myself.



*"Focus on how to be social,
not on how to do social."*



"Don't use social media
to impress people; use it
to impact people."

WHEN I WAS KID,
MY SOCIAL NETWORK WAS CALLED
“OUTSIDE”



**If Facebook
were a country**

**it'd be
the world's
3rd largest**



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Council For The Indian School Certificate Examinations

Pragati House, 3rd Floor, 47-48, Nehru Place, New Delhi -110 019, INDIA

Tel: +911126411706, 2641 3820, 2647 6547

Fax: +9111 2956 4735, 2623 4575

E-mail: council@cisce.org

www.cisce.org