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A GATED COMMUNITY'S HIDDEN INHABITANTS

With abundant greenery on its campus and Muttukadu backwaters and Buckingham Canal flowing by its side, House of Hiranandani Upscale in Egattur has incredible biodiversity. A resident trots out names from its impressive checklist **P2**



PUTTING THE SMARTPHONE IN ITS PLACE

A mathematics teacher turned counsellor is on a mission to promote digital well-being across classrooms and homes **P7**

A cracker of an initiative by gated communities in Thalambur

More than 680 kilos of cracker waste was collected and sent to a licensed vendor for recycling

BHUVANA RAJ

A handful of gated communities in Thalambur came together to celebrate Deepavali in a sustainable way through an initiative called 'Diwali Detox Challenge'. A total of 683 kilos of recyclable cracker waste was collected and sent to Spreco Recycling, which runs a licensed recycling facility.

For the last two years, this initiative was organised by SIMPLE (Sustainability Improvement through Multiple Projects for a Lovelier Environment) from Casagrand Elan. This time, for the Deepavali special drive, more neighbouring communities joined in. The additions include Arihant Heirloom, AWHO Dinesh Vihar, Casagrand Pavilion, Casagrand SmartTown and Jains



Cracker waste was kept safe from the rains. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Spring Meadows. They took part in the initiative with infectious enthusiasm. Communication was sent out to the residents of these communities that they segregate the cylinders of aerial shots, metal remains of burnt sparklers (*kambi*

mathappu), cracker packaging boxes and other packaging materials and drop them in marked spots or hand the bundle over to house-keeping staff. These recyclable items were kept separately, sheltered from rain before it was



picked up by Spreco Recycling after the festival. This effort has reduced a good amount of waste from going to dumpyards. Through this initiative, the changemakers in these communities hope to create awareness among residents on segregating their regular household waste, and the need for responsible recycling. SIMPLE envisions that this effort to reduce the huge volumes of recyclable cracker waste going to dumpyards should become a norm for all citizens.

(Bhuvana Raj is co-founder SIMPLE, a non-profit initiative)

Hoofing it, literally



Cowdung on the pathway and water hyacinth in one section of the lake. PHOTOS: PRINCE FREDERICK

The titled walkway at Sri Raman Thangal Eri in Sholinganallur can do with a better look. Cowdung and wet earth make it to the pathway

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

To add colour to communication, morning walkers might be described "as hoofing down a walking track". At a walking track in interior Sholinganallur, hoofing can be used in two contexts. One, to communicate an afore-mentioned scene involving fitness walkers. And two, in a context of absolute literality, with real hooves in attendance. Hooves clatter down this titled walkway which girdles Sri Raman Thangal Eri. The cattle just do not stop with hoofing it down the track, but also leave behind evidence of this



act – cowdung dropped on the walkway. There is fresh as well as old, dried cowdung to be seen, particularly as one hits the section of the walkway close to the main entrance, suggesting that the cattle take their fitness regimen quite seriously and follow it day after day. The point is: is their presence encouraging human-residents to take

their fitness plans elsewhere?

Earth also makes it to the walkway, caking it. JCBs are stationed at a corner of the lake for earth work. On the western side, along the walkway, newly-planted saplings flutter in the wind with their thin stems. This is a welcome addition.

On the other side of the walkway (on the same western side), right inside the lake is greenery that is unwelcome but stays put stubbornly – water hyacinth, which clearly ought to be sent packing. Sri Thangal Eri is under Greater Chennai Corporation's watch.

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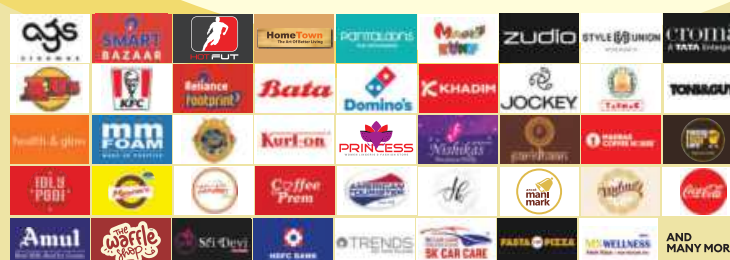
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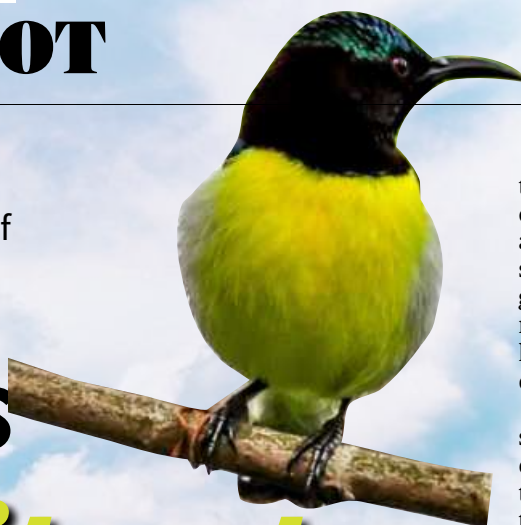
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With abundant greenery on its campus and Muttukadu backwaters and Buckingham Canal flowing by its side, House of Hiranandani Upscale in Egattur has impressive biodiversity. A resident prepares a checklist

A gated community's hidden inhabitants



the canal banks supports the egrets, herons, black-winged stilts and the elusive water cock and snipes. Migratory birds such as the grey-headed lapwing, little stint, many species of sandpipers also have made this terrain their home during winter.

I have personally recorded 126 species and a few other birders frequenting the campus in recent times have made their observations as well and we have a healthy list of 146 species of birds recorded here now.

Raptor watch

The raptors seen here are the peregrine falcon, Shaheen falcon (which is a subspecies of the peregrine falcon and a resident unlike the peregrine falcon, a migratory raptor), Shikra, booted eagle, black kite, black-winged kite and osprey.

Among the owls, it is the barn owl and the spotted owl.

Waders includes the grey-headed lapwing, little stint, marsh sandpiper, Eurasian ruff, curlew sandpiper.

In the waterbodies, greater flamingos are seen occasionally.

The canal road supports birds such as the Indian paradise flycatcher, coppersmith barbet, rose-ringed parakeet, tri-colour munia, Jacobin cuckoo and white browed bulbul.



E. ARUN KUMAR

House of Hiranandani Upscale along with its surrounding tracts is an eco-system in itself, providing a conducive environment for a wide range of birds, butterflies and reptiles.

Lined with trees on both sides, the approach road to the towers supports a wide range of birds including purple and purple-rumped sunbirds, pale-billed flower peckers, tailor birds and the resident raptor Shikra. The pond on the campus supports birds such as bronze-winged jacana, grey-headed swamp hen, common moorhen and pond heron.

The parks support a good population of yellow-billed babblers, the common myna, the rufous tree pie and the regular Asian koel. The tall buildings are home to a good number of feral pigeons and the mighty peregrine and Shaheen falcons.

The club house ground and the area behind it is home to the barn owl and the spotted owlets. Birds such as the Indian Roller also forage in these areas for insects and the black-winged kite is also a frequent visitor here for the rats. The Indian thick knee is also a regular in these parts.

Back waters and the Buckingham canal support a wide range of waders and terrestrial birds. The canal bank road has trees and plants that supports a wide range of terrestrial birds like the red vented, white browed and red whiskered bulbuls, Tri colour and scaly



Some of the birds sighted at this ecosystem. PHOTOS: E. ARUN KUMAR

breasted munia's, Indian paradise fly catcher, copperSmith barbet, rose-ringed parakeet, Jacobin cuckoo, green and blue tailed bee eaters can be seen taking sand bath in the evenings. The wires are home to Barn swallow, ashy wood swallow etc.

The reeds along the bank supports plain and ashy prinia, zitting cisticola and the clamorous reed warbler and Blyth's reed warbler.

The thick grass on

25 butterfly species

The area also supports a wide range of other life forms. I have recorded 25 species of butterflies inside the campus, the highlight being the sighting of South India's top two biggest butterflies – the southern birdwing and the blue Mormon. The rare black rajah is also sighted regularly on the top of the building.

Snakes such as checkered keelbacks, green vine snake, rat snake, buff striped keelback, bronze backed tree snake are all regulars here. Among the venomous snakes the cobra has been sighted regularly.

Many species of crabs are also sighted along the canal bank road that includes the fiddler crabs.

(E. Arun Kumar is a resident of House of Hiranandani Upscale in Egattur, Old Mahabalipuram Road)



Pulling more than her weight

Meet the 10-year-old scuba diver, Thaaragai Aarathana from Karapakkam, whose weekly calendar is marked by three days set aside to dive in and dredge up plastic waste from marine waters



SAHANA MIRA S

At just 10 years of age, this girl from Karapakkam is already a protector of the sea – spending about two-three days a week diving into the sea to clear plastic waste and protect endangered species such as dugong (sea cow). That is right – she is Thaaragai Aarathana, one of the youngest licensed PADI junior open water divers in the world and her love for the ocean and marine life runs in her family. Her father, Aravind Tharunsri, a full-time scuba diving instructor is in the business long before she was born.

Aravind Tharunsri, after a stint with tennis coaching, moved on to scuba diving. Following the certifications in Thailand and Philippines, Aravind opened a scuba diving school in Mahabalipuram for tourist purposes. “Over the years, what began as a business venture turned into something much deeper,” says Aravind. “It was everywhere – bottle caps, straws, wrappers and all kinds of plastic that you see on the shore. Seeing the ever-growing plastic crisis underwater, it naturally became urgent for us to protect the ocean,” he adds. He has been collecting plastics in the sea since 2007.



A joint underwater mission by father and daughter

While Aravind's team and the other scuba divers grew in clearing plastics underwater, it was Thaaragai's effort that caught the attention of many parents in Chennai to involve their children in this cause. Thaaragai's first dive, at just five years of age, in Rameswaram instilled in her a life-long commitment. “I still remember my first day scuba diving,” Thaaragai begins. “I have a special bond with dugongs because the very same day, we were able to save a dugong caught in a lost fishing net,” she says. By the age of seven, Thaaragai had actively started collecting plastics underwater.

Her mission began with a simple thought but enormous efforts. “Clear plastics from everywhere you see,” she says. She began by tidying up around the house – picking up plastic wrappers from food delivery

and milk packets before moving on to the ocean. “We wanted to instill in her not just the love for ocean but also the environment around her,” adds Aravind.

To date, Thaaragai has removed around 3000 kilograms of plastic from under the sea, which is sold to scrap shops, and has earned approximately 22,000 rupees, which she plans to donate to Tamil Nadu's Department of Environment. As a homeschooled student (as well as one attending a school nearby to experience the school environment), her commitment to the sea extends beyond cleanup efforts. She also raises awareness by completing challenging swims every year, the last one is crossing the Palk Strait from Talaimannar in Sri Lanka to Dhanushkodi in India in 11 hours and 30 minutes.

Remedial action taken by GCC



Sacks of construction debris that were dumped on a tree fighting its way back to health on First Crescent Park Road in Gandhi Nagar have been removed. Following an article in *The Hindu Downtown* dated November 3, 2024, Greater Chennai Corporation carried out the remedial work.

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The Gislen Timeline

1980:

Mikael buys his first computer with earnings from farm work in Sweden

1991:

Mikael visits India for the first time and develops a strong interest in the country

1992:

Mikael and Maria tour Asia, including India, where they decide to settle down

1993:

Mikael and Maria move to Chennai. They rent a house in Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar

1994:

Mikael establishes Gislen Software at MEPZ Tambaram. The company remains at this location

1999:

Maria starts Little Lambs School in Chennai with four children, including their eldest son

2004:

Gislen Software enters the Norwegian market. A partnership with Q-Free helps the company recover from previous challenges

2006:

Little Lambs School builds its first facility, providing a permanent space for students. Earlier, it operated from rented spaces

2013:

Gislen Software installs a 15 kW solar panel system as part of its commitment to sustainability

2021:

Gislen Software upgrades its solar panel system to a total capacity of 22.3 kW, further enhancing their sustainable energy usage

2024:

Little Lambs School celebrates its 25th anniversary, with 275 students and 15 teachers. And Gislen Software celebrates its 30th anniversary, marking three decades of growth and innovation in Chennai

SHARON JESSICA MICHAEL

In Sweden, the winter stretches on, and temperatures can plummet to sub-zero readings. Juxtapose a piece of that country with Chennai (a land of seemingly endless summer), and you have extremes from the weather spectrum on your hands. When Mikael Gislen was seeking to put down roots in Chennai in the 1990s, navigating the road from one weather extremity to another was the least of his concerns. He was feeling the heat from elsewhere, not the Chennai summer. Mikael was too caught up in the struggle to make the cultural and social adaptations in a vastly different land to be overly bothered about the weather, oppressive though it was in the early days.

Sweden covers a sufficiently wide band on the weather spectrum to offer varied climatic conditions: its northern parts can get bitterly cold; in contrast, southern Sweden offers a moderate climate. Mikael hails from the village of Okome in south-west Sweden, a factor helping him acclimatise himself faster to Chennai – only in terms of weather. Other acclimatisations took time, but the process was hardly onerous, thanks to an overriding love for India.

A sojourn in India in 1991 had got Mikael hooked on the country, as also the continent it is subsumed in, Asia. The next year he would undertake a tour of Asia, his wife Maria in tow. The 1990s was the time when the world was becoming more globalised and India was beginning to cradle an IT industry. He was ready for that industry, having cut his technology tooth back in Sweden with a small computer he had bought in 1980 with earnings he had managed as a farmhand. From the time they became residents of Chennai, which was in 1993, the Gislens have got by on rented accommodation. In 1998, they settled on a house in Anna Nagar West, again for rent – and they have retained this address to this day. In 1994, Gislen Software was established at MEPZ Tambaram where it has stayed put. Mikael swears by public transport and the Metro is his trusted steed, which he boards at Thirumangalam station. He disembarks at the Airport Metro station where he hops on to a waiting Gislen company van and travels the rest of the distance to MEPZ with those on his company's payroll.

While he was finding his feet along with this fledgling software company, fording the country's red tapism was a challenge. The warmth of the Chennai people made up for whatever difficulties he encountered on the entrepreneurial front.

In its early years, Gislen Software focussed on software consulting, catering to

A long and fulfilling road for the Gislens

With a Chennai address printed on their calling card for 32 years, Mikael and Maria have fashioned separate legacies in this city; 2024 is a milestone year for both in terms of what they started back in the 1990s



a select set of Swedish clients. Thanks to the 1990s dotcom boom, Mikael would soon spread his wings. But the good run would be cut short when the dotcom bubble burst, followed by 9/11 and the uncertainties that came hand in hand with it. Mikael and his team struggled through this period, and recovered gloriously in 2004 when they set foot in the Norwegian market, their major sign-up being with Norwegian Q-Free. “The project had to do with building a large public transportation system, one still in use across Scandinavia. We developed a considerable portion of the software needed for it, spending 55k hours on the project,” says Mikael. “Our contribution made up between 5-10 per cent of India's IT services export to Norway during one year.” Now, Gislen Software's offerings include bespoke software development services for the web and mobile web, systems integration connecting various business systems, user-centred design, payment solutions, collaborative economy initiatives and New Age technology such as Artificial Intelligence and cloud computing. Mikael

(62 years old now) has ensured his company keeps strides with the sustainability demands of the times. He does not primarily view sustainability as a business strategy, but a choice that needs to be made to save a beleaguered planet.

“We are using more resources and destroying more than we contribute, and I think that is unsustainable,” he reflects. “We have to start somewhere.” One of the markers of this resolve is the initiative to harness solar power through the installation of a solar panel set-up with a 15 kW capacity in 2013. Two years ago, the system was upgraded, its capacity going up to 22.3 kW.

Mikael Gislen's journey in Chennai has not been a solitary one. His wife, Maria, had her own vision which would not only complement Mikael's work but also fashion a different form of legacy.

A parallel journey

When Maria first set foot on Chennai's sun-baked streets in 1992, she was struck by the bustle. Maria hails from the Swed-



Maria Gislen with students of Little Lambs School; and Mikael Gislen with his team members at Gislen Software. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



A section featuring those from beyond the Indian shores who live in Chennai and have made a social impact in the city

ish city of Mariestad, occupied by only 16,611 people in 2019. It does not take rocket science to see how sparsely populated it would have been when Maria (now 57 years old) was growing up in Mariestad. Yet, something about this unfamiliar world called Chennai captured her heart, sparking a journey that would forever change the lives of numerous children. A teacher back in Sweden, Maria lost no time in taking up volunteering assignments at schools in Chennai. Before long, she realised she had to hew out a path of her own, one underprivileged children can take on their way to meaningful education. Besides, the education that she had in mind was close to what she herself had benefited from as a student in Swe-

den. With this thinking, the seeds for what would be called Little Lambs School were sown.

In 1999, with just four children (including the Gislens' eldest son), Little Lambs School took its baby steps.

The school stands now on a parcel of land accounting for 6.5 grounds at Vijayalakshmi Nagar in Puthagaram off Surapet Main Road, and a built-up area of 9,000 sq.ft. It offers education based on Matriculation syllabus, enhanced by added elements. Maria explains: “While following matriculation school syllabus, we add in elements of UK international syllabus.” The fee is kept nominal to suit the wallet of the unprivileged families sending their children to the school. “The most needy children are provided food and drink,” says Maria.

It took time for those baby steps to become long strides. Only in 2006 would Little Lambs School have its own facility with custom-built classrooms, providing a permanent home for the children who had become part of Maria's extended family. Earlier, it operated from rented spaces. Building the school from the ground up was no small feat, but Maria's determination saw it through. Now the school (up to seventh standard) has 275 students on its academic roll and 15 teachers on its

payroll. Little Lambs School also depends on volunteers to sustain its initiatives. “We do invite volunteers, sometimes we get volunteers from other countries who come for a few months and help out,” says Maria.

Little Lambs School mirrors Gislen Software's commitment to sustainability, something Maria values as much as Mikael does. Inspired by how Indians repurposed everyday items, she integrated the three R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) into the school's curriculum. Students are taught environmental responsibility – one striking sign of this is how students are encouraged to recycle materials for creative projects.

As Little Lambs School is celebrating its silver jubilee this year, Maria counts among the achievements not only the accreditations but also the everyday moments – the first confident smile of a child known for diffidence, a parent's tearful words of gratitude and so on.

“I want to create a place where every child, no matter their background, can blossom,” says Maria. She envisions Little Lambs School expanding even further, offering education up to the 12th grade. But beyond their respective areas of work, what truly connects Maria and Mikael to this city is the warmth of its people, the pulse of its streets, and the spirit of resilience that is branded into its heart.

HCL Concerts for young Carnatic musicians

HCL Concerts, a platform dedicated to promoting Indian classical performing arts, has announced the launch of the fourth edition of Carnatic Quest. This year's talent hunt for young Carnatic musicians is being conducted in collaboration with Rhapsody Music Foundation and is open for talented musicians aged between 12 and 18 to showcase their skills in categories such as vocals, violin, veena, flute and percussion instruments (including mridangam, kanjeera, ghatam). Carnatic Quest will be conducted over three rounds, including two digital rounds followed by a grand finale in Chennai in January 2025. A total of eight winners will be chosen, comprising three vocalists, one musician each in violin, veena, and flute, and two in percussion, said a release.

Winners will receive cash prizes, trophies, certificates and a professional portfolio shoot. They will also have the opportunity to perform for HCL Concerts Digital, furthering their visibility and growth as Carnatic artists.

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Peregrine falcon
and Shaheen
falcon at the
gated
community in
Egattur.
Photos:
E. Arun Kumar



Visiting Vadapalani

A similar case of urban adaptation can be witnessed at a gated community in Vadapalani — Appaswamy Trellis. For years now, a Peregrine falcon has been checking into the community to spend the winter. It hunts the feral pigeons in and around the community. This Peregrine falcon's movements have been studied by Gnanaskandan Kesavabharathi, an MNS member, a birder and a luminary on raptors. E. Arun Kumar, another accomplished birding expert, has also been studying this Peregrine falcon. He notes another Peregrine falcon has been seen putting in an appearance at this community, occasionally. "As of now, there is evidence of only one Peregrine falcon sojourning at this gated community during winter."

Two Peregrine falcons and one Shaheen falcon sojourn at House of Hiranandani Upscale in Egattur. Their presence keeps the pigeon population in check. In gratitude, the residents have named them in a manner that includes them in the community

Soaring over the towers

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

They rip through the air like greased lightning. They stun their prey with the dizzying speed with which they hit them. They carry their prey to a tall perch, on a towering mountain usually, tear it apart and have their fill.

Enter the other actor in this unrehearsed play on Nature's grand stage. They are noisy and gregarious and at home in crevices of hills and mountains.

And these two species come together on another stage, at an unlikely place, but with their respective instincts and behaviours intact.

E. Arun Kumar gets to watch this play on this new stage, one erected more by man than Nature.

The *dramatis personae* are the Peregrine falcon and the Blue rock pigeon with the afore-mentioned life stories. And the stage is House of Hiranandani Upscale with its sky-touching towers, in Egattur, Old Mahabalipuram Road.

Arun, an avid birder who captures his avian sightings in pixels and a resident of Upscale, notes that the gated community has been playing host to two Peregrine falcons, a male and a female, during

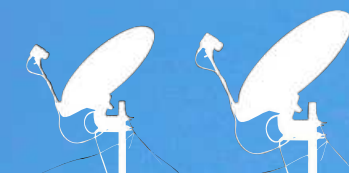
winter. Just ahead of the winter, it entertains a Shaheen falcon, which is a sub-species of the Peregrine falcon. While the Peregrine falcon is a winter visitor, the Shaheen falcon is a resident raptor given to local movements.

The two Peregrine falcons and the Shaheen falcon gravitated towards the gated community for the feral Blue rock pigeons.

These pigeons breed fast, and the raptors check their numbers. "A Peregrine falcon will take at least two pigeons every day," Arun observes. "The Peregrine and the Shaheen falcon maintain and control the feral rock pigeon population. If not for these magnificent raptors the pigeon population would explode and create serious health hazards to the residents."

The Shaheen falcon and the two Peregrine falcons observe timelines that do not clash.

Arun says that in these parts the Shaheen falcon enters the picture in June-July and continues its sojourn until September and leaves



just in time for the Peregrine falcon to have the "guest house" all to itself. And the residents of Upscale are besotted with these raptors, partly on account of the *pro bono* service they offer. Arun explains, "We have named the Shaheen falcon 'Hira'. Many residents know it by its name now. The male Peregrine falcon male has been named 'Rana' and the female Peregrine falcon is 'Nandini'. We are taking all the names from the word Hiranandani." The three falcons might feel welcome, but they know their place and time, and stick to them.

Says Arun, "They are very punctual with their arrival and departure and also stick to their regular towers and perches."



Putting the smartphone in its place

A mathematics teacher turned counsellor is on a mission to promote digital well-being across classrooms and homes



Along with school students, Brother George Palackal takes the pledge of responsible mobile phone use

LIFY THOMAS

Take this quiz (see box) to find out how addicted you are to your smartphone. Published in the inaugural edition of e-magazine *Digital Wellbeing* brought out by Chennai-based Montfort Counselling and Educational Services (MCES), the 15-page magazine helps gadget users free themselves of this addiction. These pages help them identify symptoms of this addiction and cut down on screen time.

As one does not have to “advertise” their score, participants need to be honest to themselves and act on what their score may suggest.

A score between 1 and 20 points signals minimal usage; one between 21 and 35 points show moderate usage. A score between 36 to 50 means excessive usage; and a score between 51 and 60 shows one’s life is being ruled by the smartphone – and these users are called “problematic users”.

“Problematic users must take serious steps to reduce usage and explore offline activities,” says Brother George Palackal, editor of the tri-annual magazine and director of MCES, staying at the organisation’s Pallavaram facility.

The magazine is an extension of the work this former Mathematics teacher, principal and counsellor has been carrying out for close to a decade on digital addiction among adolescents.

Brother George, who belongs to the congregation of Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel (present in 33 countries), pursued counselling as a second career after retiring from a school in Fiji Island.

In 2010, Brother George enrolled for a PhD programme in counselling psychology.

While doing his internship in Philippines in 2013, a college student who scored poorly in the first semester, was brought to him for counselling by his parents. “The youngster was a topper in school but failed in three

subjects after joining college,” says the Montfort Brother.

Adolescent behaviour

Over many sessions spread across three months, he was able to wean this youngster off the addiction to gaming. Inspired by this success, he started a research on internet gaming disorder.

“That same year, the fifth edition of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, published by the American Psychiatric Association, named internet gaming as a new disorder that needed further research. This validated my topic and I got started on my doctoral thesis on ‘Internet Gaming Disorder among Adolescent in Metro Manila: a case study,’” he says.

Later as principal of Lake Montfort School in Bangalore and provincial superior of Yercaud and Bengaluru provinces, Brother George did counsel youngsters, but it was in the last two years that he got into full-time counselling.

Since Montfort Counselling and Educational Services was started in 2022, Brother George has travelled to all major cities to conduct workshops for school students.

“Students of classes IX to XII

are my target group as digital addiction affects academic performance the most,” he says.

Touring cities

The interactive workshops are divided into six sessions and covers topics on importance of a career, time management before knowing the addiction level and suggesting ways to detox. “My focus is on preventing children from losing track of life,” he says that more than 70 schools in 16 states have benefited from the workshops.

Does not weaning children off gadgets require continuous intervention? The former principal says that from the workshops he compiles a list of students who are addicted, mentioning the level and type of addiction (social media, gaming).

“I hand it over to the school heads for them to follow up using the expertise of a school counsellor,” he says. Solutions are also offered to schools to work on such students.

“Parents also have a crucial role to play and I expect schools to work closely with the child and the parent,” he says. *The eMagazine can be downloaded free from the website www.montfortcounseling.com*

Score yourself, take remedial action

For each question, rate yourself on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5 = Always)

- * I find myself reaching for my smartphone as soon as I wake up.
- * I feel anxious, restless, or irritable when I am unable to check my smartphone.
- * I spend more time on my smartphone than interacting face-to-face with friends or family.
- * I frequently lose track of time when using my smartphone.
- * I check my phone while eating, even when I’m with others.
- * I use my smartphone late into the night, affecting my sleep schedule.

- * I feel the need to immediately respond to every notification, message, or call.
- * I use my smartphone to escape from stress, boredom, or negative emotions.
- * I find it challenging to stay focused on tasks because I keep checking my smartphone.
- * I have tried to cut down on my smartphone use but have been unsuccessful.
- * I feel guilty or worried about the amount of time I spend on my smartphone.
- * My smartphone use has affected my academic performance, work, or personal relationships.

Tamil literary event held



Vinayaka Chennai Campus organized its annual Tamil literary programme called Muthuthamizh Aayam for its teaching faculty. According to a press release, the one-day event was held in memory of “Thirukkural Semmal” N. Manimozhiyanar. Tamil literature exponents Shyamala Ramesh Babu, Parveen

Sultana, and Gayathri were special guests. A book titled *Thayumanavar Manimozhiyanaar*, compiled by Anuradha Ganesan, Director of Vinayaka Mission’s Research Foundation was released on the occasion. Thirukkural Semmal N. Manimozhiyanar Ninaivu Aasiriyar Nanmani Award along with a cash prize of ₹5,000 each was presented to five teachers. Also, 20 teachers received special recognition awards. A panel discussion on the topic “Empowering Students: The Role of Teachers in Higher Education Preparedness” was conducted.



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