# hastkala Life

WOVEN BY CULTURE

30 YEARS

हस्तकला लाईफच्या पुढील
पुरवणीच्या मजकुरासाठी
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VOLUME: 02 | ISSUE : 04 | January 2026 | 8 PAGES

Managing Editor : Nikhil Ballal

Supported by ठाणेवैभव




## Pravin CHHEDA

CHAIRMAN, HASTKALA

## New Year, New Resolutions at Hastkala!

A new year always brings with it fresh energy, renewed purpose, and meaningful resolutions. At Hastkala, every year is an opportunity to reflect, evolve, and enhance the experience we offer to our customers. Our journey has always been rooted in celebrating art, culture, and craftsmanship, and this year, our resolutions are aligned with taking that journey even further.

Our recent expansion in Borivli has been a significant milestone for the Hastkala family. It has not only widened our footprint but also infused our team with new momentum and enthusiasm. This growth has inspired us to dream bigger and begin many new stores across Mumbai and beyond, reaching more people who value authenticity, tradition, and thoughtful design.

One of our key resolutions for the year is to better cater to the evolving tastes, preferences, and choices of our growing customer base. To achieve this, we aim to travel more, exploring diverse regions, engaging with artisans, and absorbing the best of craftsmanship, culture, and innovation. These experiences will help us curate collections that resonate deeply with our customers while staying true to our roots.

Another important resolution is to strengthen the communication skills of our team. Meaningful conversations build trust, and trust builds long-lasting relationships. By empowering our team with better communication, product knowledge, and empathy, we aim to create more personal and enriching customer interactions.

Lastly, we resolve to organise more unique and innovative events and activities that celebrate and preserve our rich cultural traditions. Through workshops, exhibitions, and immersive experiences, we hope to bring communities together and keep our heritage alive.

As we step into this new year, Hastkala remains committed to growth with purpose, creativity with responsibility, and relationships built on warmth and trust.

# Rishika Jain Enriches a Legacy of Financial Wisdom

**Rishika Jain isn't just carrying forward a family name; she is reinforcing it with top-tier credentials as both a Chartered Accountant (CA) and a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA). While many might see joining a family business as a natural step, Rishika's path was deliberate. To build a solid foundation, she first joined Deloitte to gain rigorous professional experience in audit and assurance. While this corporate exposure was invaluable, it ultimately helped her realise that her passion lay in the dynamic world of finance and portfolio management. Today, she brings this "modern wisdom" to Enrichwise Financial Services Pvt. Ltd., focusing heavily on process automation, business analytics, and operational optimisation to ensure the firm remains agile in 2026.**



CA Rishika Jain

**The 300-Year Vision**

What truly distinguishes Enrichwise is its remarkable perspective on time. Rather than chasing short-term market fluctuations, the firm operates with a 300-year vision. "We aren't thinking about the next quarter; we are building for generations to last," Rishika says. This philosophy transforms the firm into a one-stop financial hub, providing end-to-end services from investment and insurance to taxation and global wealth management, helping every client achieve ultimate financial freedom.

**The 20% Financial Resolution for Woman**

Addressing the gender gap in Indian investments, Rishika notes that while women have always been "unofficial" decision-makers in households, often providing vital input on major milestones like buying a home, formal financial independence is the next frontier. To bridge this gap, she suggests a simple, powerful resolution: the habit of consistent saving. By setting aside at least 20% of your income, no matter how small the amount, you begin building a personal corpus. This single habit serves as the foundation for long-term financial freedom and ensures that women are empowered to make their own formal financial decisions.

**Strategic Tips for the Modern Investor**

Successful investing requires a shift from impulsive, headline-driven choices toward a disciplined, robust process. To build lasting wealth, avoid relying on "Google" or news cycles for the "best" fund, as search results are no substitute for a personalised strategy.

Investors should resist the urge to time the market or engage in short-term trading, which often erodes capital. Instead, focus on a systematic approach that prioritises proper asset allocation and regular portfolio rebalancing.

Pg. 3

# विद्यार्थीप्रिय शिक्षिका आणि वाचकप्रिय लेखिका : नूतन बांदेकर








नूतन बांदेकर

शिक्षण, समाजकार्य, पर्यावरण आणि साहित्य या सर्व क्षेत्रांत आपला वेगळा ठसा उमटवणाऱ्या नूतन गजानन बांदेकर या ठाणे शहरातील एक बहुआयामी व्यक्तिमत्त्व म्हणून ओळखल्या जातात. ठाणे महानगरपालिका शाळा क्र.५३ येथून मुख्याध्यापिका पदावरून नुकत्याच त्या सेवानिवृत्त झाल्या. तब्बल ३६ वर्षांच्या सेवाकाळात त्यांनी केवळ विद्यार्थ्यांना घडवले नाही, तर शाळा, समाज आणि शहराशी नाते जोडणारे कार्य सातत्याने केले.

'ठाणेवैभव'मध्ये सलग आठ वर्षे 'मनतरंग' या लोकप्रिय सदरातून त्या वाचकांच्या मनात घर करून राहिल्या आहेत. पुढारी, लोकमत यांसारख्या वृत्तपत्रांतूनही त्यांचे लेखन नियमितपणे प्रसिद्ध होत असल्याने वृत्तपत्र लेखिका म्हणून त्यांची स्वतंत्र ओळख निर्माण झाली आहे. महानगरपालिका शाळांतील कष्टकरी वर्गातील मुलांना शिक्षणाच्या प्रवाहात आणणे, हे त्यांच्या कार्याचे केंद्रबिंदू राहिले.

पान ६ वर

# Thhikana café:
# Where Every Cup of Chai Tells a Story






Shivani Sharma and Meenakshi Singhai Jain




In the five years since Meenakshi Singhai Jain and Shivani Sharma opened the doors of Thhikana, the café has grown into much more than just a business. It has become a warm and welcoming sanctuary for people of all ages. True to its name, which means "abode" or "a place to stay," Thhikana was created with a vision of inclusivity, a space where people from different generations can come together over a shared love for chai and conversation.

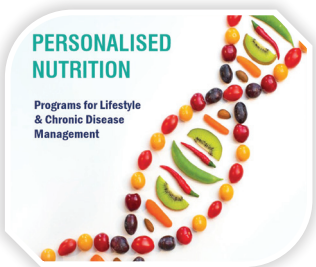
From the very beginning, the founders chose not to follow the fast-paced "hustle culture" common in modern cafés. Instead, they designed Thhikana as a community living room. Here, students preparing for exams sit beside retirees reading newspapers, while young childre blob:https://web.whatsapp.com/3ea72368-4d81-4f58-bfe8-ab7afcef931e n enjoy a special corner created just for them. At the heart of this inviting space is the café's signature chai, brewed slowly with care and traditional spices, evoking a comforting sense of home for its patrons.

Behind the warmth and charm of the café lies a journey filled with challenges. As married women with young children, Meenakshi and Shivani faced immense pressure during the initial years. The first two years were particularly demanding as they balanced family responsibilities with the intense demands of running a new business. Managing school schedules, childcare, and household duties alongside long working hours tested their physical and emotional endurance.

**Today, as Thhikana approaches its fifth year of operation, the café stands as a testament to perseverance and purpose. With a stable team and a loyal community of patrons, Meenakshi and Shivani have shown that a business can be both professionally successful and deeply personal. In a world that often feels rushed and disconnected, Thhikana continues to offer a simple yet powerful message that there is always a place to belong, and a warm cup of chai waiting for everyone.**

The struggle was made even harder by a severe shortage of staff in the early days. On many afternoons, the two founders found themselves handling everything from preparing chai and serving customers to cleaning and managing operations. Despite the exhaustion and moments of self-doubt, they remained determined. With unwavering support from their families and a strong belief in their vision, they refused to give up.













# The TRUWELLTH of Health by Nutritionist Rajashree Gadgil

In an era marked by a sharp rise in lifestyle disorders, autoimmune conditions, and chronic illnesses, healthcare is undergoing a critical transformation from reactive treatment to proactive, preventive, and personalised care. Few voices in this evolving landscape are as credible and impactful as Rajashree Gadgil, a globally experienced Healthcare Professional, Celebrity Nutrition Expert and Founder of TRUWELLTH Integrative Health Centres.

An interaction with Rajashree Gadgil is particularly relevant today as she represents a rare convergence of scientific depth, clinical expertise, public engagement, and visionary leadership. At a time when nutrition is often reduced to generic advice or short-lived trends, her work has consistently positioned it as a primary therapeutic pillar of modern medicine.

With over 20 years of global experience, including extensive professional exposure in New York City, USA, and India, Rajashree has worked across diverse healthcare systems, cultures, and disease profiles. This global perspective shapes her core philosophy: nutrition, when applied scientifically and personalised thoughtfully, is one of the safest, most effective, and sustainable therapies for chronic and complex diseases. Her work has helped individuals reverse, control, and prevent a wide spectrum of conditions including digestive disorders, chronic inflammation, diabetes, fatty liver disease, hypertension, PCOS, obesity, bone and joint disorders, kidney and neurological conditions, geriatric health concerns, cancer recovery, autoimmune diseases, post-operative rehabilitation, growth and fitness—areas where conventional models often focus more on symptom management than long-term outcomes.



Rajashree Gadgil

Rajashree's credibility rests on strong academic and professional foundations. She holds an Masters from Sion Hospital, Mumbai, a Postgraduate qualification from Symbiosis and an MBA in Marketing, combining clinical rigour with strategic insight. Her multidisciplinary expertise enables a truly integrative approach that addresses not just disease, but its biological, lifestyle and behavioural drivers.

Her entrepreneurial journey reflects this purpose-driven vision. Through TRUWELLTH Integrative Health Centres, Rajashree delivers personalised, evidence-based nutrition and holistic health solutions integrated with medical care. This is complemented by RSG Nutrition & Healthcare Pvt. Ltd., a science-focused nutrition company developing clinically researched, condition-specific formulations under the umbrella brand ENERGYA, aimed at reducing disease burden and supporting recovery.

Beyond clinical practice, Rajashree is a powerful health communicator. As the Creator and Anchor of TRUWELLTH Health TV, she has reached over 2 million viewers and conducted 400+ patient education programmes with 1,000+ global healthcare experts, playing a pivotal role in democratising credible, evidence-based health information.

Rajashree Gadgil continues to lead a growing movement that redefines nutrition not as an adjunct, but as a cornerstone of modern-day therapy—bridging science, compassion, and innovation to build a healthier, more resilient society.

# महिला सक्षमीकरण आणि पौष्टिक आहाराचा ध्यास

सामाजिक कार्याची आवड असलेल्या शिल्पा वाघ गेल्या ६ ते ७ वर्षांपासून महिला सक्षमीकरणासाठी कार्यरत आहेत. समाजसेवेच्या समर्पित भावनेतून त्या महिला बचत गटांना पौष्टिक खाद्यपदार्थ, 'टाकाऊतून टिकाऊ' वस्तू आणि आयुर्वेदिक साबण तयार करण्याचे शास्त्रशुद्ध प्रशिक्षण देतात.

साधारण २४-२५ वर्षांपूर्वी मुलांचे संगोपन आणि कौटुंबिक जबाबदाऱ्यांमुळे नोकरी सोडल्यानंतर त्यांनी वागळे इस्टेट येथे वास्तव्यास असताना 'पोळी-भाजी केंद्र' सुरू केले. त्यानंतर ऋतू पार्क येथे स्थलांतरित झाल्यावर बदललेल्या जागेमुळे व्यवसायाची आर्थिक गणिते जुळवणे कठीण झाले तरीही त्यांनी हा व्यवसाय मर्यादित स्वरूपात सुरू ठेवला. त्या काळात बेबी सिटिंग हा ट्रेंड फारसा रुजला नव्हता, तेव्हा त्यांनी स्त्रियांना आपल्यासारखी नोकरी सोडून त्याग करायला लागू नये आणि निश्चिंतपणे काम करता यावे या उद्देशाने 'डे केअर' सुरू करण्याचा पर्याय निवडला. सोमवार ते शुक्रवार 'डे केअर' चालवायचे आणि सुट्टीच्या दिवशी डब्यांच्या ऑर्डर्स घ्यायच्या, अशा व्यस्त वेळापत्रकातही त्यांनी १२ वर्षे सातत्य राखले. कोव्हिडच्या काळात त्यांच्या पहिल्या व्यवसायाला खऱ्या अर्थाने उभारी मिळाली; घरपोच डबे पोहोचवण्याच्या कामातून त्यांची समाजसेवा आणि व्यवसाय दोन्ही जोमाने सुरू झाले. या व्यवसायाने त्यांना ओळख आणि काम दोन्ही भरभरून दिले. "आपणही समाजाचे देणे लागतो" हा उदात्त हेतू समोर ठेवून आता वयाच्या साठीमधे त्यांनी पूर्णपणे सामाजिक कार्याला वाहून घेतले आहे.

शिल्पा वाघ यांनी मिलेट्सपासून (भरड धान्य) ऑनलाइन, ऑफलाईन आणि स्वतः प्रयोग करून काही पौष्टिक पदार्थ बनवण्याचे तंत्र आत्मसात केले आहे. आज त्या महिला बचत गट, अंगणवाडी सेविका आणि विविध स्वयंसेवी संस्थांमधील महिलांना भरड धान्याचे महत्त्व पटवून देतात. पारंपरिक भाकरी-पराठ्यांच्या पलीकडे जाऊन मिलेट्स ब्रेकफास्ट, लंच प्रीमिक्स आणि नाचणीची बर्फी यांसारखे नाविन्यपूर्ण पदार्थ बनवण्याचे प्रशिक्षण त्या देतात. याव्यतिरिक्त, 'टाकाऊतून टिकाऊ' या उपक्रमांतर्गत त्या देवाला वाहिलेल्या फुलांपासून, फुलांच्या हारांपासून धूप कांडी आणि दिवे बनवण्यास शिकवतात.

घरकाम करणाऱ्या महिलांना स्वतःच्या पायावर उभे करण्यासाठी शिल्पा वाघ त्यांच्या घरी जाऊन प्रशिक्षण देतात. केवळ



शिल्पा वाघ

पदार्थ शिकवून त्या थांबत नाहीत, तर ऑर्डर्सचे गणित कसे बसवायचे, कच्च्या मालाचे मोजमाप, मार्केटिंग आणि नफ्याचे प्रमाण (Margin) याबद्दल सविस्तर मार्गदर्शन देऊन त्यांना 'स्टार्टअप'साठी प्रोत्साहित करतात. सध्या त्या 'कल्पतरू ठाणे' येथील प्रोजेक्टमध्ये 'विद्या' (NGO) संस्थेमार्फत महिला सक्षमीकरणासाठी कार्यरत असून त्या आहार संबंधी प्रशिक्षण देतात. सामाजिक बांधिलकी जपत त्या दर महिन्याच्या अमावस्येला मुलुंड (योगी हिल्स) येथे १५०० ते २००० अंध गरजूंसाठी होणाऱ्या अन्नदान उपक्रमात श्रमदान/सेवा देतात. "कोणीही उपाशी राहू नये" हेच त्यांचे ब्रीद आहे.

"महिलांकडे प्रतिभा आणि पाककलेचे ज्ञान उपजतच असते, पण त्यांना गरज असते ती व्यवसायाचे तंत्र समजून घेण्याची. त्यांना योग्य वेळी मार्गदर्शन, आत्मविश्वास आणि प्रेरणा देऊन आत्मनिर्भर करणे हाच माझा ध्यास आहे," असे शिल्पा वाघ अभिमानाने सांगतात.

**प्रियंका माने - एक नवी सुरुवात**

आधी बॅंक ऑफिसमध्ये नोकरी करणारी मी, आज एक यशस्वी उद्योजिका आहे. 'आहार' क्लासमध्ये मला केवळ रवा केक बनवण्याचे कौशल्य मिळाले नाही, तर व्यवसायाचे नियोजन आणि मार्केटिंगचे बारकावेही शिकायला मिळाले. शिल्पा आणि स्वाती मॅडमच्या मार्गदर्शनामुळे माझा आत्मविश्वास वाढला आणि आता मी आनंदाने माझा केकचा व्यवसाय चालवत आहे. मला स्वावलंबी केल्याबद्दल मनःपूर्वक आभार!

**चंद्रावती शेट्टी- गृहिणी ते व्यावसायिक**

"माझ्याकडे पिठाची चक्की तर आधीच होती, पण 'आहार' क्लासला आल्यावर त्याचे व्यावसायिक रूपांतर कसे करायचे हे मी शिकले. चकली आणि इतर पिठांचे 'प्रिमिक्स' तयार करून मी आता स्वतःचा व्यवसाय सुरू केला आहे. शिल्पा मॅडमच्या पाठिंब्यामुळे मला मोठी उमेद मिळाली असून, आता मी घरापुरते मर्यादित न राहता ग्राहकांच्या ऑर्डरही घेऊ लागले आहे. ही प्रगती माझ्यासाठी खरंच अभिमानास्पद आहे.

**सुजाता जाधव- आत्मविश्वास दुणावला**

लॉकडाऊनमध्ये जेव्हा सर्व कामे बंद झाली, तेव्हा मी घरूनच डबे देण्यास सुरुवात केली. विशेषतः माझ्या पुरणपोळ्या आणि दिवाळी फराळाला लोकांकडून मोठी पसंती मिळाली. 'आहार' क्लासमधील शिल्पा मॅडमच्या मार्गदर्शनामुळे आणि प्रेरणादायी पाठिंब्यामुळे माझा आत्मविश्वास वाढला. त्यांच्या मदतीने मी आता माझ्या व्यवसायाचा विस्तार करत असून, लवकरच स्वतःचे 'टिफिन सेंटर' सुरू करण्याचा आमचा मानस आहे. 'आहार' क्लासमुळे माझ्या आयुष्याला एक नवीन आणि सकारात्मक दिशा मिळाली आहे!



१६ सप्टेंबर 'सन्मान कर्तबगार गौरवशाली भगिनींचा' सोहळ्यात स्वाती वाघ यांचा सन्मान आणि गौरव सोहळा



कळवा महिला गटासाठी झटपट ग्रेव्हीपासून भाजी बनवण्याचे विशेष प्रशिक्षण सत्र



बालदिन विशेष गांधीनगरच्या नवजीवन शाळेतील विद्यार्थ्यांना खाऊ वाटप



बालसुधारगृहातील मुलींसाठी विशेष कौशल्य विकास प्रशिक्षण



महिला दिन विशेष सुषमा स्वराज पुरस्काराने गौरव



राजन विचारे यांच्या पाटील वाडी कार्यालयात सौ. शिंत्रे यांच्या मार्गदर्शनखाली टाकाऊ पासून टिकाऊ धूप आणि दिवे बनवण्याचे प्रशिक्षण



सकस आहार आणि भरड धान्य (Millets) जनजागृती मोहीम



मनोरमानगर मध्ये महिलांना सुवासिक दिवे, फुलांच्या पाकळ्याने बनवलेले दिवे आणी पाण्यावर चालणारे दिवे यांची प्रशिक्षण

# Rishika Jain Enriches a Legacy of Financial Wisdom

(From Pg 1...)

**The Compounding Power of Habits**

Rishika has cultivated a remarkably rich personal portfolio that balances analytical logic with vibrant creativity. A trained Bharatnatyam dancer and guitarist, she believes hobbies are essential for stress management and creative thinking. Her journey as a blogger began at age 10, when her father, Kapil Jain, the founder of Enrichwise, encouraged her to write one quote a day. This small habit eventually grew into rishikajain.com, a platform dedicated to "touching hearts." To Rishika, this is the power of compounding in real life: a small, daily creative investment that evolved into a global community.

**Investing in Trust Beyond the Paperwork**

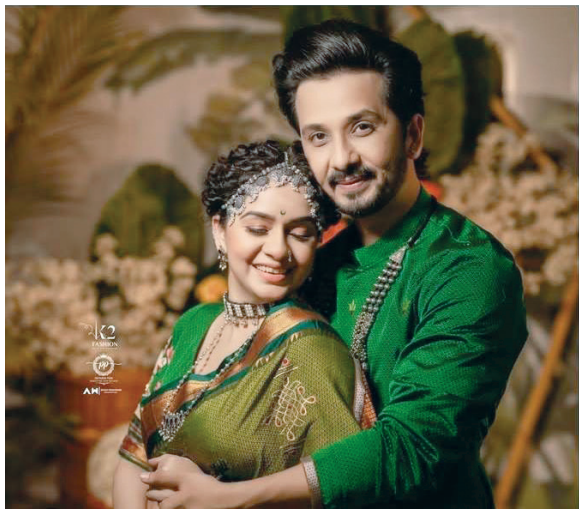
Enrichwise operates as a holistic service provider, offering everything from global investments and taxation to legal services and loans. By combining this "one-stop" convenience with a deep-rooted commitment to customer service, Rishika and her family are ensuring that their 300-year vision starts with the trust of every client they serve today.

Her mother, Shobhana Jain, a constant pillar of the firm, adds: "People do not just submit forms; they submit their trust. They don't just share documents; they share their life decisions with us." This philosophy of client-centricity over sales is what Rishika aims to scale globally, making Enrichwise one of the finest financial services firms in the world.

Scan the QR code







# From Passion to Purpose: The Inspiring Journey of Ketaki Shah Mukkirwar

Ketaki Shah Mukkirwar is a well-known fashion designer, entrepreneur, and celebrity stylist based in Thane, Maharashtra. She is the founder of K2 Fashion Closet, a brand that beautifully blends creativity, tradition, and modern style.

Ketaki began her professional journey in a multinational company after completing her education, including an MBA in Finance from D. Y. Patil College. Even with a stable corporate job, her heart was always drawn to fashion and creativity. After one year, she made a bold decision to leave her job and follow her passion. She started her business from home, taking small but confident steps toward her dream.

K2 Fashion Closet began with custom stitching and designing clothes for clients. Her unique designs, attention to detail, and deep understanding of customer needs helped her gain trust and popularity. Encouraged by the strong response, she launched the Khann Paithani saree brand. K2 proudly became the first and only brand in Maharashtra to create this special style of Khann Paithani. Along with this, she also introduced Khann Clothing, making her designs accessible to a wider audience.



Ketaki Shah Mukkirwar

Apart from designing, Ketaki is also a successful celebrity stylist. She has styled artists for popular Marathi TV shows like Hasyajatra, Sa Re Ga Ma Pa, Maha Home Minister, Bus Bai Bus, and Sur Nava Dhyas Nava. Many well-known actors and actresses have worn her designs, including Mrunmayee Deshpande, Amruta Khanvilkar, Prajakta Mali, Subodh Bhave, Swapnil Joshi, and Adesh Bandekar.

Her work has been recognised with prestigious awards, including the Luxury Clothing Brand Award, presented by Shilpa Shetty. Today, Ketaki runs her own design studio in Thane and has a growing Instagram family of over 61,000 followers.

Ketaki Shah Mukkirwar's journey is a true example of how passion, courage, and hard work can turn dreams into reality.

**Instagram handle : K2fashioncloset**











# The Artistic and Academic Odyssey of Dr Pallavi Naik

Dr Mrs Pallavi Naik is a distinguished Bharatanatyam artiste, scholar, teacher, and researcher whose work spans more than three decades of dedicated practice, performance, and academic inquiry. Her journey reflects a rare and meaningful integration of artistic excellence, intellectual depth, and therapeutic innovation, positioning her as one of the most accomplished exponents of Indian classical dance of her generation.

Initiated into Bharatanatyam at a very young age, Dr Pallavi received her foundational training under Guru Smt. Uttara Tulshibagwale. Under this guidance, she developed a strong technical base and an early inclination to explore Bharatanatyam beyond conventional performance boundaries. She presented her Arangetram in 1996 at the age of fifteen, marking the formal beginning of her professional journey. Her artistic growth was further shaped under the blessings and mentorship of her revered Guru, Dr Smt. Sucheta Chapekar, a renowned Bharatanatyam exponent and scholar.

Driven by a passion for both performance and scholarship, Dr Pallavi pursued her Master's degree in Bharatanatyam from Lalit Kala Kendra, Savitribai Phule Pune University, where she graduated with outstanding merit. Since then, she has performed extensively across India at prestigious festivals, cultural institutions, and competitions, earning appreciation for her refined technique, expressive depth, and thoughtful interpretations.

Coming from a strong medical lineage, her father, Dr Uday Kulkarni, is a respected M.D. Homoeopath. Dr Pallavi developed a deep interest in human physiology and the science of healing. This scientific grounding played a crucial role in shaping her academic research and led her towards an innovative exploration of Bharatanatyam as a therapeutic tool. In 2011, she was awarded a PhD in Bharatanatyam by Savitribai Phule Pune University under the guidance of Dr Smt. Sucheta Chapekar. At the age of twenty-nine, she became the first recipient of a PhD in Fine Arts (Bharatanatyam) from the university.

Her doctoral research, titled "Bharatanatyam as a Therapy for the Mentally Challenged (Focusing on Trainable and Educable Children with IQ Range 30–70, Age Group 10–20 Years)," is a pioneering contribution to the field of dance therapy. As part of this research, Dr Pallavi developed a structured teaching methodology tailored for special children and designed the Bharatanatyam Movement Evaluation Test (BMET), a unique assessment tool for analysing therapeutic movement outcomes.

Dr Pallavi has also contributed significantly to academic literature through research papers that examine interdisciplinary themes such as the therapeutic advantages of Bharatanatyam, its application for exceptional children, including those with mental challenges and learning disabilities, and its role in the holistic development of trainable and educable children. Her work bridges classical art, psychology, and physiology, opening new pathways for inclusive education and therapy.









Pallavi Naik

A committed teacher and mentor, Dr Pallavi is the Founder Trustee of Kalaprangan Trust, an institution dedicated to promoting Bharatanatyam education for both neurotypical and differently-abled students. She conducts regular classes at Saraswati Mandir Trust, Thane. Kalaprangan Trust was established with the inspiration and leadership of her husband, Kshitish Naik, Chairperson of the Trust, whose constant support has been instrumental in shaping its artistic vision and social mission. Her son Sayujya and her mother-in-law, Smt. Madhuri Naik provides her constant support to make the courtyard of Kalaprangan Trust into a huge community.

Affiliated with the Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, Kalaprangan Trust has grown steadily and now operates through six branches across the Thane district. Through these centres, structured Bharatanatyam education has become accessible to a wider and more diverse student community. In collaboration with the University of Mumbai, the Trust has successfully launched two pioneering academic programmes: a Diploma in Bharatanatyam with Aesthetic and Therapeutic Studies, and a Certificate Course in Dance for Special Children. These initiatives are among the earliest university-recognised programmes in India to integrate classical dance with therapeutic studies.

**As a creative director and choreographer, Dr Pallavi has conceptualised and presented several acclaimed productions through her in-house production wing. Notable works include Dwaitadvaita, Nrutya Sabha, Sawale Swaroop, Tejaswi Kiran Shalaka Savitri, Nrutyageetai, and Vaidehi Punya Smaranam. Her performances are widely appreciated for their conceptual clarity, philosophical depth, aesthetic sensitivity, and disciplined technique.**

In association with the Academy of Theatre Arts, University of Mumbai, and Kalaprangan Trust, Dr Pallavi also pioneered a unique convocation ceremony for special children who completed a one-year Certificate Course in Dance. This initiative celebrates their artistic achievements and reinforces dignity, inclusion, and self-confidence through formal academic recognition.

Beyond performance and teaching, she actively curates outreach initiatives such as Nrutya Leela, an annual student showcase; Adavu Yadnya, foundational Bharatanatyam workshops; and Divyangan, inclusive dance programmes designed specifically for differently-abled students. These initiatives reflect her commitment to accessibility, excellence, and social responsibility through art.

Dr Pallavi's contributions have been recognised with several prestigious awards and honours, including the 'Shringar Mani' title from Sur Shringar Sansad, the Best Dancer Award at the Dadar Matunga Dance and Choreography Competition, the 'Shailushi' Award for excellence in classical dance, and the Best Teacher Award from Saraswati Mandir Trust, Thane. She is also a Graded Artist of Doordarshan.

In addition to her artistic and academic work, Dr Pallavi is frequently invited to serve as a judge and examiner by reputed institutions such as Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University, Lalit Kala Kendra - Savitri Bai Phule University Pune, Swara Sadhana Samiti, and the Dadar Matunga Cultural Centre, reflecting her standing as a respected authority in the field.

Deeply influenced by her mother, Smt. Madhuri Kulkarni, a scholar of the Bhagavad Gita, Dasbodh, and Indian philosophical texts, Dr Pallavi seamlessly weaves philosophical, psychological, and physiological dimensions into her understanding of Bharatanatyam. As a dancer, teacher, researcher, choreographer, and therapist, Dr Mrs Pallavi Naik embodies the transformative power of Bharatanatyam not only as a classical art form but also as a discipline of learning, healing, and inclusive social impact.

# Mastering the Grammar of Success with Educator Sharmila Mehendale

A first-class Economics graduate (Ruia College) with a PGD in Public Relations (XIC, Mumbai), Sharmila Mehendale has a strong background in advertising and PR, including roles at Impulse Advertising and Travel Corporation of India.

Since 1996, she has worked as a freelance content creator and client servicing specialist, handling newsletters and corporate copy for major firms like Cadbury India, Labindia Instruments, Texanlab Laboratories, Medimek Industries, The Eco Group and Emco India.

In addition to her corporate work, she is an English educator, coaching 10th and 12th-grade students across the State Board, ICSE, and CBSE.

The Hastakala Life team caught up with her to discuss her professional evolution and her take on teaching language in the AI-driven world.

**What drew you to teaching and the English language?**

As a freelance content writer in advertising, I possessed a natural flair for creativity. Since good copy requires innovative language, crisp narrative, perfect grammar, and a distinct style, transitioning to teaching felt like a natural progression. My journey began 20 years ago when a group of parents asked me to coach my son's 8th-grade friends. I haven't looked back since, and I remain truly thankful for the response to my work in this noble profession.

**How do you balance being both an educator and a writer?**

Despite teaching for 20 years, I have maintained my link to copywriting. Writing remains a passion and a creative release, never a burden. Balancing classes with this passion, I found that my content writing experience unexpectedly led me to poetry; I have now penned 75 poems I hope to publish, with plans to foray into short stories. In my classes, I apply professional "tricks of the trade" to simplify lessons, perfect students' grammar, and help them develop strong, original writing skills.

**What does your personal library look like?**

My personal library contains all books from children's literature to fiction to light classics and books on philosophy and spiritualism. I have enjoyed all the writing from Jeffery Archer, Sidney Sheldon, Wilbur Smith, Robin Cook to Jane Austen, Echarte Tolle, Robin Sharma, Deepak Chopra and even Khalil Gibran. I relate totally to Ruskin Bond, whom I look upon as an idol of simple yet effective writing.

When it comes to reading literature, it's a journey by experimenting various writers till you get to your mojo.

**In the era of "Gen Z" slang, how do you keep students engaged with formal English?**

Yes, this is the most pertinent question and close to the heart of every educator. Like every other teacher, I hate the influence of social media on students. It has affected the purity of language and muddled the students' thought processes. The 'ready content' that children pull from AI or ChatGPT is not their own.



Sharmila Mehendale

Dependence on social media kills creative thinking. When I teach essay writing to my students, we brainstorm for ideas and then put our pens to paper. As a teacher, I strive hard to bring originality to the content and teach my students to express original ideas through their writing.

I am proud to claim success in this venture as I see my students gain confidence over a period. I teach them how to manage the flow, use good vocabulary, proverbs, live examples and write with precision. My content writer profile helps immensely.

**How can educators encourage original thought over AI assistance?**

There goes an adage, "Machines are good slaves and bad masters." As educators, we inculcate this maxim as the principal guide of their lives. I stress upon the fact that my students must write their own ideas, even if it's simple, maybe a little distorted, but over the years, they will gain confidence to write flawlessly and effectively. "Let good writing become a part of your life; it may not give instant results, but years of effort take you to the pinnacle of great expressive writing." Do not let machines run amok over your brains!

**What daily habit would you suggest to elevate communication skills?**

There is no one single good habit, but here are a few tips that work fantastically for those who wish to master this language:

**Read, Read and Read –** Read all kinds of content from newspapers to books to Wikipedia.

**Think in English –** To master a language, you should learn to think in that language (Avoid thinking in Marathi and translating literally; this is a common pitfall)

**Improve your vocabulary-** Download a good app like Dictionary.com+ Thesaurus.com and use it regularly. Use a few of those good words every day.

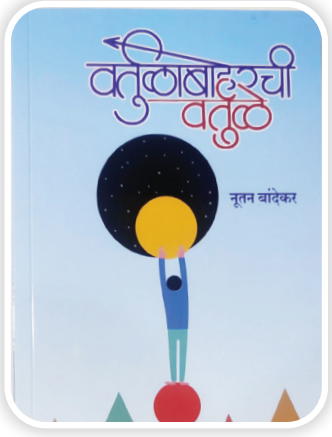
**Be your own Editor-** After you write something, open the thesaurus app and apply new adjectives and verbs to your own writing, this develops your flair.

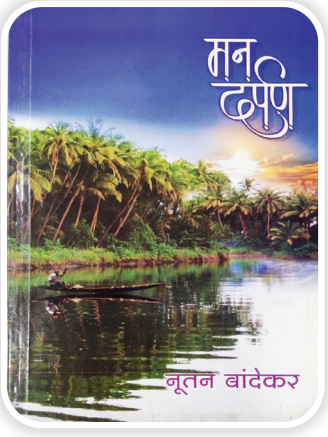
**Consistency and Discipline-** No one ever achieved finesse without hard work and perseverance!

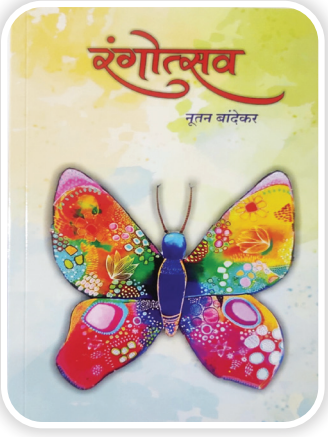
# विद्यार्थीप्रिय शिक्षिका आणि वाचकप्रिय लेखिका : नूतन बांदेकर

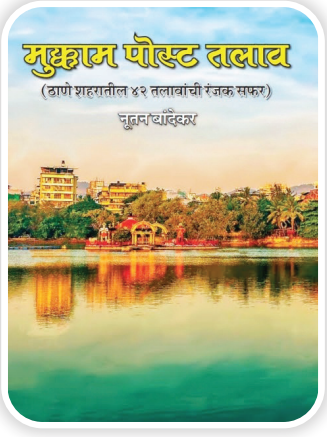
(पान १ वरून)

शाळेची घटती विद्यार्थीसंख्या वाढावी म्हणून त्यांनी शाळेपासून तीन-चार किलोमीटर दूर असलेल्या तुर्फापाडा व धर्माचापाडा परिसरात जाऊन शिक्षणापासून वंचित असलेल्या सुमारे दीडशे मुलांना शाळेत दाखल करून घेतले. बंद पडण्याच्या मार्गावर असलेली मराठी माध्यमाची शाळा त्यांनी पुन्हा उभी केली. या विद्यार्थ्यांची दैनंदिन ये-जा सुलभ व्हावी यासाठी ठाणे महानगरपालिका परिवहन विभागाकडून विशेष बससेवा सुरू करून घेतली. सुरुवातीला स्वतः आर्थिक भार उचलून आणि 'उडान वेल्फेअर फाउंडेशन'च्या सहकार्याने मोफत बस पासेसची व्यवस्था केली. पुढे त्यांच्या प्रयत्नांतून महापालिकेच्या सर्व विद्यार्थ्यांना मोफत बस पासेस देण्याची योजना अस्तित्वात आली.




कृतीतून शिक्षण देण्यावर त्यांचा ठाम विश्वास आहे. विविध उपक्रम, कार्यशाळा आणि शिबिरांच्या माध्यमातून त्यांनी शालेय अभ्यासक्रमासोबत पर्यावरण शिक्षणाची जोड दिली. 'हिरवे स्वप्न' आणि 'मातृसेवा संस्था' यांच्या सहकार्याने, तज्ज्ञांच्या मार्गदर्शनाखाली विद्यार्थी व पालकांच्या सहभागातून शाळेच्या टेरेसवर मातीविरहित बाग निर्माण करण्यात आली. सुक्या पालापाचोळ्यापासून माती, ओल्या कचऱ्यापासून खत, कांद्याच्या सालींपासून कीटकनाशक, केळ्यांच्या सालींपासून खत, नारळाच्या शेंडीपासून कोकोपीट निर्मिती असे अनेक प्रयोग विद्यार्थ्यांकडून करून घेतले गेले. टाकाऊ प्लास्टिकच्या वस्तूंच्या पुनर्वापरातून 'शून्य खर्च-शून्य कचरा' ही संकल्पना प्रत्यक्षात उतरवली. या उपक्रमांचे सादरीकरण विद्यार्थ्यांनी Climate Action Project या जागतिक पातळीवरील उपक्रमात केले. विविध देशांतील शाळांशी ऑनलाईन संवाद साधत पर्यावरण विषयक काम मांडण्यात आले. 'माझी वसुंधरा ०.२' स्पर्धेत शाळेला अव्वल स्थान मिळाले.

महिलांसाठी कायदेविषयक मार्गदर्शन शिबिरे, आरोग्य तपासणी शिबिरे तसेच दरवर्षी महिलादिनाचे कार्यक्रम त्या नियमितपणे आयोजित करतात. कोरोना महामारीच्या काळात त्यांनी पदरमोड करून सुमारे तीनशे कुटुंबांना अन्नधान्य व जीवनावश्यक वस्तूंची मदत केली. 'उडान वेल्फेअर फाउंडेशन'च्या माध्यमातून परिसरातील मुलांना पौष्टिक आहाराचे वाटपही सातत्याने केले. याच काळात त्यांनी 'ठाणेवैभव'मध्ये सकारात्मक लेखमालेतून समाजाला मानसिक आधार दिला.

आपत्कालीन व्यवस्थापन विषयाच्या मास्टर ट्रेनर म्हणून त्यांनी यशदा, पुणे येथे तसेच विविध महानगरपालिका व जिल्हा परिषदांमध्ये प्रशिक्षण दिले आहे. त्यांचे चार ललित लेखसंग्रह प्रकाशित झाले असून कथा, कविता, बालनाट्ये असे विविध साहित्यप्रकार त्यांनी हाताळले आहेत. आकाशवाणीच्या विविध केंद्रांवरून त्यांच्या लेखनाचे अभिवाचन कार्यक्रम प्रसारित झाले आहेत. ठाणे शहराबद्दल विशेष आस्था ठेवत त्यांनी 'तलावांचे शहर ठाणे' ही लेखमाला लिहिली. ठाणे महानगरपालिका हद्दीतील ४२ तलावांचा प्रत्यक्ष अभ्यास करून त्यांच्या सद्यस्थितीचे आणि ऐतिहासिक महत्त्वाचे दस्तऐवजीकरण त्यांनी केले. या लेखमालेतून 'माझा तलाव' मोहीम सुरू झाली आणि अनेक तलावांच्या पुनरुज्जीवनाला चालना मिळाली.

शिक्षिका म्हणून विद्यार्थ्यांचे आयुष्य घडवणाऱ्या, लेखिका म्हणून समाजमन जागृत करणाऱ्या आणि कार्यकर्ती म्हणून माणुसकी जपणाऱ्या नूतन बांदेकर यांचे कार्य प्रेरणादायी आहे. पुरस्कारांच्या पलीकडे जाऊन त्यांचे योगदान विद्यार्थ्यांच्या यशात, संवर्धित पर्यावरणात आणि जागृत समाजात स्पष्टपणे दिसून येते.







# आवडीपासून यशस्वी उद्यमापर्यंतचा गीता नाईक यांचा प्रवास

"आपल्या आवडत्या व्यक्तीच्या हृदयात शिरण्याचा मार्ग पोटातून जातो" असे म्हटले जाते. मात्र, तो मार्ग 'गीता नाईक कुकींग व बेकींग क्लासेस्' मधून जातो, असे म्हटले तर ते अधिक योग्य ठरेल. गेली तीन दशके हजारो महिलांना पाककलेचे धडे देत त्यांच्या जीवनात आत्मनिर्भरतेची चव निर्माण करणाऱ्या गीता नाईक यांनी आज घराघरात स्वतःची ओळख निर्माण केली आहे.

गीता नाईक या मूळच्या दादरच्या. सुप्रसिद्ध भावगीत गायक गोविंद पोवळे आणि सुवर्णाताई यांच्या त्या द्वितीय कन्या. आईकडून मिळालेला पाकसिद्धीचा वारसा आणि वडिलांकडून लाभलेले वक्तृत्व, हजरजबाबीपणा व शिकवण्याची कला या गुणांचा सुंदर संगम त्यांच्या व्यक्तिमत्त्वात दिसून येतो. १९९० साली नोकरी सोडल्यानंतर घरच्यांच्या प्रोत्साहनामुळे, मुळातच हाताला चव असलेल्या गीताताईंनी कुकींग क्लासेस सुरू करण्याचा विचार केला. या विचाराला प्रत्यक्षात आणत १९९२ साली त्यांनी 'गीता नाईक कुकींग व बेकींग क्लासेस'चा पाया रोवला. सुरुवातीला केवळ आईस्क्रीमचे क्लासेस सुरू झाले. त्यानंतर पंजाबी, चायनीज, मोगलाई पदार्थ, मिठाई, केक्स व आयसिंग, बेकरी, इन्स्टंट मिक्सेस अशा विविध प्रकारच्या तब्बल ४० हून अधिक प्रकारच्या क्लासेसची भर पडत गेली.

क्लासमधील मोकळे व खेळकर वातावरण, अतिशय सोप्या पद्धतीने आणि बारीकसारीक तपशीलांसह शिकवण्याची हातोटी, तसेच सर्वात महत्त्वाचे म्हणजे पदार्थांची उत्कृष्ट चव या सर्व गुणांमुळे अल्पावधीतच गीताताईंची लोकप्रियता वाढली. आजच्या सोशल मीडियाच्या युगाआधीही त्यांच्या कामाची कीर्ती विद्यार्थिनींमार्फत दूरदूर पसरत गेली. खऱ्या अर्थाने, "काम बोलत गेलं आणि कारवाँ बनत गेला." या क्लासेसमधून प्रशिक्षण घेतलेल्या असंख्य महिलांनी पुढे स्वतःचे छोटे-मोठे व्यवसाय सुरू केले आणि त्या आत्मनिर्भर बनल्या. ज्या महिला व्यवसायात उतरल्या नाहीत, त्या आपल्या कुटुंबाच्या लाडक्या अन्नपूर्णा झाल्या. महिलांच्या सक्षमीकरणात दिलेल्या या योगदानातच गीता नाईक कुकींग व बेकींग क्लासेसचे खरे यश सामावलेले आहे. महिलांना पाककलेच्या माध्यमातून स्वतःच्या पायावर उभे करण्याच्या त्यांच्या या कार्याची दखल घेत, ८ मार्च २०१७ रोजी जागतिक महिला दिनाचे औचित्य साधून त्यांची नवदुर्गा पुरस्कारासाठी निवड करण्यात आली. ठाणे महानगरपालिका आणि उक्ती फाऊंडेशन यांच्या संयुक्त विद्यमाने तत्कालीन महापौर मिनाक्षीताई शिंदे यांच्या हस्ते गीताताईंना मानचिन्ह व मानपत्र देऊन गौरविण्यात आले.



गीता नाईक

आपल्या यशामागे आई-वडिलांचा आशीर्वाद हीच पहिली पायरी असल्याचे गीताताई अतिशय नम्रपणे सांगतात. या संपूर्ण प्रवासात त्यांचे पती शिरीष नाईक यांनी नोकरी सांभाळत मार्गदर्शक, मित्र आणि मदतनीस अशा विविध भूमिका पार पाडत त्यांना भक्कम पाठबळ दिले. मुलगी सई हिनेही समजूतदारपणे आपला खारीचा वाटा उचलल्याचे गीताताई प्रेमाने नमूद करतात. तसेच, त्यांच्यावर विश्वास ठेवून शिकायला आलेल्या विद्यार्थिनी आणि त्यांचे कुटुंबीय यांच्याशिवाय हा प्रवास शक्य झाला नसता, अशी कृतज्ञ भावना त्या व्यक्त करतात. सतत ३२ वर्षे अथक परिश्रम, चिकाटी आणि सातत्याने कार्य केल्यानंतर २०२३ साली काही अपरिहार्य कारणांमुळे त्यांना हे क्लासेस अचानक बंद करावे लागले. मात्र, शिकवणे हेच आपले खरे पॅशन असल्याने, वयाच्या ६२ व्या वर्षी त्यांनी नव्या उमेदीने प्री-रेकॉर्डेड ऑनलाइन क्लासेस सुरू केले. या उपक्रमालाही भरघोस प्रतिसाद मिळत असून, इतकी वर्षे पेरलेल्या बियांचे हे गोड फळ असल्याचे स्पष्टपणे दिसून येते.

आज त्यांचे सर्व ऑनलाइन क्लासेस त्यांच्या वेबसाईटवर सशुल्क उपलब्ध आहेत. एकदा ही फी भरल्यावर कोणीही घरी बसून, केव्हाही आणि कितीही वेळा हे ऑनलाइन क्लासेस पाहू शकतो तेही आजीवन उपलब्धतेसह असे त्यांनी सांगितले.

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# Educating Minds, Shaping Lives:
# Principal Lydia Salian's Vision for NKT College

In an era where education is often measured by grades and placements, Principal Lydia of NKT College believes that its true purpose lies much deeper. Drawing inspiration from Martin Luther King Jr.'s words on education and character, her vision centres on nurturing not only intelligent minds but also responsible, confident individuals who contribute positively to society.

As the Principal, her primary focus has been on creating a learning environment that balances academic excellence with strong values. She firmly believes that a college should shape ethical professionals and compassionate citizens, empowering students to grow with confidence, integrity, and social awareness.

While academics remain essential, Principal Lydia emphasises the importance of holistic development. At NKT College, students are encouraged to explore opportunities in leadership, creativity, sports, and social service through a wide range of activities. These experiences help them discover their strengths, develop empathy, and build life skills such as discipline, teamwork, and humility. For her, holistic education forms the bridge between academic success and meaningful impact.

With the constant support of the college management, she has introduced and strengthened digital learning,



Lydia Salian

promoted faculty development, encouraged student research, and expanded opportunities for seminars, workshops, and community engagement. These initiatives aim to make education relevant, inclusive, and aligned with the demands of a rapidly changing world.

Preparing students for life beyond the classroom is a key priority. The institution focuses on skill-based learning, internships, industry interactions, and career counselling, while also nurturing ethical values and soft skills. The goal is to help students to step forward with clarity, competence, and confidence.

**Addressing today's challenges, Principal Lydia believes adaptability is the greatest strength students can develop. Through mentoring, career guidance, and exposure to real-world experiences, NKT College helps students view change as an opportunity rather than an obstacle, nurturing curiosity and a mindset of lifelong learning.**

To students, she echoes Steve Jobs' words: "Stay hungry, stay foolish," encouraging them to dream boldly, embrace failure, and never stop learning. To parents, she emphasises trust and support, assuring them of the college's commitment to guiding students toward a balanced and meaningful future.

At NKT College, education is not just about careers—it is about life, leadership, and lasting impact.

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