

# CAMARADERIE

**TEDx**  
**SPECIAL EDITION: MAHE Bengaluru**



In the spirit of ideas worth spreading, TEDx is a program of local, self-organized events that bring people together to share a TED-like experience. The inaugural edition of TEDxMAHE Bengaluru was held on 16 February 2024 at Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Bengaluru Campus.

The theme of TEDxMAHE Bengaluru was "Into the Newness" and the event aimed to foster discussions around new imaginations and practices of social change. 'Newness,' referring to a sense of freshness and originality, was the common factor among all the ideas that were showcased at the event. Our hope is that this has generated and provoked conversations around how we can collectively work towards transforming the spaces we inhabit and together change societies.



## CONVENOR'S NOTE



Dr. Swathi Shivanand

### Social Change and TEDxMAHE Bengaluru

The theme of TEDxMAHE Bengaluru event was 'Into the Newness' and we anchored this theme around showcasing ideas and practices of social change. In post-colonial countries such as India, where education has historically been a vehicle for social transformation, we need necessary reminders of what the larger goals of education should be: introducing students to social change and their own potential to bring this about, individually and collectively; that education need not only be about becoming change-makers or trail-blazers but also must prompt us all to ask who are we change-makers for, what are we leaders of; and if working with communities, may perhaps be more sustainable and respectful ways of effecting social change.

## CO ORGANISER'S NOTE



Ms. Sumathi Nagesh

### Bringing Ideas Together

The TEDxMAHE Bengaluru 2024 themed 'Into the Newness' was a unique experience brought in students, faculty and staff from across the University in the conceptualization, planning and execution of the event. The organizing team comprised of students and faculty from DLHS, MIT, SMI, MIRM and TAPMI who collectively deliberated on ideas and people we could host on the TEDx platform. The range of speakers hosted at the event was a testament to the diversity of disciplines and practices that we host at MAHE Bengaluru. The result was a range of talks that delved into the arts, sciences, gaming, healthcare, policy making and biodiversity conservation. This event really showed us that wonderful things can happen when different institutions within the university come together.



## INAUGURATION OF TEDxMAHE BENGALURU

Arunima Ganguly

Inaugurating its maiden voyage at MAHE Bengaluru on 16th February 2024, TEDxMAHE Bengaluru emerged as a beacon of inspiration, fuelled by a shared passion to nurture curiosity and propel transformative ideas. The theme for the event 'Into the Newness' was carefully selected to ignite discussions, inspire fresh perspectives on the dynamics of social change and breathe 'new life' into conversations seeking to reshape our narratives about our communities

The event saw a lineup of the most diverse speakers from the sciences to the arts. From the cultural standpoint, Shilpa Mudbi and Ishita Shah eloquently discussed the need to embrace and celebrate diverse cultures as collective expressions of art and memory. Dr Satyanarayana Ramanaiik and Farah Ishtiaq spoke intensely about public health initiatives. While one focussed on HIV and AIDS awareness among trans-communities in Northern Karnataka, the other shared ground-breaking research studies on how sewage samples can be studied to detect early signs of the SARS-CoV-2 variant in communities. Swathi Shyam Sunder and Poornima Seetharaman were embodiments of superwomen in tech. While the former shared profound insights from personal experiences in the realm of digital development and artificial intelligence, the latter recounted her journey into the vast industry of gaming, highlighting her path to success as a female in this industry. Under the motto "Nature to Nurture," speakers like Madegowda C and Vivek Mishra advocated the utilisation of indigenous knowledge to conserve nature and leverage silk for scar treatment. Paras Sharma spoke of the urgent need for mental health aid in India. Lastly, content creators like Summaiya Khan and Pasha Bhai emphasised the need for inclusivity; the former spoke with respect to visually impaired individuals, while the latter, with his nerve-wracking performance, spoke of Dakhni, a language with its own profound identity.

Some of the key moments included Summaiya Khan's captivating speech, which evoked thunderous applause and brought the entire audience to their feet in admiration of her confident presence. Paras Sharma's soft and light-hearted humour perfectly embodied how individuals, institutions and mental health spaces need to embrace empathy. Additionally, the crowd erupted in joy as Pasha Bhai delivered a thrilling performance of his popular songs, including "Eid ka Chand." The audience was impressed by the lineup of speakers and the efforts put into the event.



TEDxMAHE Bengaluru Stage Set-up



Lighting of the lamp by the convener, Dr Swathi



Dr Raghavendra Prabhu declaring the event open



## WHO OWNS FOLK MUSIC?

Swaksha Gupta

Shilpa Mudbi, a folk artist and founder of the Urban Folk Project, began with a folk song taught to her by her grandmother, which narrated how caravans of lowered caste communities travelled to Sufi dargahs in North Karnataka. She described these songs as a gateway to her culture. For communities that did not have access to places of worship in their own villages, these songs, she said, captures memories of the labour of faith, caste, and gender. She terms these memories “folk culture.”

Mudbi asks, “What is folk culture? Is it a dream—a large, everchanging and adapting dream?” It is the dream of people who share a religious and caste identity which manifest through instruments and songs. At Yellamma temple, jogathis, transgender women, busk while playing a Chowdki.

She said that the market pervades our lives, commodifying art's legalities, rights, and royalties. “The illusion of being classless and casteless can give rise to this illusion of belonging,” says Mudbi. As someone who benefitted from reservations for Dalits, she was able to earn enough privilege to work at documenting her community’s culture, and to reclaim it with pride, which is not something that the jogathis, devadasis and women of her community with far less privilege have been able to do. Shilpa Mudbi concluded by proposing an appreciation toolkit, which includes co-creation, contextualisation, compensation and accreditation.



Shilpa Mudbi during her talk



Shilpa Mudbi performing a folk song



Mudbi receiving a token appreciation from MAHE faculty

**“The illusion of being classless and casteless can give rise to this illusion of belonging.”**  
**—Shilpa Mudbi**



## EXPLORING NEW SOCIAL FRONTIERS WITH GAMES

Krishnapriya P

The gaming industry is rapidly expanding and evolving, and Poornima Seetharaman shed light on this progress. As a game designer and the founder of Women in Games India (WIGIN), she shared her journey from being an avid gamer since childhood to her current experience as a female gamer. In 2001, Seetharaman faced sexist remarks for the first time, which made her realise the rampant sexism in the gaming world and its damaging consequences. Female gamers often face harassment and sexism, especially in multiplayer games, leading them to hide their gender and sometimes even quit gaming completely.

Despite this, gaming culture is evolving into a more inclusive space where building communities and forming new bonds is the norm. Professional gaming camps and academic game design courses now exist, showcasing the payoff from the hard work in game development and altering the perception of games.

She pointed out how games often imitate life, reflecting our psychological inputs and economic systems. Feedback loops are crucial in game design, with probability being key. Game designers incorporate triggers to add extra unit layers, and the Coyote type evokes emotions through these mechanisms. Game designers use mechanics, psychology, and economy to give players a unique experience.



Poornima Seetharaman sharing some of her favourite games

## BREAK YOUR BIASES

Arunima Ganguly

In her journey through the landscape of STEM and artificial technology, Swathi Shyam Sunder's story is a testament to her resilience against gender bias. Emerging from a middle-class background that emphasised education, she pursued science and programming. However, throughout her education and profession, she countered subtle yet pervasive barriers of gender bias. Despite being technically skilled, she was often rejected based on 'interpersonal skills', a challenge women face in male-dominated fields. She also spoke of how such dominance makes it difficult to assert their ideas and claim space in such fields. Swathi highlighted the lack of women in top roles and attributed it to the distinction in the evaluation process of candidature. While men are evaluated based on future leadership potential, women are scrutinised based on personal profiles.

Undeterred, she, excels in the AI space, advocating for gender balance and diversity. In her journey, Swathi embodies the sentiment "Break Your Biases." Embrace the courage to dismantle prejudices and harness the power to halt stereotypes.



Swathi Shyam Sunder sharing some anecdotes from her time in the tech industry



## USING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

Sreya Suresh

Indigenous knowledge and practices, which are widely considered primitive or ritualistic, have the potential to be used for conservation of biodiversity in significant ways, said Dr. Madegowda C, Adivasi leader and researcher in his TEDxMAHE Bengaluru talk. He highlighted the close relationship indigenous communities have developed with nature and wildlife through worship, which underscores the importance of not separating humans from wildlife. However, many Adivasi communities are uprooted, and spaces designated for wildlife are completely bereft of humans. The indigenous lifestyle practices of worshipping nature ensure a give-and-take between humans and nature, paving the way for a sustainable mode of living.

Dr Madegowda advocated for a shift in the current trends of data collection and documentation methods by being more considerate of nature and its inhabitants. The audience was exposed to a fresh perspective on traditional and sustainable methods in contrast to the predominant focus on modern technology in sustainability discussions. This shift encourages a re-evaluation of older and indigenous methods as viable solutions.



Dr. Madegowda C explaining the science behind indigenous practices

## INTO THE NEWNESS: INCLUSION 360 DEGREES

Vasundhara S

Summaiya Khan's premise was inclusivity for the visually impaired. She talked about how, despite the increase in various aides for the visually impaired, lack of inclusivity persists as a problem. According to her, the visually impaired are generally considered as an 'institutional responsibility,' depriving them of basic social spaces.

She discussed the absence of inclusivity in fields of education and employment. She recounted a story of her university restricting students with vision impairments from representing them in an intercollegiate competition. Organisations fail to acknowledge the unique identities, viewing them as difficult or unproductive investments.

She concluded by stating inclusion for the visually impaired can be as normal as it is for anyone else; exclusivity need not be the basis of inclusion. Summaiya Khan reiterated how visually impaired individuals are wrongly treated as "recipients of charity". The audience gave her a standing ovation.

When asked in a post-event interview what changes she would want to make in terms of inclusivity for the visually impaired, she jokes that the list is endless but the first thing is that their problems need to be given more attention than it is currently.



Summaiya Khan recounts the instances of prejudice she encountered



## EMPOWERING VOICES, TRANSFORMING LIVES: COMMUNITY LED SOLUTIONS IN PUBLIC HEALTH INTERVENTIONS

Sreya Suresh

Dr Satyanarayana Ramanaik, in his talk, detailed his experience as a public health worker working alongside sex workers. In the early 2000s when money from global organisations towards programmes, designed towards HIV-AIDS prevention, he and his organisation found that sex workers were not interested in these programmes at all. For sex workers, their concerns revolved around matters of everyday survival and violence, i.e. how to earn enough income for the day, how to protect oneself against intimate partner or police violence. AIDS for them was just another disease, Dr. Ramanaik shared. This insight led them to undertake a longer community engagement where interventions were crafted to provide support for sex workers and their families to provide support in navigating difficult circumstances as well as for women to become leaders themselves.

His other areas of work included running empowerment campaigns for girls from rural areas to ensure that a strong bond was developed between the girl child and her parents, especially her father, so that she could articulate her needs. It became easier to ensure that more girls received education and avoided marriage at a young age. As some members of the audience had expressed post the talk, the central idea he presented was that solutions to certain problems must originate from within the local community rather than relying solely on institutional remedies.



Dr Satyanarayana recounting how he started community engagement programmes

## DOES SEWAGE HOLD THE SECRET TO CITY'S HEALTH?

Sreya Suresh

Scientist Dr Farah Ishtiaq started her talk with an unexpected question addressed to the audience, “What does poop tell you about your health?” Dr. Ishtiaq explained the significance of this seemingly unusual question, describing how sewage water is used to collect crucial health data at the city level. Through sewage analysis, scientists can discern the trends in pathogens, helping them calculate the necessary healthcare requirements. Globally, many cities had sewage monitoring systems in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. Genomic sequencing was done to discover new variants with government mandates being implemented based on the data collected. This analysis method posed a primary challenge: the necessity for real-time testing, demanding analysis on the day of sample collection. With an effective team, this challenge was overcome.

Dr Ishtiaq concluded the talk by emphasising the necessity for widespread adoption of this method as it is non-invasive, cost-effective and efficient. The attendees were fascinated by the talk, gaining valuable insight about sewage as ‘sentinel of disease’, as she put it. In the post-talk interview, she mentioned the importance of communal effort, remarking, “It's just the community that needs to come together and make it work. Ask yourself, 'Can you solve this problem?' That's something which I learned while doing this.”



Dr Farah Ishtiaq provides insights into the decision-making process behind quarantines



## SILK ROUTE TO WOUND CARE



Vivek Mishra shares his journey of discovering silk's wound-treating potential

Srividya J

Vivek Mishra is a professional in pharmaceuticals and agri-business entrepreneur who founded Fibroheal Woundcare in 2017, a pioneer initiative to use silk protein in wound care and management.

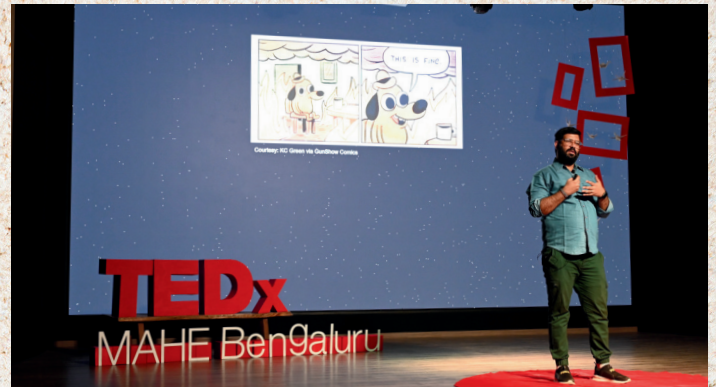
Vivek spoke about breaking the myth of silk being predominantly used as a fabric. He further explained the life cycle of a silkworm, emphasising how every part of it was valuable. Silk perfectly fits into the circular economy, in which every product is produced, consumed, and recycled to maintain sustainability. This is possible with silk obtained without cruelty, which involves harvesting broken cocoons left behind by the silk moths, which are completely biodegradable.

In India where 3 crore births occur annually—and a majority of them involving a Caesarean delivery—silk can provide active wound care and tolerate heat, lessening the burden of hospitals. All this is just the tip of the iceberg, as there is a tremendous scope for research into silk's properties in the medical sector.

As Vivek said, “What is used for Emperors' clothes can also heal wounds.”

**“What is used for emperor's clothes can also heal wounds.”**  
**– Vivek Mishra**

## INTO THE NEWNESS: NAVIGATING MENTAL HEALTH IN INDIA



Paras Sharma discusses the challenges surrounding mental health support in India

Pranati Mahapatra

Paras Sharma, co-founder and director of The Alternative Story, which is a mental health startup in Bengaluru, spoke about the reality of an ignored state of mental health, navigating through economic foundations, scarce services, the intervention of technology and government and political strategies. He also prompted reflection on the extent to which these factors have truly benefited individuals in need. The statement, “Even lab rats are male and white in colour,” highlights the dominance of Western males in mental health research, neglecting people of colour.

Paras Sharma addressed mental health needs in impoverished sections of society, where 8 out of 10 people require mental health attention but can't afford to see it. He advocated for elimination of taxes on mental health organisations, suggesting subsidies instead. He continued, “Trauma-informed, queer affirmative, anti-caste counselling skills are the basic minimum requirements” when talking about teaching programs. He highlighted the vitality of acknowledging mental health in workplaces by providing support, adopting mental health friendly policies and combating existing prejudices. Finally, he urged, “Be a mental health ally, not neutral, not a part of the problem.”

The audience praised his talk for its humor and memes, calling it crowd-friendly, informative, and acknowledging him as a speaker who unearthed vital aspects regarding mental health in India.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR CULTURAL PRESERVATION

Srividya J

The tenth speaker was Ishita Shah, whose work focuses on the intersection between cultural preservation, community engagement, and creative interpretation. She has moderated the series ‘Curating Archives’ which explored creative archiving possibilities both in India and the Global South.

Her speech focused on the central idea of preserving history. History ranges from monuments to folklore to letters and pictures, which poses a question—who does history belong to, in an age of historical erasure? To this end, Ishita’s team tries to get communities to participate and productively engage with each other. The result is that the communities become authors and custodians of their own stories and their culture is preserved through their own eyes.

Ishita follows two primary methodologies while preserving community cultures for cultural practices and narratives, practical and lived histories, and personal and family histories—one is archiving, and the other is curating. Archiving merely preserves these for the future with care, while Curating brings communities together to facilitate meaningful exchange. This process takes people from personal to collective. Making history accessible can bring people together and increase unity in diversity.

As Ishita aptly puts it, “Culture can also bring change.” Even incremental changes contribute to preventing erasure and increasing human connectivity.

**“Ensure you avoid  
 any kind of  
 appropriation.  
 Don’t tell somebody  
 else’s story through  
 your lens.”**  
**–Ishita Shah**



Ishita Shah questioning the audience if they have an interest in history



Ishita Shah receiving a token of appreciation from MAHE faculty



Ishita Shah explaining the importance of archiving



## FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL: THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF DAKHNI

Krishnapriya P

The crowd roared as Pasha Bhai, Dakhni rapper, bounded onto stage with his electrifying performance. he began with three songs with his crew, Clan Bokka Phod. Embracing his mother tongue, Dakhni has been part of a lifelong journey to accept his identity.

Pasha started his rap career in Hindi but exposure to Dakhni eventually made him confident in his identity. He noted Dakhni's roots in South Indian languages and Farsi (Persian), realising its similarity to other Dravidian languages.

Pasha Bhai also mentioned how the movement to preserve Urdu was already underway. his goal is to remove the tag "broken Urdu" attached to Dakhni without worsening Urdu-Hindi tensions. Pasha sees himself as an 'escape artist', preserving the true meaning of his poetry. He views hip-hop as nonviolent resistance against oppression. He expressed that regional hip-hop, especially after "Gully Boy," is growing rapidly and that "Dakhni rap had arrived and was there to stay."

**“It was quite a struggle to make people understand because I believe that this language has evolved in the southern part of the country and that an amalgamation of many languages had made it possible for this one to exist.”**

**—Mohammed Affan Pasha**



Pasha Bhai during his performance and talk



Clan Bokka Phod receiving a token of appreciation



Clan Bokka Phod delivering an electrifying performance

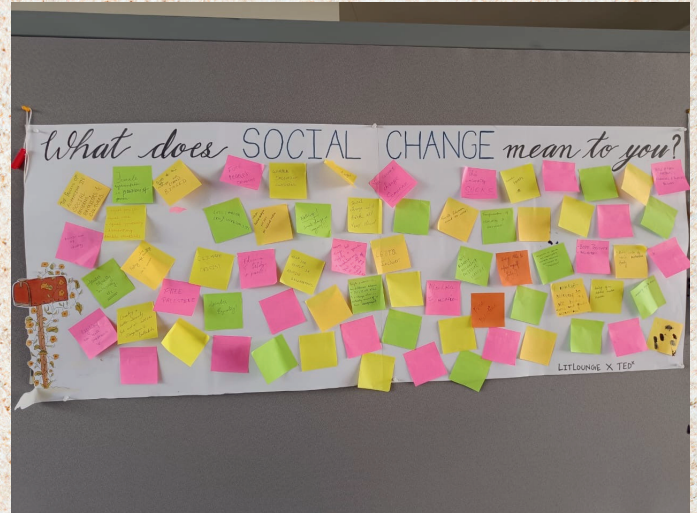


## BUZZ BEFORE THE EVENT

Sreya

Several student-run clubs from the Department of Liberal Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (DLHS) collaborated with TEDxMAHE Bengaluru and hosted various events and activities in line with the theme of Into the Newness to commemorate the first-ever TEDx event hosted by MAHE Bengaluru. LitLounge, the literary club of DLHS, hosted a poetry submission competition. The club also hosted an activity where students of MAHE were encouraged to write their thoughts on what social change meant to them on an interactive board. Samvaad, the debate club of DLHS, followed in the same vein with their “Write to Debate” event, where students of MAHE were invited to voice their opinions regarding social change. Pandora’s Box (the mythology club), Abhinaya (the drama club) and Kalaakriti (the dance club) collaborated to put on a wonderful performance titled “She-Khand-He,” a retelling of the mythological tale of Shikandi. DLHS’s film club, Point of View, screened the movie V for Vendetta to foster discussions on revolutionary violence. Serenova (music club of DLHS) curated a music exhibition that aligned with the theme of this year’s TEDx event.

Additionally, T A Pai Management Institute, in collaboration with TEDxMAHE Bengaluru, conducted an Open Mic that celebrated the power of expression. TEDxMAHE Bengaluru also conducted two other competitions—the QR Design Competition and the Business Innovation Competition to encourage students to engage with a wider audience. The string of events conducted over the weeks leading up to the inauguration of TEDxMAHE Bengaluru concluded with a binary-breaking fashion walk, “Silhouette”, presented by Speakeasy, the gender and sexuality club of DLHS. This unique showcase explored the expressive power of clothing. The grand finale of “Silhouette” featured the unveiling of the TEDxMAHE Bengaluru banner, marking the culmination of the event.



Interactive board set up by LitLounge



Speakeasy breaking the gender binary with a fashion walk “Silhouette”



Open mic event organised by TAPMI



## TESTIMONIES

**“Loved the lineup of speakers; it felt so good listening to Poornima Seetharaman speak of gaming. As a female gamer, I felt represented for the first time.”**

*—Prithika Priyesh, BA Double Majors, DLHS*

**“As someone who loves AI, I loved Swathi Shyam Sunder’s insights on women in AI and how she became a confident person in the tech space.”**

*—N Ananya, BA Double Majors, DLHS*

**“As an animal lover and someone who advocates for the protection of all creatures, the talk by Vivek Mishra on how silk can have alternative uses without needing to kill silk worms did encourage me a lot.”**

*—Samriddhi Pahwa, BBA, TAPMI*

**“As a dancer and performer often seeking to engage in forms which are not mainstream, Shilpa Mudbi’s talk on trans-art was awe-inspiring.”**

*—Paromita Bairagi, BA Psychology, DLHS*

**“TEDx wasn't just about lectures for me; it was a journey into "Into the Newness." We explored how sewage data can define a city's health, dived into the circular economy in healthcare, and witnessed the power of community engagement in cultural preservation. Dakhni hip hop pulsed through the venue, showcasing its potential to redefine the soundscape. I'm incredibly grateful I learnt about cultures, practices and innovations that I couldn't fathom being introduced to in a classroom alone.”**

*—Prashanth Kumar Gunda, TAPMI, II year*



## WHAT DOES SOCIAL CHANGE MEAN TO YOU?

### *Wholly Her!*

As impeccable as can be, she proudly stands,  
A woman and her heart not driven by demands.  
A woman free of comparisons to her counterpart,  
A woman that is a masterpiece, a soul that is an art!  
A woman breathing free of expectations,  
She paints her canvas with her own aspirations.  
Why would she need validation or society's decree,  
She is a sensation, stunningly wild and free!  
A whirlwind of comments and then she finds,  
They ask: herself how can she prioritize!  
Oh, dear society, is it too risky a role?  
For a woman to govern her body, mind and soul?  
In a world where judgements tightly sting,  
Let's change narratives; let her freedom ring!  
No more judgements and no prejudiced view,  
It's time for change; society anew!  
A change is due, a change is must;  
In a woman's absoluteness, we absolutely trust!  
In her confident self, a stereotype undone,  
A woman complete in herself; and the world has won!

**Arunima Ganguly**  
BA Double Major  
II Sem

### *Elsewhere*

If I choose to pack my bags and fly one day  
To another foreign land that's far away,  
I'll move away, abroad, elsewhere,  
To a place that can, perhaps, possibly spare  
A kind glance or two at one whose love  
And self expression are queer as Iris above.  
But then, where else will I truly find  
The people that I can consider mine,  
Whose tongues can speak the words I know,  
Whose lives can match with how I've grown?  
Where else will I find street food and chaat  
And eat pav bhaji till I satiate my heart?  
Where else will the sun paint the sky  
The brightest saffron to be awestruck by,  
With white cloudy skies with patches of blue  
And green forests with a hundred brilliant hues?  
And yet, the land is ruled by a law  
That is yet to choose to correct a major flaw —  
It grants not the freedom to love and express  
And holds this nation back from progress.  
The land must lawfully let love and let live  
Beyond archaic rules and choose to give.  
I implore my brethren and all fellow folk  
To choose to love and inspire and evoke  
The bonds of empathy to embrace at length  
Another's traits and accept them as strengths.  
Is it not a tragedy that not all those who  
Live in this land are free to be true?  
For, with all its endless flaws beyond compare,  
What I find in India, I can never find elsewhere.

**Srividya J**  
MA Multimedia and  
Communication  
II Sem



## WHAT DOES SOCIAL CHANGE MEAN TO YOU?

### *The faith of my golden bones*

I shout, nobody listens

The tradition of faith stands strong,  
midst the chaos of suffering and yelp.

A feeling of the sound of glasses breaking into a billion pieces,  
A lightening of the storm that shatters all the trees in a city,  
A murderous rage, A fire burning, a merciless force, beyond control  
Why bother why care, you ask

I shout, no one listens

A swift wrestle with myself crying with helplessness,  
like a mourning bird crying for freedom, yearning for kisses  
A rumbling moment of chills through the spine, my wet eyes, the realm of  
my limbs with the force of my battle's scars,

Why bother why care, you ask

I shout, but why does no one listen?

A summary of my tale, still breathing, still awake, still increasing  
A pretty orange sky with the first ray of the sun falling on my golden bones,  
tells me to not go ahead,

Why bother why care, you ask

I shout, and you have to listen

A map of a road

Not knowing where it'll take me to,  
might take me to the sea shore

I will hold my own hands  
the way i held my mother's  
in my childhood,

I'll look at its beauty  
from the threshold,  
to the point I smell the salt air  
all alone

Without anyone, sovereign and unattached

Because

The tradition of my very own faith stands strong, midst the  
chaos of suffering and yelp,

I shout, and you will listen.



## WHAT DOES SOCIAL CHANGE MEAN TO YOU?

One of the most common discussions that happened while putting together the list of speakers for TEDxMAHE was whether to look for a “showstopper” speaker. While we deliberated as a team to decide who to bring on board, it also got me thinking “Who is a showstopper?”

As a part of a semester at SMI, I took the students for a city walk in Shantinagar ward. The idea was to introduce the concept of commons and I was collaborating with Socrates Foundation for Collective Wisdom who have been helping the citizens reimagine their wards and deliberate on urban governance through the Namma Ward Namma Dhvani Project.

As we walked through the meandering bylanes and crowded marketplaces, we reached the Shaktivel slum, home to a Tamil speaking migrant community. When you enter the slum, you see an open playground surrounded by houses stacked up. The Muthimariam temple graces one end of the slum. What we saw as a playground today was a dumping yard earlier. A lithe energetic fellow spoke about how the people in the Shaktivel community brought about this change. His name was Krishna and through his fragmentary English, he was able to convey this story. Krishna worked in an electronics factory and had taken half a day off to spend time with us. Through the entire interaction, I kept observing him and how jovially he interacted. While heading out, I couldn't help but ask Nithin (from Socrates) “what is his story?” and this is what I heard. Krishna was born and has lived in the slum. Despite doing a well-paying job, he did not move out from the community for greener pastures but stayed there to bring in change. In the converted dumping yard, Krishna runs a sport camp for children and adolescents to help them recover from addictions. He believes that such initiatives build in camaraderie among children and are important for a sound body and mind.

It was a humbling moment for me to see this young man rise above all odds but at the same time not forgetting his roots and the urge to give something back! So, what are the qualities one needs to bring about social change? While some might perceive these environments as places where financially secure individuals are more inclined to instigate change for others, perhaps what truly matters is empathy and the will to make the change. To me he was a “showstopper.”

**Dr Chandrima Home**

Head of Research and Collaborations,  
Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design and Technology



## SNIPPETS FROM THE EVENT



Faculty Coordinators:  
Dr. Swathi Shivanand  
Ms. Sumathi Nagesh

Photography:  
MAHE Photography team  
Ritika (DOP TEDxMAHE Bengaluru)