

# THE BEACON

PRACTICE NEWS BULLETIN OF THE PG STUDENTS OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

Monday, 30 October 2023 / St. Joseph's University / Vol: 16 Issue: 48 / www.sjcdeptcomm.wordpress.com

## Tech Maali unique system

**Divya Batavia**

**CAMPUS:** Urban lifestyle comes with a set of limitations and one of them is not being able to water the plants regularly.

A stall was set up at the orchid show held at St. Joseph's University which helps tackle this situation. Tech Maali is an automatic watering system which solves the majority of the problems for busy city dwellers.

"An app is invented which can control the watering of the plants connected to the system from any part of the country you are sitting at," said Ashok Ahuja, the owner of Tech Maali. He noticed the struggles people, especially farmers were facing for which he came up with this innovative idea. This system reaches out to not only farmers but qualifies to be used for domestic purposes as well.

He took a micro controller and programmed it as a timer connected to the watering pipes. To control the app there are different time schedules which waters the plants in seconds.

A frequent flier, client of Ashok was expressing his concerns with regards to watering the plants he had at home. He said that his security guard would either be busy or forget to get the house key. For Ashok, this wasn't a challenge to solve since his product would be the solution to it.

The word of mouth has helped him to publicize his business. This helps him connect with customers from different parts of south India other than Bangalore.

## Various attractions at Orchid Show 2023

**Shruti Srivastava**

**CAMPUS:** Showcasing various varieties of self-grown orchids, educational training programs for orchids cultivation and other gardening related stalls were set up for the nature enthusiasts at St. Joseph's University, Bengaluru.

The Orchid Society of Karnataka organized an Orchid Show at St. Joseph's University on October 28 and October 29. The inaugural ceremony of the event was marked by the presence of DS Ramesh, Director, Department of Horticulture, Government of Karnataka, Dr Ronald Mascarenhas, Pro Vice-Chancellor of St. Joseph's University, Bengaluru and Dr M Jagdeesh, Joint Director of Horticulture, Department of Horticulture, Government of Karnataka.

"All the Orchids displayed



Nature enthusiasts at SJU

Shruti Srivastava

here are grown by the members of the orchid society on their terrace, backyard and balconies," said Dr Shashidhar, President of the orchid society. He further added that the stalls put there were not only from Bangalore but people from other southern states had also participated.

Calling it a "remarkable show", the Pro Vice chancellor

said that the event was not only about displaying or showcasing the orchids, but also about educating people. He was referring to the various training programs which were held in order to train people in the cultivation of orchids.

Apart from the orchid stalls, additional points of interest were also observed at the exhibition

. A booth named 'Tech Maali' was set up since the act of watering plants is important to its purchase. Tech Maali is an automatic device which is installed in the water tankers of houses for automatic watering. This is controlled by a simple mobile application developed by the owner of the company Ashok Ahuja. "All the people

present here are my Gods, they are the driving force behind my company and I feel blessed to have gotten this opportunity to be here today," said Ahuja while talking to The Beacon.

'Indo-American Seed Company' was also set up apart from the orchid show. The stall was operated by a company which also operated as an educational institution providing horticulture courses to students. Managing Director of the company, Rashmi Allevar said, "We provide training programs to students from the horticulture background. A lot of students complete their practicals with us." She further added that she and her team were delighted to be displaying their stall at the university and on being associated with the orchid society.

## TOSKAR succeeding as custodians of conservation

**Parvathi Nair**

**CAMPUS:** Forests and orchids are closely related because the presence of orchids in a forest ecosystem are indicators of the health of the ecosystem, said KS Shashidhar, founding member of The Orchid Society of Karnataka while speaking to The Beacon.

The annual Orchid Show was organised on October 28 and 29 in St. Joseph's University by The Orchid Society of Karnataka (TOSKAR). The two-day show featured a display of indigenous and hybrid orchid plants along with various training sessions on growing and caring for orchid plants.

Shashidhar, who was the former Additional Principal



KS Shashidhar in conversation with the Beacon Rhea Sundara Raju

Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, Nagaland said that forests are the theme for this year's show because of the interconnectedness of orchids and forests. He said that apart from popularising orchid-growing amongst people, the idea was to highlight the conservation of orchids.

KS Shashidhar founded TOSKAR with just a handful

of members in 2005-06. Over a period of 18 years, the society has grown and now has around 680 members, he said. The shows began in 2012 with the objective of making orchids more popular amongst the general public and shattering the myths surrounding the plant. "Earlier it was known that only elite people can grow orchids in greenhouse conditions. We wanted to break that myth and

say that you can grow it in the backyard, the front yard or even your balcony", he said. He added that the society has been successful in spreading awareness and myth-breaking through these displays.

Shashidhar stated that the last show was organised in 2019. In 2022, the society tried to organise another show but the plans fell through as a venue couldn't be arranged in Lalbagh, he added. "Dr. Divakar brought us here to St. Joseph's University. We are happy that we had the show here because every one of the faculty members and the Vice Chancellor, including students, cooperated to a great extent", he said.

## Orchids face environmental perils

**Sneha Thomas**

**CAMPUS:** Orchids adapt to climate change gradually, evolving from terrestrial to epiphytic growth as per their climatic requirements, said Sadanand Hegde, orchid expert and member of the Orchid society of Bangalore.

Orchid society's ongoing efforts to safeguard orchid diversity has contributed largely to orchid distribution in the country, especially in the north east, in places like Arunachal Pradesh. Climatic change, habitat loss and pollution, poses a challenge to orchid cultivation all across the country.

Though adaptable, orchids are sensitive to environmental conditions. "Here in Bangalore, there are about 15 species naturally occurring. But with the expansion of Bangalore from a small town to this much and because of air and water pollution, many good habitats have been lost," noted Hegde.

Assam has lesser orchid distribution compared to other North eastern states, because of the tea estates, most of the natural things are lost and the Brahmaputra floods that occur annually also has an adverse effect, he added.

## Passion blooms into success

**Sherin Johnson**

**CAMPUS:** Suresh Babu, the visionary founder of Divine Blossom orchid boutique, has been sowing the seeds of his passion for orchids for the past five years. He embarked on a journey that led to the creation of his unique startup.

The Orchid Show 2023, hosted by St Joseph's University on October 28 and 29, which saw emerging startups, one such was the Divine Blossom Orchid Boutique that emerged as the ultimate destination for orchid enthusiasts. With an extensive array of offerings, including primary hybrids, vandas and succulents, their stall



From calculation to cultivation

Sherin Johnson

caters to a diverse audience.

Speaking to the Beacon, Babu said, "We cater to everything related to orchids, from accessories to nutrients, pots, and media. You can find all your orchid needs in one place."

He resigned from his job as a chartered accountant to

start this venture and is now very happy, he said. "With orchids we forget everything, our pains, struggles and have mental peace", he added.

Isha, a visitor, described the event as a source of joy and happiness and she appreciated the pricing at the Divine Blossom.

## Orchids and their significance

**Kiranmai Basavaraj**

**CAMPUS:** Orchids are one of the oldest flowering plants which are almost 100 million years old. The Orchids are known for its healing properties for cough and lung illnesses.

Dr. Shashidhar, President of The Orchid Society, conducted a workshop at St. Joseph University on 28 and 29 October to inform the public about the process and methods of growing orchids.

"Planting orchids facing east in a moderate temperature promotes better growth. They require shade and sun exposure in equal measures

and take almost 15 months to fully grow," said Rajesh Mootha, the owner of an orchid farm, taking part in the session.

Orchid's biggest enemy is fungal infection. In order to avoid fungal infections there are three different fertilizers - 8 micro nutrients, vitamins b1, b6, b9 and NPK micro nutrients which helps in enhancing the colour of the flower, explained Mootha.

"The workshop was very much helpful and gave more information about the Orchids plantation," said Nandini (name changed) a workshop attendee.