

Mood Indico



The Young Turk

What is
he upto?



Making The Difference

One genius kid and
one confident woman
at a time



Interview with
director, radio
host Harish
Saluja

The Woman of Today

Elegant and Feminine

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Entrepreneur

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FACE TIME

HARISH SALUJA

Gregarious and charismatic Harish Saluja is a multi-faceted man who has blended art and science, East and West. A graduate of IIT Kharagpur, Harish found his calling as a movie director, producer, painter and radio-host. Not only that he is also a publisher of magazines. We recently spoke to him.

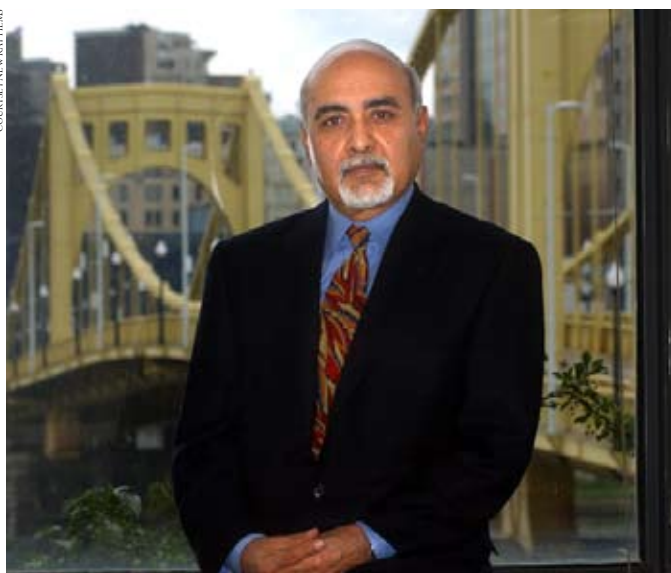
You are an engineer so how come you became a producer, director, radio-host and painter? I wanted to make movies, write and paint since childhood. But in my generation to get into IIT or medical college was considered such a wonderful opportunity that nobody would allow you to go to Bombay and make movies. It took me a while to get to this point.

How did you prepare for movie-making? I took a project implementation approach as I would do for an engineering project – do due diligence, research, assemble team and raise money. I prepared by reading books, magazines and attending seminars. Even after that I could not get practical experience so I bought my way into an associate producer's job with a friend.

How did you get the idea for your first film, "The Journey"? I have had ideas since childhood for stories. They come to me floating in hundreds and dozens. I have a file with about 200 or so ideas for movies. It was one of them.

During filming you had difference of opinion with Roshan Seth. Why? Roshan confused, in my opinion, the job with his own individual ego. He felt that a man as cultured and knowledgeable from India would be much

COURTESY NEWRA FILMS



more savvy and sophisticated. I was trying to explain that I know people who know five languages [but] are not savvy with technical things. It doesn't make them idiots. He was not revolting in any way. We would have a discussion and in the end he would say fine we would do it your way.

How was it to work with Saeed Jaffrey? He is unbelievably wonderful. We had assigned rooms so that they could have their privacy. Everybody would go to their rooms while we spend 3-4 hours putting cables and fixing things and Saeed would keep on following me. I would ask Saeed do you need something, he would say, 'No'. So why are you following me around. He would say what else would I do sitting in my room. I want to see what

you guys are doing and have some fun. It was absolutely wonderful to work with him.

Many of your paintings are based upon ragas. Why? I have been listening to ragas for 40 years and have a strong emotional connection with them. I actually visualize abstract things. When I listen to ragas, I actually see images, colors, patterns and things. I am trying to portray my emotional reaction.

You are hosting a radio program since 1972. How would you describe that experience? Absolutely fantastic. I am one of those people who somehow got convinced that it is their responsibility to make the World a better place. I think that if more music, art, movies and cultures are shared then it would make the World

a better place. When I first came here, there were no radio stations playing Indian music. So I developed huge collection just to share it with fellow Indians who had been here for 10-20 years and had not heard Sehgal or Lataji or Mukesh for a longtime.

You are also involved with TiE. What initiatives are you working on? TiE's main aim is to promote entrepreneurship. Although we welcome everybody, we are particularly happy when a person of Indus origin comes to us. We are also working on a project called I-Port. We want it to be the first place people go to if they want to do business in India.

You are from Punjab known for agriculture and settled in Pittsburgh known for steel. Is there any connection?

[Laughs] We lived in cities in Punjab and in Delhi, so you know, I have exposure to both city and rural life and then in Nainital, which is in the mountains. I spent five years in Kharagpur doing engineering and four in Dhanbad in coal mines. So the only connection is that Pittsburgh is a steel city with coal mines.

What is your next project? I am working on a film festival called Silk Screen – www.silkscreenfestival.org. We are organizing a high profile Asian film festival, bringing in 30-40 films from India, China and Japan along with directors and actors to come and spend ten days in Pittsburgh, show their movies and meet local population. I am also working on two movies; one is called Chasing Windmills, set in Nainital, in my school, 7,000 ft above sea level. ■

JAY MANDAL ON ASSIGNMENT



DIED. BRIJ LAL, 81, journalist, radio and TV host, was born in Bharatpur, Rajasthan, India and moved to US in 1951 to work for Voice of America. Later, he worked for ABC Radio News and hosted "Bharat Vani", a radio and TV program. In 1993, he received Ellis Island Medal of Honor for exceptional humanitarian efforts and outstanding contributions to America.

REELECTED. UPENDRA CHIVUKULA, 55, for the third term to the New Jersey State Assembly. He beat GOP challenger Salim Nathoo, another Indian American and dental surgeon, for the 17th district. First Asian Indian elected to the New Jersey Assembly, Chivukula graduated from Chennai's Guindy Engineering College and later obtained MS in Electrical Engineering from New York's City College. He joined Democratic Party in 1992 and was elected to the Franklin Township Council in 1997 and Mayor of Franklin Township in 2000. He was first elected to New Jersey State Legislature in 2002.

COURTESY ASSEMBLYMAN CHIVUKULA



FRONT ROW

MILESTONES

DIED. GOPAL VINAYAK GODSE, 86, brother of Nathuram Godse, who shot Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation of India in 1948. A Hindu Mahasabha leader and author of "Gandhi Hatya Aani Me", Godse served a 16 years jail sentence for his part in the assassination of Gandhi. He remained unrepentant for the killing that shook the nation and called Gandhi a "very cruel person for the Hindus", in a 2003 AP interview.

AWARDED. Dr. SHASHI PHOHA, by IEEE-Computer Society with its 2004 Technical Achievement Award in November 2005. The award recognizes individuals with outstanding and innovative work in fields of computer, information science and engineering with in the past fifteen years.

CROWNED. NATASHA MOHAPATRA as Junior Miss Teen America 2005. Thirteen year old student of Forest Ridge School in Seattle won the contest, which is the part of Continental Miss Teen America Scholarship Program. ■



COURTESY SHASHI PHOHA



JOSEPHIER A VISUAL GROUP CALIFORNIA

Inside the Numbers

2 Times approximately the area of Pakistan compared to that of California

4.5 Times approximately the population of Pakistan to that of California

25 million approximate worldwide population of Sikhs

15 million approximate worldwide population of Jews

4.5 million approximate worldwide population of Jains

2.6 million approximate worldwide population of Zoroastrians

2.4% World's Land area supported by India

15% World's population supported by India

80,466 Students entered U.S. from India in 2004/05, most from any nation

62,523 Students from China, the second leading nation

565,039 Foreign students entered U.S. in 2004/05

191,321 U.S. students, who went abroad in 2004/05

1% decrease in foreign students enrollment in U.S. than previous year

8.5% increase in number of American students going abroad during the same period

225 Members of Parliament in Sri Lanka

435 Members in U.S. House of Representatives

Source: Background notes US State Dept.; Encyclopedia Britannica 2005 Year book; Institute of International Education; U.S. House of Representatives

They Said It

"I think someone like Muhammad Yunus, who founded the Grameen movement, should be TIME's Person of the Year for pioneering micro-financing for poor women, helping dramatically reduce poverty"

Corazon Aquino, Former President of the Philippines as told to TIME magazine.

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FRONT ROW

FROM THE HISTORY BOOKS

400 years ago Akbar – full name Abu-UI-Fateh Jalal-Ud-Din Muhammd Akbar – died in Agra on October 27, 1605. Born at Umarkot in Sindh province of present day Pakistan on October 15, 1542, Akbar was a descendent of Turks, Mongols and Iranians. His ancestors included Timur or Tamerlane and Genghis Khan. Akbar succeeded his father, Humāyūn, who died suddenly, as the ruler of an unstable and weak Mughal empire in 1556. He inherited a very small kingdom but expanded it in all direction eventually leaving an empire that included major parts of Malwa, Gujarat, Bengal, Kabul, Kashmir, Rajasthan and Khandesh in Deccan or Southern India. An illiterate, Akbar was a very able ruler and instituted many long lasting reforms that helped his administration and subjects. He was a strong patron of arts and literature and promoted tolerance of all religions. During the end of his reign, Akbar faced rebellion from his son Prince Salim, who eventually succeeded Akbar as Emperor Jahāngir. ■



Fatehpur Sikri Fort. Akbar built this magnificent capital 23 miles west of Agra. Built between 1571 and 1585, it had to be abandoned soon due to water shortage



The Buland Darwaza or the Gate of Magnificence. Built by Akbar following 1573 victory over Gujarat

500 years ago in 1505 on his way to Maldives, Portuguese sea captain Lourenco de Almeida got stranded in Ceylon and was received well by the Sinhalese king Vīra Parākrama Bāhu of Kōtte. Almeida, the son of then Portuguese Viceroy of India in Cochin saw the commercial and strategic importance of the island. Portuguese established a contact with the king of Kotte and were permitted to build a fort at Colombo in 1518. In 1520's war between the sons of then king of Kōtte, Vijayabāhu, broke out. With the help of Portuguese, Bhuanika Bāhu, the oldest son of Vijayabāhu, was able to establish his kingdom but became greatly dependent upon Portuguese. The successive rulers were even more dependent upon Portuguese and by the end of the century they were firmly in control of the island. The rival king of Kandy then sought help from the Dutch and by the middle of next century they had replaced Portuguese as the masters of coastal Ceylon. ■

1502 Vasco de Gama reaches Calicut
1505 Francisco de Almeida named first viceroy
1505 Lourenço de Almeida reaches Ceylon
1518 Portuguese permitted to build a fort at Colombo
1521 Three sons of Vijayabāhu put him to death
1543 King Bāhu signs treaty with Portuguese for their protection
1557 Kotte king Dharmapāla converts to Christianity
1593 King Rajasinha dies and Portuguese capture much of Kōtte
1612 King Senarat of Kandy concludes a treaty with Dutch
1619 Kingdom of Jaffna annexed by Portuguese
1638 A treaty gives Dutch trade monopoly
1645 Truce in Europe between Dutch and Portuguese
1656 Portuguese surrender Colombo to Dutch
1658 Dutch take Jaffna

100 years ago in 1905 Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, partitioned Bengal. It soon became a rallying point for the freedom movement. Initially introduced as a way to improve the administrative efficiency, the Partition of Bengal was seen as a 'Divide and Rule' policy to increase imperial control. With a population of 85 million spread over 189,000 sq. miles, Bengal was too big for efficient administration. However, Lord George Nathaniel Curzon's plan created a Muslim majority province of Eastern Bengal and Assam and a Bihāri and Oriyā speaking Hindu majority province in West Bengal. This left Bengali Hindus without a majority in either new Bengal province. "Bhadralok" or intellectual Bengalis, who were more outspoken, thought this move to marginalize them. Their initial rhetorical protests soon translated into boycott of British-made goods. This 'swadeshi movement' was later embraced by Indian National Congress and turned into a potent non-violent weapon by Mahatma Gandhi. After his first term as viceroy from 1899 to 1904, Lord Curzon was offered a second term. However, His partitioning of Bengal along with Universities Act of 1904 to reorganize governing bodies of Calcutta University generated so much heat that he had to resign within a year of second term. ■



ONE CHILD, ONE WOMAN,
ONE SENIOR CITIZEN AT A TIME

RENNU DHILLON IS MAKING THE DIFFERENCE

(non-resident Indian) women that would go beyond fashion, glamour and Bollywood. It took a while but

she has done it. After two years

of planning and groundwork, Rennu launched Miss NRI Global pageant in San Francisco. As promised, it contained all that she had said and then some more, which is not quite surprising considering that she is a remarkable woman of many talents.

A pharmacist by education, Rennu found her calling in areas quite different from medicines. She calls herself a community activist, children and their education are her passion, loves her fashion and branded shows and is dedicated to organizing events for kids and senior citizens.

A second generation NRI, Rennu has lived in three continents and has observed

the expatriate community well, which is reflected in many of her projects.

Generations of Indian settled in distant places show amazing diversity and common connections. Most Indian immigrants to Africa were businessmen. There they became big economic force and politically influential. Many of UK's NRIs are business people and professionals too but a significant number is from villages. The growing Indian immigration to USA consists primarily of professionals.

These migrating Indians took with them an image of their homeland arguably stuck in time. Over the years they evolved, got integrated with natives and developed their own distinct community identity, which differs in many ways from each other. These differences have influenced Rennu's passions and work.

She found the NRI community in Africa to be most broad minded. She grew up in a Sikh community in Mombassa, Kenya where the Gurudwara shares the boundary wall with the Arya Samaj temple. Compared to that she has found NRIs in UK and USA to be old fashioned and intolerant of religious and political differences amongst Indians.

Rennu credits education to the broad mindedness of NRI community in Africa. No wonder education for children is one of her passions. It is also the reason that

she founded Genius Kids – a school for kids. While teaching her kids to read, she realized that she had stumbled upon something worthwhile. So she developed a reading curriculum, a book and a CD-ROM. Now her six years old school is getting great testimonials.

Rennu also wants to do a lot for our senior citizens. She thinks that our temples are too focused on religious events and don't do much for seniors. She wants to change it. Through Sikh community centers she organizes events to help seniors and youth get more involved with the community and the main-stream.

She had also not forgotten her initial dream of a beauty pageant for NRI women. She produced one this year. Those who have seen Michael Kane prepare Sandra Bullock for the beauty pageant in Miss Congeniality know that it takes a lot of efforts to prepare for such a

contest. So, Rennu included grooming workshops for five days covering topics like public speaking, how to dress, how to present yourself on the stage and yoga.

She also invited many professionals from such diverse fields as entertainment and medicine to give the contestants pointers about how to make a career in their respective fields.

The outcome was highly effective, as Mikki Singhal, winner of Mrs. NRI Global Pageant, says, 'It made me feel more confident about myself – just being able to present myself in front of so many – it was not an easy task.'

The tasks Rennu Dhillon has taken up are also not easy, but then she sums up her philosophy quite well, "you can't change the masses, but if I make the difference with one or two persons then it will be a good start." ■



L-to-R: Rennu Dhillon, Rimi (USA) 2nd runner up, Kanchana (Malaysia) 1st runner up, Mehru (Pakistan) winner - Miss NRI, Mikki (Botswana) winner - Mrs. NRI, Nikhat (USA) 2nd runner up, Vidushi (West Indies) 1st runner up, Jay Patel

Mikki Singhal - Mrs. NRI Global 2005

When you think about a software engineer from IBM in Austin then the image of a beauty queen probably would not come into your mind, but that is what Mikki Singhal is. She had heard about many women who won such competitions and then went on to do wonderful things in their life. So she took the challenge. It sounded like a great idea but as she says it's not an easy task. "I had to put in lot of preparation before I went in", says Mikki and then adds, "[but]... it was a wonderful experience."

While growing up in Zambia and Botswana, Mikki has had similar experiences like that Rennu had and, as she says, she also has to dispel this no-

tion about people living in trees in Africa. She also had to travel to far away places looking for better quality of education, including for high-school to England and for graduate degree to USA, though, she skipped going to South Africa for under-graduate degree preferring to stay with her parents and doing it in Botswana.

Mikki says that she always had an urge to do something different. She picked up badminton in Zambia and became ladies champion in Botswana competing at the international level. Then she became the first woman to top engineering college. Now she is also trying her hands at acting making use of Austin's active independent movies industry. ■

Mehru Khan - Miss NRI Global 2005

Pakistan born, Mehru Khan says that winning the Miss NRI Global pageant has changed her life in "a really positive way". Not only has she got the recognition that she wanted but also it has given her confidence to put her talents to good use.

Beauty pageants are still taboo in Pakistan – its government once tried to dissuade Miss International Beauty pageant from allowing Neelam Noorani to compete as Miss Pakistan. So it is not surprising that Mehru is proud of her accomplishment and wants to change the image of Pakistani women.

She is changing it one step at a time. First she won Miss Congeniality award at Miss Asia USA pageant, then Miss NRI Global and coming next is a career in entertainment industry.

A criminal justice graduate of Loyola University, Mehru works for a law firm in Chicago and is actively pursuing a career in entertainment industry. At the moment she is focusing on modelling, doing promotional shows and producing a music CD – a fusion of pop, R&B and Indian. On the side she is also moonlighting as an actress in Hollywood movies. She has already done bit roles in couple of Jennifer Aniston movies, including Derailed, in which they both hop into a train together at Chicago's Union Station. ■



Genius Kids School Students in Action



SOMSHARMA - DIGITALVISION

BY SUNIL SHARMA

When she tried to enter Miss Kenya pageant, Rennu Dhillon was told that she could not because she is not African even though she was born in Kenya and is a Kenyan citizen. Then she tried to enter Miss Femina pageant in Bombay, India. They told her that she could not because she didn't live in India.

At that time Rennu decided that one day she would create a platform for NRI



SOMSHARMA - DIGITALVISION



COURTESY BRAIN REACTIONS

■ TOPIC A: THE YOUNG TURK

BUBBLING WITH CREATIVITY

Anand Chhatpar of Malad, Mumbai was recently rated as one the Best Entrepreneurs Under 25 by the BusinessweekOnline

■ BY SUNIL SHARMA

What would you do if you were transplanted from sultry Mumbai to the so called frozen tundra of Wisconsin?

If you are Anand Chhatpar then you would pick up snow boarding and wouldn't mind the weather.

Anand is one of five young Turks selected by BusinessWeek Online readers as the most innovative – and youthful – small business leaders in the US. He is the CEO of BrainReactions, LLC, a Madison, Wisconsin based company that helps businesses launch new products, enter new market segments and improve customer service by tapping into the creative, imaginative and unconstrained minds of college students through brainstorming sessions.

In September 2005, BusinessWeek conducted a nationwide search for best young entrepreneurs or as they put it, “We set out to find truly innovative businesses that both demonstrated clear potential for growth and established the talent of the savvy, young entrepreneurs behind them”. They asked their readers for nominations and got names of 100 entrepreneurs within a month. Then they short listed the pool down to 20 finalists. Then they asked their readers to vote for the most promising amongst the short-list. Out came the list of five, which the BusinessWeek calls “Best Entrepreneurs Under 25”.

Anand Chhatpar is one of this elite group of young small business leaders. He is the kind of person who is highly energetic and bubbling with ideas even while giving a trans-continental telephone interview at 2:30 AM in the morning, notwithstanding the jet-lag from the flight from USA to India.

A native of Malad, Mum-

bai, 24 years old Anand came to the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 2001 to pursue a degree in computer science. While doing an internship stint at Pitney Bowes, he got a brainy idea, which eventually culminated in the launch of BrainReactions in July 2004. Since then his company has been growing steadily and bagged many clients including US Peace Corps, United Nations, and Fortune 500 companies like Intuit, Bank of America. After being named a finalist on BusinessWeek Online the future is looking even brighter, as he said from Mumbai, that his company is not only adding employees but also starting new initiatives in India and Japan.

There is something about Wisconsin that makes a Badger, Wisconsin Football and Cheesehead fan out of you if you come to live there. That would happen even if you grew up – like Anand – in the cricket-capital of India.

Anand is a proud UW Badger, who not only has a fully developed opinion about whether the retirement of coach Barry Alvarez is good for the UW football team or not – he thinks it is – but also who makes observations like “Where else would you find five Cheeseheads from five different countries sitting together feeling completely at home.”

The entrepreneurial spirits and the curiosity to try new things with open mind helped Anand in a smooth transition from Malad, Mumbai to Madison, Wisconsin. Still, he found many subtle and not so subtle differences. The biggest difference he noticed was in people's attitudes towards life, business and relationship.

TOPIC A: THE YOUNG TURK

Though he found life at UW to be quite active and the atmosphere cordial and friendly he feels that deeper connections exist in India between colleagues, friends, neighbors and family.

He finds significant differences in business thinking too. He says that in India the focus is on cost-cutting and the employees are considered almost as commodity, whereas in US, the focus is on innovation and creativity. Indian businesses

have done very well using technologies developed in US but they still think about how to employ these technologies to get better contracts. US businesses like in Silicon Valley, on the other hand, want to innovate and introduce newer products, services and concepts to the world.

So what is Anand doing to take advantages of this situation? To begin with he is working on an initiative to help Indian business leaders

spark innovation and creativity in their organizations. Appropriately titled, InnovationTrip, his initiative includes workshops and first-hand exploration of US research industry. Anand's next stop is going to be Japan, where he has been invited by JETRO, a Japanese government agency that promotes trade and investment in Japan.

Seeing opportunities and taking advantages of them come quite naturally to

Anand. After all, this is how he got the idea for his current venture and when he found himself rooming with a British exchange student who was a snow-boarder he thought it to be a serendipitous opportunity to learn snow-boarding.

What else would you expect from a man who started two businesses before he turned 20 and who is on his third startup before the age of 25? ■

RAHUL SATIJA - RHODES SCHOLAR

Rahul Satija wants to understand how 3.1 billion nucleotides of human genome control our life at a fundamental level. He says that he caught the bioinformatics bug during his first year at Duke University. Now that bug is taking him to the University of Oxford as one of 32 American students selected as Rhodes Scholars.

The oldest international study award for American students, Rhodes Scholarship was created by the Will of Cecil Rhodes, a British philanthropist and colonial pioneer, in 1902. This year's Scholars were selected from 903 applicants endorsed by 333 colleges and universities.

A native of Potomac, Maryland,

Rahul, is doing a double major in biology and music and minor in math. He wants to become professor and a research scientist in the area of computation biology, genomics and bioinformatics. ■



COURTESY RAHUL SATIJA

INVESTMENT INDIA MOVING UP THE FOOD CHAIN

Indian technology industry has been hot for US businesses for quite some time. Outsourcing to India, setting up operations there and tying with Indian service providers are not only competitive advantages but for many US businesses a strategy for survival.

Still, the recent quick series of announcements of big investment by major US corporations and venture capitalists portends that even bigger and better things are going to come. Since October, six major US companies have announced various investment plans totaling well over \$8.8 billion. Wall Street Journal is also reporting that venture capitalists too have increased their direct investment in India.

Many top executives of big US corporations have recently gone to India to meet with Indian leaders and to announce far reaching investment plans.

While announcing a \$1.7 billion plan in New Delhi, Bill Gates of Microsoft said, “We are keen to increase the growth of Microsoft activities in India”.

Craig Barrett, the Chairman of Intel Corporation said in New Delhi while unveiling his company's \$1 billion plan, “this demonstrates Intel's long-term commitment and builds on the foundation we have created during our 10 years in India”.

John Chambers, CEO of Cisco, discussed Cisco's \$1.1 billion investment

plans with PM Dr. Manmohan Singh.

Indian economy has been growing 7% or so for the past couple of years. The growth projected for current fiscal year is more than 7%. Despite such growth, Wall Street Journal reports that foreign direct investment into India is less than 10% of that in China. That is why the expansion plans of major US companies are making Indian political and business leaders very happy.

Success of outsourcing to India is definitely making its high-sector ripe for investment. Gartner Inc., forecasts that within four years the annual technology spending by Indian companies would top \$43 billion, representing an annual technology spending growth of over 20%, much higher than 4.5% expected worldwide. ■



Barrett of Intel
(COURTESY INTEL)



Gates of Microsoft
(COURTESY MICROSOFT)



Chambers of Cisco
(COURTESY CISCO)

NISHKAM AGARWAL

CAUSALITY AND CORRELATION

Is high school graduation only related to what seniors do in their young lives or does the chain of causality go all the way back to BIG BANG?

As a long time student of Econometrics, I am very familiar with the notion that causality is much more elusive than correlation. In fact, pure theorists say that causality is nearly impossible to prove, which I generally accept. Exceptions do, however, exist.

A class of problems where one may find causality easier to “prove” is where interconnected events happen over time. My daughter’s recent graduation from high school was an example of this class of problems.

Graduation from high school is a big event for children and for parents. At this time of the year, we may not yet be in the grip of next year’s ‘graduation fever’. Like cohabiting ducks in a lake, however, we will become silent, or not so silent, witnesses to the frantic activities on home computers in basement under-worlds where college essays will be crafted and re-crafted. Graduating seniors will consider this furious undercurrent of activity to be devoid of antecedents. I, however, postulate that it is only the latest in a long series of steps that brought them to this point in their lives.

I wonder how many times these seniors and their families have stopped to ask how they arrived at this juncture. Do they really know what acts of omission or commission led them to where they are today? Do they really believe that it is only correlated to what these seniors did in their young lives, or do they understand the chain of causality that goes back in time all the way to the BIG BANG?

Let me explain. At my daughter, Isha’s Classical Dance Arangetram and Graduation Party in Columbia, Maryland during the late summer of 2005, I was to give a speech after her performance. I noticed how friends and family heaped praise on her for her accomplishments culminating in her impending departure for Harvard College.

I was proud of Isha’s three-hour long flawless Bharatnatyam Dance performance, her academic and social accomplishments,

Agarwal is the resident scholar and economist of his household and hopes to figure out causality and correlation by the time his second daughter graduates from high school.

and her admission to Harvard. Attempting to find conceptual underpinnings, I ran into causality and correlation. In a dialectical fit of pique, I changed my speech at the last minute and went into a philosophical discourse on causality. The essence of my argument: Rome was not built in a day nor do high-school graduates.

What comes before that? There are the usual suspects – the parents, me and my wife – and the births and marriages in the family signifying direct physical causality. Then there are the “silent” martyrs – the kinship group that sweats it out to create the support network. Throw into this mix, the Pan Am flight

that my parents took in 1948 from Palam Airport, Delhi to San Francisco, California.

The story does not end there but meanders through the travails experienced by lives past. The grandparents, the great grandparents, and more generally, the founding fathers, the Declaration of Independence, Gandhi, Christ, Buddha, and ... the BIG BANG!

How could the graduation day of my daughter possibly have arrived without any of these antecedents?

How can we forget the sacrifices of Mangal Pandey in the War of Independence of 1857? Can we even begin to ignore the great philosophical works of Shankara, Madhva and

Ramanuja? What about the Golden Age of the Guptas and the Cholas or the suffering of the Buddha or the compilation of the Rig Veda, the Upanishads or the great civilization at Harappa and Kot Diji?

My pithy advice to our future graduating seniors: There is cause for pride but no cause for hubris. The “butterfly effect” is alive and well. Always remember this, as we, the parents, begin the process of sending you off, in the words of Southey:

Go little brooke from this my solitude;
I cast thee on the water, go thy ways;
And if, as I believe, thy tone be good;
The world will find thee after many days.
For, the chain of causality goes on forever... ■



Isha at her Dance Arangetram

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