

THIS WEEK, FOR THE PIONEER'S WEEKLY EDITION OF COMMUNITY WISE, WE BRING TO YOU THE STORY OF FERNANDEZ FOUNDATION THAT IS PROVIDING COMPASSIONATE CARE TO ALL NEW MOMMIES AND THEIR BABIES.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Fernandez foundation started as a two-bed maternity clinic in 1948, ensures safe, sensitive and dignified birthing. From the very beginning, Dr. Leslie and Dr. Lourdes Fernandez were guided by ethical values and a commitment to unbiased care.

In 1991, arrived Dr. Evita Fernandez who chose to build an institution, where every pregnant woman and her newborn would be offered respectful, compassionate, evidence-based care. For decades, the institution has been providing compassionate care to all, irrespective of background, resources, and ability to pay.

They even narrate to us a story, "Poojitha suffered from a condition called spina-bifida, a congenital defect of the spine. It often causes paralysis of the lower limbs, and sometimes learning difficulties. When she conceived, she was worried about passing on the condition to her child. She consulted the doctors from the foundation and believed in giving birth to a healthy child."

Poojitha herself shared, "For my physio-

Safe & Joyous way of birthing

therapy sessions, I used to go to Dr. Latha Balasundaram. She did a complete study on my condition and advised physiotherapy sessions every month. She took into account my mobility and the condition of my body and then curated physiotherapy sessions suitable for me. She also trained my husband."

Poojitha's pregnancy journey was not easy. After two corrective surgeries in her early childhood, she was paralysed from the waist below. Due to this skeletal deformity, she had compromised abdominal space and a very narrow ribcage.

This made it difficult for her to carry the pregnancy till term. "But Poojitha was extremely determined and disciplined to carry her pregnancy as far as she could. She religiously went for all her consultations. She was even determined to breastfeed her baby, despite her condition. Not only did she nurse her own baby, but she also donated her excess breastmilk to Fernandez's milk bank helping several preterm babies," told Dr. Evita. An idea that initially seemed preposterous saw the light of day. With support from her sister, an obstetrician, and her brother, who offered financial assistance, Dr. Lourdes began practising at her own little clinic in Hyderabad. But there were challenges too. "The country is characterised by a strongly medicalised environment. Unhappy birthing experiences include interventions without consent, multiple vaginal examinations, episiotomy repairs without anaesthesia among others.

Meanwhile, the intangible trauma goes unacknowledged. Psychological abuse in the form of lack of privacy, body shaming, shouting at women are some reported practices. These practices are violations of human rights. There is an urgent need to respect women's choices and provide humanised care. High volumes and the resulting stretched bandwidth make this a daunting task. We can all scale this movement by playing an active role independently and in collaboration with the government and their initiatives towards humanising childbirth," speaks the chairperson.

In continuation, she says, "We believe that mothers are not patients and childbirth should not be a painful event but a joyous journey. The experience must shift from doctor-centric to mother-led, where the woman can listen to and guide her body through the birthing process. With the right preparation, the support of a skilled midwife and the presence of a birthing companion, most low-risk, healthy women can give birth naturally. The process of childbirth should empower, not subdue this natural instinct. Movement like walking and squatting helps in pain management. Similarly, empowering women to choose their own birthing position can make the whole process much more comfortable for them. These natural practices are made possible with the support of a skilled midwife.

During childbirth, women are encouraged to sit upright or walk and move based on their comfort. This helps reduce the use of medical interventions like epidurals which leave the women groggy and unable to enjoy the first few moments of motherhood. In the early 90s only, we decided to specialise in birthing. Since then, we are constantly on the lookout for ways to better this journey for every mother."



Empowering farmers in adopting sustainable practices

Farmers in India suffer with crop productivity because of the short crop age and low yield per acre. In India, the average crop age is only 12 years, compared to 45 years in Western nations.

Perennial crop farmers face a variety of difficulties, including uneven fertilizer applications, delayed pest and disease detection, ineffective irrigation techniques, and inadequate soil and planting material selection. With an aim to combat this issue, Samhitha was established to assist farmers in enhancing agricultural productivity and profitability in order to address these issues.

Dr. Shyam Gunnamreddy, Founder & CEO, Samhitha Crop Care Clinics said, "Samhitha Crop Care Clinics (Samhitha) offers advice to farmers on precision farming. We are a group of specialists in technology, soil science, and plant health. Our offerings to farmers every 15 days include Soil and Water Testing, Drone Survey, Tree Tagging, and Tree Level Advisory. For localised ground truth and aerial data, we deploy telemetry devices with soil moisture sensors and weather stations. After being formally created in February 2021, we hope to establish a steady growth trajectory in 2022. We have onboarded 4,000 acres of citrus fields in Telangana, representing 700+ farmers. It has incorporated citrus fields totaling more than

5,000 acres in the Nalgonda area of Telangana.

In December 2021, the agri-tech company closed a \$1.5 million seed round that was led by TechStar Group and featured Quadrant Resource and US angel investors."

In order to evaluate the quality of soil and water, the team hires professionals to use drones to collect crop photography data. The field advisers make prompt advice to the farmers by utilising the insights gained from the data.

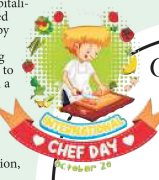
All data and insight reports are stored in their smartphone app, Citron, which is also used to distribute advice to the farmers.

Their thorough research has shown that the two main issues facing Indian farmers who grow horticulture are profitability and crop longevity. "We intend to add 1 lakh citrus acres during the next three years. Over the next three years, we intend to extend our services to the neighbouring states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Maharashtra. Within the next five years, we aim to do so across the country. We also intend to diversify into different cash crops, such as mangoes, papayas, grapes, and pomegranates. Crop insurance and the expansion of market and input linkages, as well as partnerships for credit linkages, are now being investigated," concludes the founder.

TANISHA SAXENA

From awe-inspiring ambience, exquisite food to extraordinary services! Together they all reflect the rich mosaic of fine dining but have you ever thought how much effort a chef puts in to bring the best for the customers. They are the unsung culinary heroes. Hospitality sector is evolving, and it is evolving drastically. Thanks to technology! According to studies, the hospitality industry in India is expected to grow at a CAGR of 4.73% by 2027. On the other hand, the culinary sector is also growing exponentially and is expected to reach nearly 2000 billion with a growth rate of 16% by 2027. And to honour the chefs, we have international chef's day, celebrated every year on October 20, celebrating the people in the culinary profession, with an intention to promote healthy eating and spread awareness about the profession. And this year, *The Pioneer* speaks to a few chefs from the city to track down the challenges and struggle, what is it that inspired them to join the profession and what's in store for the upcoming chefs in the industry.

Raising a toast for the chefs



Celebrating the International Chefs day today, *The Pioneer* connects to a few chefs from the city, taking us through their journey, struggles, challenges and much more.

While there's a lot that has changed in the hospitality sector, it doesn't mean that the challenges have reduced. Everyday is a new challenge for a chef. From handling shortages of any particular ingredient in the market, less staff, more workload, putting a smile on everyone's face after eating the food to apologizing to the customer if he/she is not satisfied with the food, everything is a challenge. Moreover, making food according to his or her palate is also one of the biggest tasks. Starting from scratch, back in 2007, I joined Pizza Hut in Delhi as a team member with zero knowledge of kitchen and food. Later in 2008, he got a chance to join Taj Mahal Hotel as a vocational trainee. Due to financial issues I didn't finish my studies. After training, I went to Malaysia and Thailand, worked there and earned good experience and explored several dishes. I came back to India and joined the National Sports Club of India. I worked in many restaurants in Delhi as an executive chef. I was pretty much curious about Hyderabad Dishes and luckily I got a chance to work in Hyderabad (the greenest city of the world). I joined Farzi Cafe jubilee hills as an executive chef three months ago and this place has a good vibe and positivity.



CHEF SANDEEP SAL, EXECUTIVE CHEF FARZI CAFE HYDERABAD



CHEF PREM KUMAR POGAKULA, EXECUTIVE CHEF OF THE WESTIN HYDERABAD MINDSPACE

From sourcing raw materials to making the finest presentations, a chef is supposed to be taking care of everything. And it is important to understand that the management institutions therefore play a significant role. At present, there are around thirty one management institutions in Hyderabad. Lakhs of aspirants enroll themselves to learn the craft. However, learning is a never-ending process. When a teacher teaches kids that A stands for Apple, that's not the end of it. We gradually learn that A can also stand for ambition and so on. Similarly, a management institution can teach you the techniques and craft of it, but it is upto a chef how to keep up with the changing times and remain afloat. I enjoyed each and every phase of my life in this profession and I am still learning.

VARUN SHAHANI, CHEF DE PARTIE, JEAN-GEORGE RESTAURANT IN NYC

Iwould like to lead a restaurant of my own or become a leading chef. It has been a wonderful journey here, learning new things every day. But I believe it is consistency that plays a crucial role. Working here is different because of the diversity. I interact with new people and understand the gamut of culture.



ASIF IQBAL, EXECUTIVE CHEF, SANCTUARY BAR & KITCHEN

Keeping up with the market trend and evolving while staying true to the cultural roots is the next thing; competitors emerge wanting to make a mark, new techniques, and wild presentations is yet another thing. We are becoming a more environmentally friendly organization and redesigning products and services for "Going Green" is our next major mark.

Travel has made humans masters, and technology has amped knowledge. We need to use more of it, training staff how to use never infrastructure and advanced facilities.

SHANKAR KRISHNAMURTHY, DIRECTOR, FUSION HOSPITALITY PVT LTD. HYDERABAD,

It could be a rollercoaster ride for a chef but the highs are the most beautiful part of the journey. When I was working at the SAARC summit catering to 7 country heads in the same hotel with their entourage and their special needs. As an entrepreneur catering to the current PM for a special conference, the complexities of food management at such times gives you also the maximum satisfaction that everything is great.



CHEF BENJAMIN, CHEF DE CUISINE AT SHERATON HYDERABAD

The idea of celebrating the day is interesting indeed. We have come a long way in the journey. Now, we talk about sustainability in nearly every aspect of our lives and a chef's career witnessed massive transformation in the past few years. It feels overwhelming when we are praised and celebrated. However, with all of this comes a new set of challenges and the responsibility to serve nothing but the best to the people.

The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata, followed by Taj, Accor and then new Marriott. Cooking is an adventure. We are dealing with uncertainty every single minutes. It involves creating innovative dishes with trial and error, exploring new recipes, learning new cooking techniques and unique presentation styles, connecting with new people who share a mutual interest, and discovering unexplored cultures.

