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WILSONIAN

THE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

CONNECT



FROM
WILSON HALLS
TO THE
NATION'S CALL.



Contents

Quiz on Constitution of India	03
Editorial	04
Foreword Commodore Venkatesh Iyer	05
Messages from Alums on the Occasion of Constitution Day	08
Col Kaizad Bhaya Colonel Nagendra Pillai Lt Col Saurabh Thakur Flt Lt AK Pranav Major (Retd.) Arvind Patil, Emeritus Alumni	
ReWind	21
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Alumni Meet December 20252. The Rajkumari Mor Scholarship3. Wilsonica Naturalia – December Camp!	
What's Next?	23
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Inviting Applications2. Members Sub-Committee Members	
Purani Jeans Ganesh Raman	24
Special Thanks	28



Do You Know Enough About Your Constitution?



Take a small Quiz now!

1. How many women members were there till the end of Constituent Assembly?
2. How many Tribal representatives were there in the Constituent Assembly?
3. Whose brainchild was the Sixth Schedule which provides safeguards and autonomy for tribal regions of Northeast India?
4. Who was an active member of the Constituent Assembly and was there for the final group Photograph but did not put his signature on the final version of the Constitution?
5. Hansa Mehta was a member of the Constituent Assembly; which international body did she simultaneously make significant contribution to?
6. Who was the Dalit woman representative in the Constituent Assembly?
7. Which articles in the Indian Constitution cover the right to equality?
8. Which Article is called the Freedoms Article?
9. What are the different dimensions included in Article 21 which covers the Right to Life?
10. Which landmark Judgement of the Supreme Court introduced the idea of the Basic Structure of the Constitution?

Check the last page to know if your answers are correct :)

Constitution Day vs. Republic Day

Constitution Day (Samvidhan Divas): Observed every year on 26th November to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India in 1949.

Republic Day: Celebrated on 26th January to mark the day in 1950 when the Constitution came into force, officially establishing India as a Republic.

While Constitution Day honours the adoption of the document, Republic Day celebrates its implementation and the birth of India's democratic republic.

Dear Wilsonians,

We are delighted to present the fourth issue of Wilsonian Connect, released to mark 77 years of India's Republic Day on 26th January 2026.

The celebrations may now be behind us, but the spirit of the Republic endures, most powerfully through the lives and choices of those who serve the nation every day. In this edition, we turn our focus to our alumni who have taken on that responsibility as elite members of the Indian Armed Forces.

Their journeys remind us that the values celebrated on Republic Day are not confined to a single day or parade. They are lived, through discipline, courage, and an unwavering commitment to duty. We are honoured to feature a foreword by Commodore Venkatesh Iyer (fondly known as Venky), along with reflections from Col. Kaizad Bhaya, Col. Nagendra Pillai, Lt. Col. Saurabh Thakur, Flt. Lt. AK Pranav and Major (Retd.) Arvind Patil (emeritus alumni) whose collective experiences bring these ideals to life.

Through their stories, we are reminded that while Republic Day may pass on the calendar, the role of upholding the Constitution, its promise of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity, continues every day. May their spirit and passion inspire us to carry our nation and our institution to ever-greater heights.

This issue is our salute to those who live that promise.

Editorial Team





Foreword

by Commodore Venkatesh Iyer

Ahoy Wilsonians!

When I was asked to write the foreword for this alumni magazine, my first thought was, Surely they've called the wrong number. My second was a familiar Wilson instinct: Alright then—let's give it a go. Wilson College has a way of persuading you to step up even when you're not entirely sure you're ready. Condensing what this institution did to my life into a few hundred words felt ambitious, but then again, Wilson was where I first learnt that ambition often arrives well before confidence does.

So I write this not as someone who had a perfectly charted future while sitting in those classrooms, but as someone who figured things out largely on the job. If there is one thing my journey demonstrates, it is that starting from the last bench, with no clear road map and plenty of self-doubt, is not a disadvantage. Wilson, quietly and without fuss, prepares you for exactly that.

July 1987. I remember my first day at Wilson College with remarkable clarity.

I had just managed to arrive in time for the beginning of classes in the Junior College Science stream. The classroom felt enormous to a young boy fresh out of an all-boys school—three long columns of benches, nine rows deep, each bench seating four or five students. As fate would have it, the only vacant seat was on the last bench of the column where the girls were seated. And so, somewhat awkwardly and entirely by chance, I found my place at Wilson—right at the back of the class.

That seat became mine for the next two years as we negotiated the academic pressures of the time: the unspoken mandate to become either a doctor or an engineer, the relentless pace of study, and the general sense that everyone else seemed to know exactly where they were headed. Somewhere amid all this, I realised that neither medicine nor engineering was my calling. What I did find, however, were friendships that have endured for decades. Those last-bench companions remain among my closest friends even today—a reminder that Wilson often taught us its most important lessons well outside the syllabus.

In 1989, I chose to continue at Wilson for my B.Sc., opting for Microbiology. That year proved to be the most memorable and formative of my time here. For the first time, I allowed myself to explore life beyond academics. I stepped—tentatively at first—into extracurricular activities I had previously avoided.

The Nature Club, in particular, nudged me in directions I hadn't imagined, encouraging curiosity, initiative, and engagement with the world beyond textbooks.

Wilson College began its quiet work on me. I was slowly transforming from a shy, introverted boy into someone willing to stand up, speak out, and take chances. Even something as simple as delivering an extempore talk in front of an audience felt monumental at the time. Those moments still evoke a deep sense of pride—not because they were extraordinary, but because they marked the beginning of confidence. Wilson gave me a safe space to fail, learn, and try again—and that, I believe, is one of its greatest gifts.

Looking back now, I realise that many of us passed through Wilson carrying similar uncertainties, even if we wore them differently. We worried about the future, compared ourselves quietly with others, and wondered whether we were doing enough or choosing wisely. What Wilson offered—without ever announcing it—was reassurance: that growth takes time, confidence comes unevenly, and finding one's direction is rarely a straight line.

It was during this period that I decided to attempt joining the Armed Forces through the National Defence Academy at Khadakvasla. I cleared the written examination and soon found myself heading to the Services Selection Board with little idea of what lay ahead. My preparation consisted largely of an hour-long conversation with Prof. Sudhakar, who patiently walked me through the basics of interviews and group discussions. That single interaction—marked by clarity, encouragement, and belief—proved invaluable. A few of my Microbiology classmates came to see me off as I departed for Mysore, reinforcing the sense of belonging Wilson had already given me.

If Wilson College channeled my energy and helped me discover my voice, the NDA gave wings to my dreams. It transformed me into a commissioned officer of the Indian Navy, ready to shoulder responsibility and lead from the front. Over a career spanning 31 years, one lesson has remained constant: stay grounded, live in the present, and lead with humility. That humility, I dare say, was first nurtured within the corridors of Wilson College, long before I ever wore a uniform.

I have been privileged to serve in a wide range of appointments in the Navy and, as a pilot, to undertake numerous challenging and life-saving missions. Yet, what stands out most is not rank or recognition, but the opportunity to mentor others. I have had the honour of commanding ships—organisations, as we call them in the Navy—on five occasions, guiding young and impressionable minds, and helping them choose the harder right over the easier wrong.

The Armed Forces are built on the ethos of Service Before Self. As upholders of the Constitution of India, we are duty-bound to honour this principle, even at the peril of our lives. The Navy has taught me to be a disciplinarian and, unapologetically, a conformist. Rules and regulations are not constraints to me; they are the framework that allows large, diverse systems to function with fairness and purpose. Doing what should be done, I have learnt, is often far more important than challenging norms simply to appear rebellious.

As we approach the 26th of January, these reflections acquire deeper meaning. Wearing a uniform comes with responsibilities and limitations, especially when it comes to public expression. Yet, within this Wilsonian fraternity, I feel a certain liberty to share a personal view. The freedom to voice one's opinion is a precious privilege—one that many in our neighbourhood do not enjoy. This liberty comes with in-built protections within the system and must be exercised judiciously. It is not a licence to dissent merely to appear liberal, but a responsibility that must be backed by logic, restraint, and that increasingly rare quality—common sense.

The country we live in today offers immense promise. That promise must be measured in reality. Systems exist for a reason, and while dissent has its rightful place, the law of the land remains supreme and must be followed at all costs. I have always believed that meaningful change comes not from dismantling institutions,

but from strengthening them through discipline, responsibility, and service.

Perhaps that is why Wilson continues to matter long after we leave its gates. It does not demand allegiance, yet it earns it. Years later, across professions and paths, we recognise familiar traits in one another—a certain steadiness, an ease with responsibility, and an understanding that success carries with it the obligation to contribute beyond oneself.

Wilson College means something different to each of us, yet it binds us through shared

memories, friendships, and values. For me, the three years I spent here—though I may not have formally graduated from Wilson—were instrumental in shaping the person I became. The lessons endured, the friendships lasted, and the confidence gained here carried me far beyond these gates.

With great humility, I say this: I may have traveled far from Wilson College, but I never truly left it behind. I will always be a Wilsonian at heart.

Brief Bio Data

I am Commodore Venkatesh Iyer. I joined Wilson in 1987 and completed my Junior College in 1989. I joined BSc doing Microbiology in 1989 and post a year joined the National Defence Academy in Jul 1990. I was Commissioned into the Indian Navy in Jul 1994 and joined the Aviation branch of the Navy. I have been part of the Navy for the past 31 years and am still serving.

I have over 2000 hrs of Flying experience on helicopters including the initial induction crew of the Advance Light Helicopter in the Navy and presently posted in Bangalore.



Messages by illustrious alumni who have served in the Indian Armed Forces.

EVERY SITUATION OFFERS A LEARNING LESSON

Combating Situations

Life is a challenge and one needs to face it. In the words of Paulo Coelho – “When we least expect it, life sets us a challenge to test our courage and willingness to change”. From birth onwards while constantly growing we are adapting and thus evolving. Implying changing. But the irony is that we always fight change - in other words we are in combat with change. Change is inevitable and one needs to face that as well AND so is challenge – a combat. There is an opponent or a counter force that you are trying to get the better of. People with unfinished business combat with time, the less fortunate combat with pangs of hunger and there is a different template of combat for everyone. YES, all have to combat something or someone at every point in time (disagreement - a combat of words).

The other day, during the Alumni function, at every place where my vision could rest, **recalled memories and the unique stories associated with them.** A flash flood of incidents that reminded me of the various combating situations

I encountered those six years which were a part and parcel of an institution that assisted in my evolving, grooming and immunizing me with the skills necessary to combat realities of life. On a personal note I have had not just my share but a jug full to the brim; to date, I remain in unceasing combat situations. To elaborate.....

As I stood and glanced around, it gave that pleasant feeling of accomplishment. A realization - all that was for a purpose and not just incidental. On the left was the most dreaded of all fears which were to be combated where linear equations that at times felt as if my life was spared in the nick of the moment from a QED under Prof Narayanswami and Prof KK Thakkedath. With that as a life-threatening ordeal, it was certain Maths was NOT To Be



Col Kaizad Bhaya

With the chemical locha, Chemistry succumbed to my feelings in the second year as in the front was the first floor where I had to combat balancing of chemical equations under Prof Ms P Irani, Prof Mrs S Irani and Prof Tandel. When sights elevated to the second floor, those perfect micro balances of physical chemistry which had to be combated under Prof R Shetty's eagle eye again not my cup of tea. Something that I left behind in Junior college, burst to life.

Opps the scalpel snipped another artery during the terrorizing dissection sessions, though erroneously, but the under the deadly supervision of Prof Ms Gazdar and microscope of Prof BD Vakharia who were always there to guide and then subsequently. Lowering sights in humility was my very own (yet is). The thought of graduating in Physics (a misconception though) where solid state physics, under the guidance of Mrs Vaidya, came down upon me with full vengeance of maths coupled with chemistry and thermodynamics under Ms Savrdekar provided no solace in the sweltering heat of (then) Bombay. Twisting around was the Makenzee Auditorium which had its own share of fun.

Being in the Hostel witnessed the glitter and sheen of College Day as action replay from the comfort of my room (in St. Andrews House) somewhat resembling a box experience on the race course. It brought back the most pleasant

we are also delighted to feature Major (Retd.) Arvind R Patil in the Emeritus Alumni section.

memory and the most difficult lesson that life taught me. As a lad of just 20, to have 45 hostel mates (to whom discipline was just a word in the dictionary) execute a torch drill, was a feat by itself. THOSE Combating practice sessions drove home a lot of man-management lessons. By then my moist eyes rested upon the canteen which was the regular haunt where attempts to become the College Grand Master in Chess taught me how to lose gracefully.

In the canteen the combat was of choice. With only Rs 2.75/- in the pocket, what it would be for breakfast where it had a Gulliver in Lilliput like feeling.

Being brought up in a conservative setup, college life initiation was thoroughly confusing and awe struck at the fast pace and ease at which peers transacted business for the day. Combating temptation of studies over sleep and play was a constant wingman. With total freedom that one had as privilege of being a hosteler, often did get me into trouble. Wherever there was trouble - sure be it I would be either in the thick of it or in its vicinity. Reflecting on it as on date, you can say it was a case of being at the wrong place at the wrong time. What went in my favour of proving my innocence was being with the right people who would bail me out being naïve to the street ways. **But at every stage a learning was in process.** This helped me in life and I have a lot of experience. (Experience is not knowing the right things to do – it is knowing what not to do, fully aware of the consequences) and these transposed out as guidance to the startups that have been mentored to become self-sustaining in the recent past. The beauty of these incidents, experiences and situations, though not at that time but later in life taught me valuable lessons of a Husband (How) managing five **W**ives (What/What/Where/Who/When). The prime attribute was the constant support and guidance of Profs, Staff and Seniors who had faith in me and intentions of my actions.

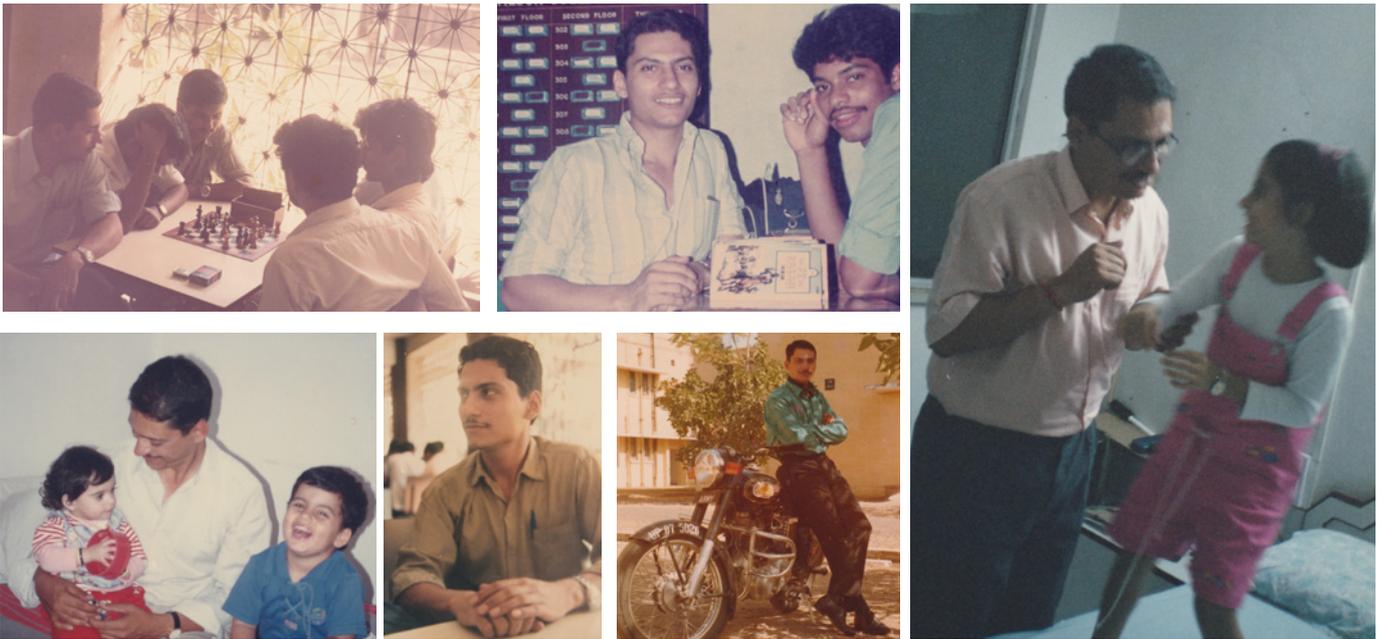
Correctly placed here would be actions speak louder than words. Becoming a part of the Nature club and the perpetual pearls of wisdom from Prof (Late) BD Vakharia as a constant guide paved a new path for me.

Wilson College, I can say is a collage of varied perceptions and even though graduating in Physics, I made it a point to associate with practically all. Be it Prof (late) Ashok Patet the fatherly figure of the St. Andrews House, Prof (Late) Ookerjee from the Philosophy to Mrs (Late) Moolgaonkar (the office staff), all of who inculcated in me certain aspects which stood me in good stead not just in my professional journey but in chiseling out me a good human being and am grateful to one and to all.

Prof S Kale a Prof turned friend and Prof Sudhakar Solomon Raj were regular shoulders to lean on even after graduation. (There are many more in-fact. Hardly any Prof in my time I can say not to be but then here too I am combating constraints of space). This went a step further, as on date even though I may be called a senior citizen, my learning graph seems to be never ending and am thankful to all of them for teaching me something however small it always pays off on a positive note. Prof (late) Dharkar the HoD of Physics and Prof (late) BD Vakharia were instrumental who not only taught their subjects in class, but also went a mile beyond in elucidating the connections of subject and connecting it to life and how each subject in its own way impacts us.

These interactions in College infused in me a sense of achieving something and with that I progressed towards my career path by joining the NCC where due to the practical sessions in College was not able to devote the time required, but did enough here and was a stepping stone to become an officer into the grenadiers Regiment after getting commissioned from the Officers Training Academy, Chennai (then Madras). I have lived a FULL Life and today as a Freemason strive to imbibe the best of all into a package. Action in operations and on the battle field have left an impacting effect on me where I would fail in my ultimate obligation if I do not acknowledge with utmost gratitude the benevolence of the ALMIGHTY in the path by teaching me through his ambassadors and keeping me safe and sound to pen this for those who would like to make the best use of a few take-aways

Listing a few examples to elucidate what has been just said:



In college combating with temptation – to go back to the library and study for the ensuing exams or have one more checkmate round (pic next page) or even in the Hostel when its time to go for the scheduled lecture or spend some more fun filled moments.

Combating with time and resources while on one of the NCC Camps so as to be punctual and in proper dress code.

Combating emotions where you realize you have lost the most crucial part of your children’s journey by discovering they have outgrown what you perceived them to be when coming home after a very long leave (18 months being the longest duration of separation indeed had its effects)

COMBATING MOMENTS DURING OP VIJAY (1999)

A quick briefing (in a make shift bunker) for the next at hand, followed by a quick bite and moved for the task at hand. Enroute a scheduled halt as light precluded movement and then receiving the final GO on the radio set (see pic) it was time for action. Combating Fear, moments before the final assault where the target are has been lit up for conformation of the enemy bunkers that need to be tackled (each one identifies what needs to be neutralized).

Combating the element of uncertainty that lies ahead and ensuring you don't show this to your men – You will never be able to lead them – they will ALWAYS doubt your credibility

Courage is not the absence of fear – it is that element by means of which you don't show it.

Taking up positions and digging in to maintain vigil where the enemy leaves no effort in their counter bombardment.

A narrow miss. The Artillery OP in a crater which was the result of their shelling. But the task is far



from over ensuring casualties are taken care of and their safe evacuation, after the assault by the company on Pt 5000 and thereafter clearing the area of mines strewn across by the enemy in Drass Sector.

The cease fire earned the company another task - Preparing the mule track for logistics another instance of combating patience and time in

inhospitable chills ranging up to minus 20 (in the summers).

Eventually after grueling 15 days wait the first of the mules arrive. Till then it was combating emotions of impatience bearing direct morale on the troops. The moment finally converts to reality being relieved – not for long (as another unknown task awaits).



COMBATING MOMENTS DURING OP KHUKRI

(Operation KHUKRI in Sierra Leone, West Africa -- The Battallion had been tasked to extricate a company of the other Indian Battallion that had been held hostage (sieged) by the RUF).

Operation KHUKRI was no different – only aspect was that it was in Foreign Country Under different Terms of Engagemnt and functionality

was dependent on the smooth collaboration with elements of foreign contingents.

The calm before the storm – The Mandir & Masjid Parade invoking the blessings before the execution. The Loading of the Company for a heli-lift operation. The Team prior to the departure. The Victory celebrations with the final

adieu with a pat on the back for a job well done and it is time to move on. (I was hand picked to fill in the vacancy when the Batallion moved abroad on the UN Mission).

The ultimate litmus test of a leader (especially for an Infantry man) is when he is picked up by his men on their shoulders – as a mark of acceptance – they will follow you again!!



The Message

Combating a situation helps one evolve to make a better person of you. Be it health – a combat on a daily basis for the elders (the illness knows when to strike) – Be mindful of diet and daily routine.

Discipline and self-discipline are separated by a very thin line. The latter is identical to the former. (A Carbon Copy – the only aspect is no one is watching you and no one going to tell you what is to be done) Combat that temptation that would lead you astray.

As a citizen, I would enjoy you to be exemplary in the discharge of your civil duties, by never proposing or countenancing any act that may have a tendency to subvert the peace and good

order of society, by paying due obedience to the laws of the State which become the place of your residence and afford you its protection.

As an individual, let me exhort the practice of every domestic as well as public virtue: let Prudence direct you, Temperance chasten you, Fortitude support you and Justice be the guide of all your actions.

As a last general recommendation, let me exhort you to dedicate yourself to such pursuits as may at once enable you to be respectable in life, useful to mankind, and an ornament to society.

Good Luck & God Bless !!

Viva - Fides Spes Caritas

A JOURNEY FROM A SANDY TO OLIVE GREENS

With immense pride and nostalgia, I connect with fellow Wilsonian's through this alumni magazine and feel humbled to have been part of this historic college, which has shaped the character and destinies of great stalwarts from all fields of our society.

I count myself among the privileged and fortunate ones who embarked on this beautiful journey; stepping into the grand portals of Wilson College in 1987, joining St. Andrews House (SANDIES) in 1988 and graduating in Physics in 1990. Those three years remain fresh in my memory and I often relive them as my thoughts wander over the time spent on campus. The ecosystem was vibrant and real, with new friendships, many of which remain strong to this day. The combination of college activities, progressive learning, extra-curricular pursuits and meticulous academics prepared us to face the real world. These seemingly mundane experiences enriched us, shaped our perspectives on life, nurtured our sense of purpose and inspired us to embrace greater callings.

The academic rigor and systematic scholastic growth during those years provided me with much-needed vision. The CEP (Cooperative Education Programme) conducted during summer breaks, gave me the impetus and focus to pursue a clear career path. It was then that I decided to join the Indian Armed Forces.

The formative years at Wilson and St. Andrews House fueled my deep sense of responsibility. I owe immense gratitude to my professors in the Physics and Mathematics departments, and I remain connected to my mentors, Prof. Sudhakar and Prof. Sivan, who continue to inspire me. Mentors and friends for life are invaluable, they offer guidance, support, and broader perspectives, evolving into trusted relationships where both parties learn and grow.



Colonel Nagendra Pillai
Class of 1990 (Physics)

I was commissioned into the Corps of Signals in December 1992, the Indian Army's communication backbone, responsible for secure and reliable

I appeared for the UPSC (CDS) exams, followed by the SSB (Services Selection Board), a rigorous five-day evaluation for officer candidates in the Armed Forces. The process, split into Stage I (Screening) and Stage II (Psychology, Group Tasks, Interview), culminates in final selection only if all assessors approve, followed by a medical examination. Training at IMA, Dehradun, was a transformational experience. Known for instilling leadership, character and patriotism in Gentlemen Cadets (GCs), the academy prepares cadets for real-life challenges, turning young men into officers and gentlemen, ready to command soldiers in both war and peace.

connectivity from tactical battlefields to strategic networks, cyber-operations, electronic warfare, cryptography, IT, and computer networks. Over my 33-year career, which continues to this day, I have served across India, from the northern region to the western front, the northeast in Arunachal Pradesh, and now in Kutch, Gujarat.

I was privileged to be part of major military operations including Op Vijay, Op Parakram, and Op Sindhoor. An officer's life is a mix of triumphs and challenges, rooted in values of honor, duty, and courage. I also had the opportunity to serve on the IA training teams in Bhutan and Sri Lanka, training soldiers of friendly foreign nations. My tenures in J&K, where controlling militancy was a major concern, tested critical thinking and demanded a deep understanding of local culture and ethnic backgrounds, essential to winning hearts and minds in coordination with civil administration.

I can honestly say that the lessons learned and friendships forged at Wilson have instilled in

me a spirit of oneness and mutual respect for all citizens of our country, across religions and faiths. This foundation has stood solid, like the Rock of Gibraltar.

Through Wilsonian Connect, I wish to inspire more youth from Wilson to join the Armed Forces—because soldiering is a noble profession, and the Army is a way of life. You only have one life to live.

Let us make this alumni magazine an active forum, where we connect, remain connected forever, and help the next generation. JAI HIND.

Brief Bio Data

WILSON COLLEGE (EST-1832)

ALUMNI 1987-1990

LEARNING OUT COMES

- Balanced eco-system
- Progressive learning
- Academic pursuit with discipline

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF: TRUST THE PROCESS OF EVOLVING

INSIGNIA - VISHWAS ASHA PREM

INDIAN MILITARY ACADEMY (EST-1932)

ALUMNI 1991- 1992

LEARNING OUT COMES

- Developing intellectual and moral strength
- Leadership and character building
- Decision making
- Physical and mental toughness for battlefield

“TRANSFORMATION LEADERSHIP” & CHANGE MANAGEMENT

INSIGNIA - WISDOM AND VALOUR



OWN YOUR CHOICES, EVERYTHING ELSE FOLLOWS

Experiences from College

Greek philosophy poses the enduring paradox of the Ship of Theseus: if every plank of a ship is replaced over time, does it remain the same vessel? Life unfolds in much the same way. Experiences, environments, and responsibilities steadily replace parts of who we once were, yet something essential endures. Looking back, my journey from college corridors to life in uniform feels like a gradual reconstruction, one plank at a time, guided by values that remained constant even as everything else changed.

St. Andrews House was the first workshop of this transformation, and quite possibly the most scenic one I have ever attended. Being a campus resident came with the rather extravagant privilege of a five star address on Marine Drive. While most students worry about alarm clocks and early morning locals, we had the Arabian Sea reminding us every morning that life, occasionally, can be generous. Friendships forged during those years were built to last, surviving careers, cities, and the general chaos of adult life.

College also encouraged a refreshing academic freedom, particularly the liberty to wander beyond one's own department. I embraced this wholeheartedly, perhaps a little too enthusiastically and may well have set an unofficial record for attending the maximum number of lectures outside my discipline. That cross-disciplinary wandering broadened my horizons manifold and taught me that perspective often lies just one classroom away.

In hindsight, the most enjoyable parts of college turned out to be the most educational. The various college feasts and the legendary Nature Club treks, which we sincerely believed were recreational indulgences, were quietly conducting crash courses in leadership, management, teamwork, and emotional



Lt Col Saurabh Thakur
Class of 2006 (Economics)

intelligence. There were no lectures, no notes, and thankfully no exams, just experiences doing their work while we weren't looking.

All of this - academics, friendships, freedom, and a little (too much) fun, came together to shape my personality and steadily channel my ambition towards joining the Army. Such was the momentum that, just a couple of months after my TYBA exams, I found myself setting the pace on the drill square of the Indian Military Academy.

The transition from college to the Army marked a profound shift, not merely in profession, but in identity. The Army is not a job; it is a way of life. It demands absolute commitment and offers experiences that are intense, often lived at the edge, and permanently etched in memory. Eighteen years in uniform have produced such moments, though most of them are best narrated under a star-lit sky, around a crackling bonfire, and strictly off the record (Nature Club, consider this an advance booking).

Experiences and takeaways as defence personnel

Key takeaway: Split-second judgement, teamwork under pressure, and calm leadership aren't Army tricks—you learnt them in college, usually the night before submission. So own your choices, everything else follows.



On The Constitution

The Statutory Oath of Allegiance, administered to officer cadets upon commissioning, is not a ceremonial formality but a solemn commitment. It requires one to swear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India, to serve honestly and faithfully in the regular Army of the Union, to go wherever ordered by land, sea, or air, and to obey the lawful commands of the President of India and superior officers, even at the peril of one's life. In essence, it is a pledge to uphold the sovereignty, unity, and integrity of the nation while remaining constitutionally loyal and politically neutral. The Constitution thus serves as both guide and guardian, reminding us that service is rooted in values larger than personal belief.

For the youth and for citizens at large, upholding constitutional ideals begins with awareness, responsibility, and participation - most importantly, through understanding and practicing the Fundamental Duties. These duties transform citizenship from a passive status into an active responsibility. In a democracy as vast and diverse as India, rights alone cannot sustain the Republic; responsible citizens do.

In the end, I would like to say: like the Ship of Theseus, we may change entirely over time, but it is our values (and that fun at heart streak) that keeps us recognisable.

Jai Hind.



Brief Bio Data

- Year of Graduation: 2006 Economics
- Underwent training as an Officer Cadet at Indian Military Academy, Dehradun from 2006-07.
- 18 Years of Service in Indian Army.
- Currently posted at Directorate General of Military Operations

PHYSICAL TRAINING IS REALLY MENTAL TRAINING IN DISGUISE

I joined Wilson College to study Physics, Maths, and Computer Science with a clear goal in mind - to serve in the Armed Forces. College became the place where that intent was sharpened and strengthened. Towards the end of my second year, CEP introduced me to Professor Sudhakar, whose mentorship played a decisive role in shaping my journey.

Sudhakar sir helped me recognise my own potential and approach life with discipline, clarity, and purpose - qualities essential for a career in defence. In my third year, being part of the Student Council and the Nature Club further developed my leadership skills, sense of responsibility, and respect for the larger world beyond oneself. It was also during this time, through the Student Council, that I met my wife. The friendships formed and the many conversations around campus (primarily Marine Drive and Chowpatty) remain some of my most cherished memories and eventually led me to my life partner.

Wilson College gave me not just an education, but mentors, relationships, and perspectives that shaped both my career and my life.

One thing the defence forces teach you very early is that physical training is really mental training in disguise. Long runs, tough drills, and demanding routines slowly build a kind of inner



Flt Lt AK Pranav

Class of 2016 (Computer Science)

strength that stays with you. It helps you remain calm under pressure, take difficult decisions when there is no perfect answer, and lead men with confidence and empathy.

Life in uniform also changes your perspective. You stop worrying about the small, trivial things and learn to focus on what truly matters. Discomfort becomes familiar, challenges become routine, and you learn to keep going without complaint.

Experiences during operations such as Op. Sindoor leave a lasting mark. They change the way you look at life, responsibility, and service. Being part of something larger than yourself where preparation, teamwork, and trust come together brings a deep sense of pride and quiet satisfaction. Moments like these reaffirm why you chose this path and make every hardship feel worthwhile.





The Constitution, to me, is essentially the backbone of our country. For those of us in uniform, respect for the Constitution is instinctive, because every order we follow and every duty we perform is ultimately in its service and it reminds us who we serve and why.

As young citizens and as common people, upholding the Constitution does not require grand actions. It starts with basic things such as being fair, respecting others, following rules, and standing up for what is right, even when it is inconvenient. Understanding our rights is important, but so is remembering our duties toward society and the nation.

Brief Bio Data

- Graduated in BSc Computer Science batch of 2016
- Got commissioned as a Fighter Controller in the Indian Air Force in 2021
- Recently won the prestigious award for his role in Operation Sindoor



ALUMNI CAN CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

Alumni Emeritus:

Early Education

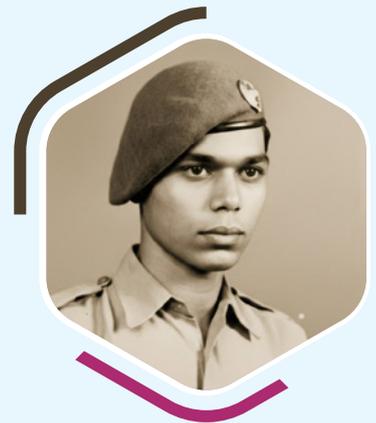
I completed my schooling at Wilson High School in 1959, where I distinguished myself as a bright student and scholarship recipient. I went on to graduate with a B.Sc. (Honours) in Chemistry and Physics from Wilson College in 1963. My formative years were marked by academic excellence and active participation in extracurricular activities.

At Wilson College, I contributed to the Wilsonian Magazine, participated in dramatics under the guidance of renowned artists, captained the badminton team, served as Treasurer of the Student Council, and was elected to the Marathi Vangmay Mandal. Inspired and encouraged by Principal Dr. Airan, I developed into an all-rounder with a strong patriotic spirit. Notably, I initiated the first Independence Day flag-hoisting ceremony on campus, a bold step at the time.

The Chemistry Department at Wilson College was enriched by outstanding faculty, including Dr. Airan, who also served as Principal, Dr. Frazer (an Irish scholar), Dr. Dabholkar, Prof. Barve, and Prof. T. M. Joseph, who later retired as Principal of the College. Their guidance and mentorship played a pivotal role in shaping my academic foundation and providing the exposure necessary for me to excel in life.

Military Career

Recognised as “Best Student” by Rotary and graduating with B.Sc. Honours in Chemistry, I earned NCC certificates under NCC I/C



Major (Retd.) Arvind Patil
Wilson College, Class of 1963

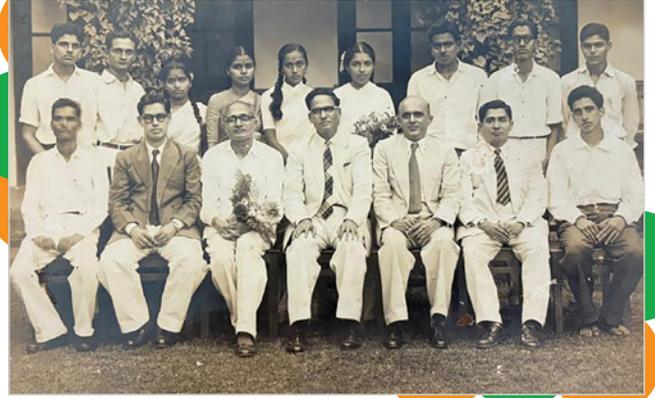
Prof. Joshi before joining the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. I was commissioned into the Indian Army on 2 August 1964 as a Second Lieutenant after rigorous physical and medical examinations.

Dr. Airan initiated the China Discussion Group to reflect on the debacle, encouraging open dialogue and critical thought. He inspired me to think deeply, exchange perspectives, and listen with respect, instilling in me the value of constructive discussion and the importance of embracing diverse opinions, a quality much needed in today's world.

I fought in the Indo-Pak Wars of 1965 and 1971, later rising to the rank of Major. My postings included Tura (in Meghalaya), Amritsar (Wagah Border), Tawang (China Border), NEFA, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, Punjab, and the Bhutan border.

In 1969, while posted at Bhuj, I was selected for the Corps of Signals due to my academic background. At the College of Military Engineering, Pune, I trained in Electronics and earned a degree from Jawaharlal Nehru University. During the 1971 War, I served at the Barmer border in Rajasthan under Brigadier Parab, advancing through extreme desert conditions toward Hyderabad-Sind until the ceasefire was announced.

Later postings included Nagrota (J&K), where



I married in 1972 and became the first family stationed there despite harsh conditions and local hostilities. My final assignments were at the Ministry of Defence in Delhi and later in Mumbai.

On 31 July 1980, I was released from service under Rule 15 of the Army Rules, 1954, and transferred to the Regular Reserve of Officers (Class X) with liability to recall until 30 April 1992.

Post-Retirement Service

After retirement, my wife, Sandhya Arvind Patil, and I dedicated ourselves to uplifting impoverished communities in the remote areas of Palghar district, Maharashtra. Through

our trust, Aastha Foundation, we have led transformative initiatives for over fifteen years, including the development of the Zilla Parishad School and Aanganwadi in Dongripada, Village Jamshet, Taluka Dahanu, District Palghar, Maharashtra. Our efforts and commitment have improved education, health, and livelihoods for marginalised tribal families of the village.

Continuing the Mission

Our mission is ongoing, and the call is clear: Wilsonians everywhere are invited to join hands with Aastha Foundation to further the development of these villages. Whether through volunteering, mentorship, or support, alumni can contribute to building sustainable futures for communities that need it most.

Major (Retd.) Patil's journey, from a Wilson College scholar and student leader to an Army officer, and now a social reformer, remains a shining example of how, Wilsonians continue to serve society long after their college years.

REWIND

Wilson College Alumni Meet 2025

The Annual Alumni Meet 2025 was held on 13 December 2025 at the Wilson College campus, bringing together Wilsonian’s from across batches for an evening of warmth, nostalgia, and celebration.

Highlights of the Meet:

- Alumni reconnected with classmates and faculty, sharing cherished memories and future aspirations.
- The Christmas theme added vibrancy to the gathering with alumni flaunting festive colours, some also accompanied by their family members.

- Games, carol singing and networking dinner created a lively and engaging atmosphere.
- The event reaffirmed the strong Wilsonian spirit and commitment to supporting the college community.
- Christmas gifts, group photos and cheerful selfies became treasured keepsakes, carrying fond memories back home.

The evening concluded with renewed bonds and a collective promise to keep the Wilsonian legacy thriving.



The Rajkumari Mor Scholarship



The Rajkumari Mor Scholarship is a pioneering initiative established by Nachiket Mor, a distinguished alumnus of Wilson College (Class of 1985) and his siblings Surendra and Swati. Named in loving memory of his mother, the scholarship is both a tribute to her and a celebration of all girls and women who pursue knowledge with courage and determination.

This first-of-its-kind programme supports female students enrolled in Master's courses at Wilson College, ensuring that financial barriers do not stand in the way of their academic aspirations. The scholarship covers not only tuition fees but also essential academic needs such as journals,

projects, and field visits, enabling recipients to fully engage in their studies.

The inaugural fellowship was awarded to two students from the Department of Zoology, under the banner: **The Rajkumari Mor Scholarship for Curiosity and Science.**

This marks the beginning of a legacy that encourages young women to explore, innovate, and contribute meaningfully to the sciences.

Wilsonica Naturalia – December Camp!

Naturalia Wilsonica Nature Camp – Phase II at Seetanadi, Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary. The second phase of the Naturalia Wilsonica Nature Camp was successfully conducted at the Seetanadi Herpeto Camp in the lush Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary, Karnataka. Surrounded by the rich biodiversity of the Western Ghats, participants immersed themselves in nature trails, herpetofauna observations, and engaging discussions on conservation and ecology. What made this phase truly special was the incredible intergenerational presence of our alumni community. It was heartening to see multiple generations come together in the field - united by curiosity, camaraderie, and a shared love for nature. From our senior-most participant, Sindhu Koshy (1990 batch), to more recent alumni, the camp became a living bridge across decades. With Prof. Sivan joining the group, it was a joyful moment to witness the continuity of Naturalia Wilsonica's spirit - where learning transcends batches and years. Seeing alumni reconnect with nature - and with each other - reaffirmed what makes this community so special.



Let's Go Outdoors, a nature-oriented travel company, founded by alumnus Sandesh Lad (Alumnus 1999 Microbiology) helped organise the camp with his team members including alumnus Tejasvi Lohia (Alumnus - English Literature).

Here's to many more such gatherings in the wild!



Wilson College Alumni Association - Invitation to Join

The Wilson College Alumni Association is delighted to announce its upcoming Registration Drive to welcome alumni as members of the Association. This initiative aims to strengthen our community, foster lifelong connections, and create opportunities for meaningful engagement.

Membership Registration: All alumni of Wilson College are invited to register and become part of the Association. Membership offers access to exclusive events, networking opportunities, and a chance to contribute to the growth of our alma mater.

Applications for Sub-Committee Members (FY 2026–27): Alongside the registration drive, we are inviting applications from enthusiastic alumni who wish to serve as Sub-Committee Members for the financial year 2026–27. This is a unique opportunity to actively participate in shaping the Association’s initiatives, programmes, and outreach efforts.

How to Apply

- **Membership Registration:** Details of the registration process will be announced shortly.
- **Sub-Committee Applications:** Interested alumni may express their interest with Prof. Sudhakar Solomonraj or Dr. Anuradha Pendse by **20 March 2026**, and submit their applications once the official call is released.

We look forward to your participation and to building a vibrant alumni community together.

Wilson College Alumni Association “Once a Wilsonian, always a Wilsonian.”



Purani Jeans



The Road from Andrews to Advertising!

Little did I know when I joined Wilson almost three decades ago, that one day in the far, far future, I would be racking my brain to really think hard about what I did ages ago. But reconnecting with my alma mater has been a joyful experience, something I decided to do in 2025.

In the many twists and curves of colleges, jobs, friendship gangs and whatsapp groups, we tend to forget our early roots. Over the years, one thing has remained a constant: my once-in-a-while connection with **Sudhakar Sir**. And i'd imagine that goes for a lot of us.

1. About Yourself

I would consider myself a happy-go-lucky individual who got a lot of love and luck along the way. My name is **Ganesh Raman**, and I graduated from Wilson in 1993-94. I did my BSc in Chemistry and could be found loitering in the hallowed halls of St. Andrews during that five-year period.

Post-Wilson, I did my MBA in Marketing and subsequently joined the advertising world with

Ogilvy. It was something I always wanted to do. Currently, I run my own advertising & digital company: **Freeflow Ideas**. I live in Bengaluru and brave the traffic on a daily basis (a full-time job in itself!). My wife, **Somni**, is a furniture designer specializing in custom-made pieces, and my daughter, **Aanya**, is a young learner, navigating the myriad of life choices and career paths available.

2. If your life at Wilson College were a sport, which one would it be?

The only games I can relate to during my time at Wilson would be **Table Tennis and Carrom**. I was fairly good at both and played regularly at St. Andrews.

Looking back at my 'position' in hindsight, I was

probably one of the **carrom coins**: oscillating from the hostel to the canteen, to the classroom, to the chemistry lab, then quickly back to the canteen, and finally dashing back to the room. This simple trajectory was the way life went for most of my time at Wilson.



3. A memory or teaching that helped in shaping your dreams?

Thinking back and reconnecting, I'll be honest: I didn't originally join Wilson for the college! My parents and I were on the lookout for a hostel, as my father was considering a posting abroad and I was in the midst of my crucial education years. We found **St. Andrews** and, well, Wilson was part of the package. My first allegiance was always to the hostel.

And after all, Wilson was a but a fall-back. My father wanted me to become an engineer or a doctor, while I wanted to be a designer or an architect. I didn't get through either entrance exams, and gap years were unheard of back then. So that's how, I came to be part of this more than a century-old institution.

What doesn't break you shapes you. St. Andrews came as the **great leveller**. The hostel inmates, the warden (Sudhakar Sir), the gym, the mess, the proximity to Chowpatty beach, Mackichan Hall, the college canteen with chai & bun maska, PRH, the omelette sandwiches... the list goes on.

It was like the **United Nations of St. Andrews**. We had students from Nigeria, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Nepal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and even a prince from an African tribe! If my geography was considered good in school, St. Andrews provided the real-world extra-additions. The beauty of diversity, experienced in such a carefree zone, opens your eyes to cultures and observations you'll never find in a textbook.

Add to this a generous sprinkling of learnings from all the professors and hostel mates in a **chemical reaction** with Sudhakar Sir's wisdom, The CEP collective and the fresh oxygen and life-lessons from the tree-planting and nature treks, and you have the perfect stimulus to shape a young mind. Even though I was enrolled in the BSc curriculum, all my real life lessons were learned inside the campus; just not on the prescribed timetable.

4. One piece of advice for students pursuing an illustrious career?

I always wanted to get into advertising and made all my choices based on this, from my MBA to internships and knowledge gathering. I was lucky to get breaks in top-tier agencies and even luckier to learn from the heroes of the industry. I eventually took the plunge to start my own agency when the opportunity presented itself. And that too was along with a room-mate from St. Andrews.

While focus, handwork and luck played their parts, here is my two-bit advice:

- **Passion & perseverance:** There is no substitute for hard work, especially if you

aren't the 'natural extrovert' that the industry often demands and applauds. Stay the course, trust your gut and instinct and feed your mind. The classic, adage garbage-in-garbage-out is seriously true!

- **Trust your compass:** We live in an age of distractions and AI. It's easy to get carried away by the, flavour of the season. A floating ship will reach a different destination with every wave, but to reach a specific destination, you need to steer it. Whether you go slow or fast, then, is purely a matter of individual choice and maturity.



A midnight prank, gone 'bald'. L to R: Ben longkumer, Dinesh Desai, Gladson Ronad, Panjak Majapurua, Sanjay Kini, Ganesh Raman & Ivan John.



At the CEP Programme. Foggy memories. Vivid learning's.



CEP Programme group picture.

Here's a quick compilation of **SOME GREAT NEWS** shared by alumni.

Neelambari Phalkey

(Alumnus 1999)

I have some amazing news! I have been awarded the prestigious and highly competitive Develop Your Creative Practice (DYCP) grant from Arts Council England couple of months ago.

It's a publicly funded grant (supported by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport) that will allow me to focus on my art practice. I'll be using machine learning to create immersive visual and sound experiences centered on the climate crisis.

I am also excited to share my contributions to the "Environmental Humanities: Emergent Key Terms" glossary, a transdisciplinary project edited by Ulrik Ekman and Daniel Irrgang. Conceived within the Art and Earth research cluster at the University of Copenhagen (Københavns Universitet), this glossary seeks to redefine how we navigate the complex challenges of our changing world.

In my two entries, I explore the multi-dimensional nature of resilience:

- Resilient Practices: <https://artsandculturalstudies.ku.dk/research/art-and-earth/environmental-humanities-glossary/resilient-practices/>
- Mangrove Resilience: <https://artsandculturalstudies.ku.dk/research/art-and-earth/environmental-humanities-glossary/mangrove-resilience/>

It is a privilege to see these published alongside contributions from thinkers like Olafur Eliasson

Looking forward to 2026!

Serene Phillip

(Alumnus 1990)

Social Protection Specialist earlier with the World Bank in Sudan and now with World Food Program in one of the world's most conflict prone areas and immense human suffering in Somalia. Currently Serene has helped conceptualise and is helping establish a Government and World Health Program with World Bank Project worth \$443 million dollars reaching 2.2 million most vulnerable people.

Earlier she lead a Humanitarian and Resilience Project worth \$38 million.

She has also helped establish a National Shock Resistance system to combat endemic violence and recurring drought induced by Climate Change.

Her current work is also helping governments to develop safety nets.

She also helps run radio programs for the community.

She represented Somalian perspective at the UN Climate Conference in Bonn in 2023.



Special Achievements



Chubbamenla Jamir

(Alumnus 1999)

Chubbamenla has been doing with Ecology, Communities and capacity building for Climate change resilience. She is also the Wilson College Alumni Association's Regional Chapter In-charge for North-eastern States of India.



Aarti Palnitkar

(Alumnus 2004)

Aarti Palnitkar nee Magrolkar won the annual achievement award for her work as Top achiever in West Asia, South Asia and Africa.



Nachiket Mor

(Alumnus 1985)

Nachiket Mor was honored with HSBC's Inclusive Finance Award for his lifetime contribution and enduring impact on the sector.



Great news. **Ben Longkumer**, Commandant with the Nagaland Police, alumnus 1997 has been awarded the Presidential Service Medal on Republic Day.

We applaud and celebrate this achievement.

Congratulations Ben.

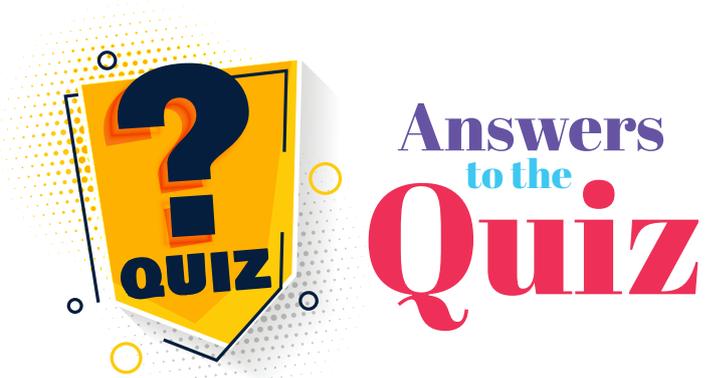
This recognition honours his dedication, courage, and consistent service to the people. His contributions reflect the professionalism and resolve of the States's police force.

The Unsung Heroes of Wilsonian Connect!

A big Thank You, to the FreeFlow Ideas (freeflowideas.in) team from Bengaluru, under the guidance of our alumni Ganesh Raman, for their wholehearted support in designing this and some of the previous issues of the Wilsonian Connect.

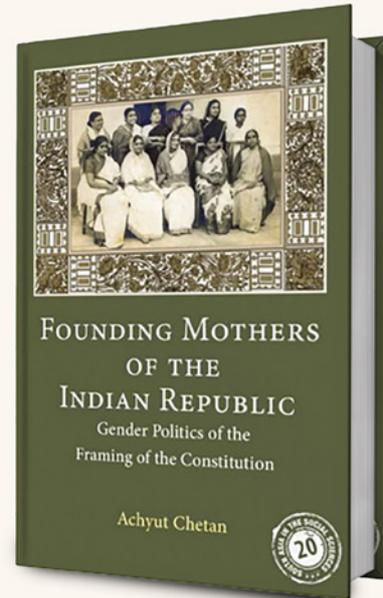
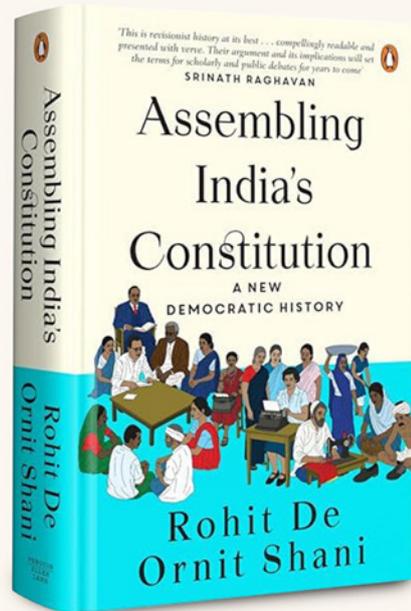
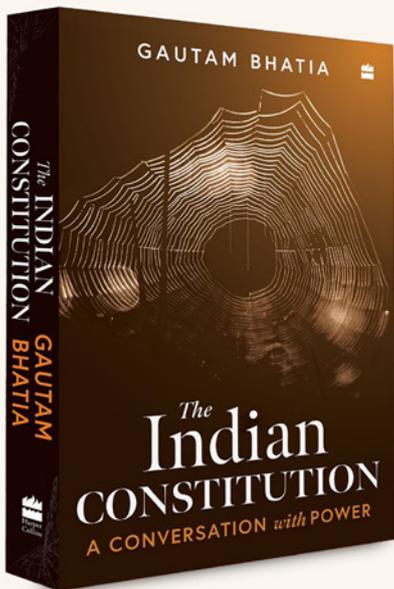
Despite demanding work schedules, the team took on the responsibility of shaping diverse contributions and bringing them together in a form that could be meaningfully shared with our alumni. With wholehearted support and guidance from Siddhi Lad, the team has successfully managed the last few issues.

The Editorial Team sincerely applauds and appreciates their collective efforts.



1. 15 but only 11 as vacancies created by death and resignation were not filled by women but by men.
2. Jaysingh Munda from what is now Jharkhand and Rev. Nichols a Khasi from Meghalaya.
3. 5th Schedule provides safeguards for tribal regions in Central India. Rev Nichols.
4. Hasrat Mohani
5. Hansa Mehta was a member of the Committee which worked on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is credited with coining the term Human Rights instead of then popular Rights of Man.
6. Dakshayani Velayudhan
7. 14 to 18
8. Article 19 which includes the Freedom of Thought, Belief and expression in all forms, Association, Residence.
9. Right to Education, Livelihood, Clean Air, Clean Water, Clean living conditions. These have been established through Judicial Decisions in Public Interest Litigation and in 2010 the 86th Amendment made Right to Education under Article 21.
10. Kesavananda Bharati case 1973. It is supposed to include
 - Primacy of the Constitution
 - Checks and Balances
 - Federalism
 - Secularism
 - Primacy of Fundamental Rights

Three current books which are a must read on the Constitution of India!



We promise it will be enthralling for young and old citizens of India.

STAY CONNECTED, STAY INVOLVED

To share your stories, feedback, suggestions, letters to the editor:
email wilsonianconnect@gmail.com or rajsudhakar@hotmail.com



WILSON COLLEGE

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