

# CAPSTONE PROJECTS

JAN 2023- MAY 2023

ANANYA S

MALAVIKA JOSHY

RUCHIRA KASERA

SAKSHI MODI

SANJANA RAJESH

VIJETA BHAT



PLANT  
STUDIO

# Gender and Sexuality Education using Plants for Creative and Interactive Learning



This research looks into gender and sexuality education in Kerala schools. It is working its way through the Kerala education curriculum and other school activities. This project's primary goal is to develop a method for disseminating the concept of gender and sexuality differences. It conveys the message that everyone can be unique in their clothing, appearance, or preferences. I am using plants and their structural differences to convey this concept to school students. The key questions guiding my inquiry are, (1) Plants are everywhere and play an important role in our daily lives. So, how can plants be used to communicate important information to society? (2) Nowadays, parents are attempting to educate their children about gender and sexuality at a young age. It is also critical to educate children about this in school, but most educational systems do not. So, how can I bridge this gap?

This project aims to address gender and sexuality illiteracy. During the research period, the main questions raised were how the Kerala educational curriculum aids in this topic, how teachers and parents are involved in gender and sexuality education, and what challenges they face. I conducted primary and secondary research to gather information for this project. The study first looked at how gender and sexual identities are communicated in schools and at home. It conducted primary research through semi-structured interviews to better understand the current situation in Kerala's schools. This included interviews with teachers from the Thiruvananthapuram cooperation area. The research then examined methods used by other educators and professionals in the field through secondary research. I also went through the Kerala educational curriculum as secondary research. These have been used to identify the factors that influenced the main findings of the project.

The research revealed that people have mixed feelings regarding teaching students about gender and sexuality; some believe education should begin at a young age, while others believe that as time passes, individuals will learn for themselves. In particular, when teachers encounter situations in which students use inappropriate language to refer to other genders, and students ask questions about it, then teachers become hesitant to communicate with the students. If we are looking at the government's involvement, the LDF government also proposed a gender-neutral education policy. On the other hand, the Congress-led UDF has stated that this policy will result in the rejection of religion and sexual anarchy. Currently, the term "moonaam lingam" (translated as a third gender) is used in Malayalam to refer to trans men and trans women, which the queer community finds unsettling and offensive. With the current limitations of popular Malayalam vocabulary in mind, Kerala has launched a contest to find the most appropriate word to refer to a transgender person.

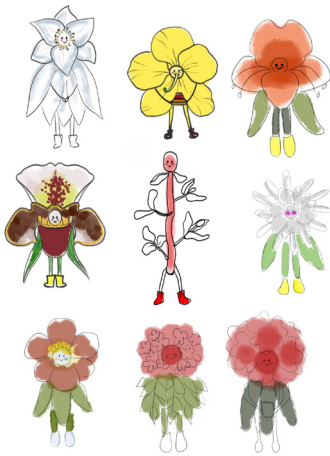
The project's primary goal is to provide a basic understanding of gender and sexuality within Kerala's primary education context. Based on my interviews and research into educational curricula, I discovered that children are unaware of the existence of different genders and sexualities. For that, I'm attempting to incorporate the concept of a workshop that conveys the idea by using flowers as a medium.

Hello, I am a master's student in Industrial Art and Design Practices at the Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design, and Technology. "Change is the only constant," said the Greek philosopher Heraclitus. My philosophy is to be open to change and to learn from my mistakes. Indeed, design is all about adapting to change.



**ANANYA S**

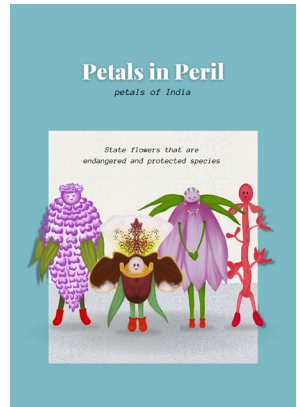
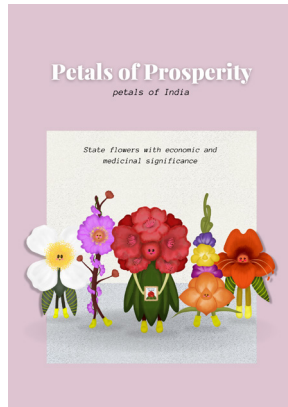
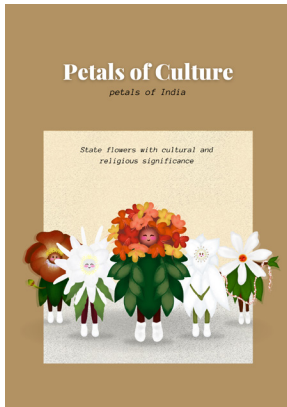
# Petals of India: Representing Indian State Flowers as Characters



This project focuses on creating anthropomorphic character representations of India's state flowers. The aim of the project is to create awareness and spread knowledge about plants. There are 28 states and 8 union territories in India and all, except for one, have been designated flowers as official emblems. Most of these flowers are native to Asia and some have been discovered in India. Through this project, I aim to showcase these plants through character sketches that serve as portals for gaining cultural and botanical knowledge.

Every flower has a reason explaining its selection as an official emblem. It may have cultural or religious significance to the people of the state, or be of economic and medicinal value to indigenous communities, or need protection as an endangered species. In developing character sketches of these plants, various aspects of cultural, botanical and geographical knowledge are incorporated.

Decolonization in India and plant awareness are two themes underpinning this project. Decolonization has highlighted the value of cultural knowledge and fueled its interpretations through media, animations, video games, and other platforms. Building plant awareness has become all the more relevant in the context of the biodiversity crisis we face today. In working with the concept of state knowledge and state imagery, my project thus serves as a medium to learn about some of India's cultural aspects along with developing a sense of care and responsibility to our environment while spreading awareness about the local flora and its significance in our lives.



I am a student at Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design and Technology completing my Masters in Visual Communication. My background is in Visual Media. I have aspired to become a designer ever since I realised I have a liking towards art and illustrations. As a designer I have the duty to be mindful about the present ecological concerns and focus on putting out solutions to spread awareness about flora and its significance in our lives.



**MALAVIKA  
JOSHY**

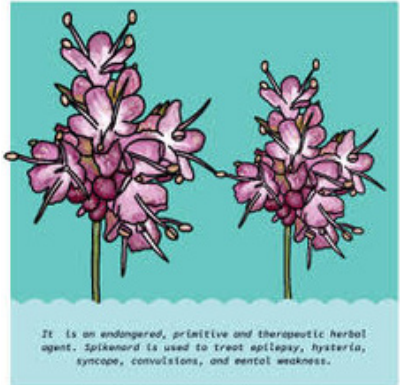


# Rooted: A Cultural Gateway to Botanical Awareness Among Gen Z

Rooted is a brand that will use plants in Indian culture to create plant awareness, generate empathy and respect for plants, encourage environmental conservation, and educate on Indian culture. The project clearly outlines the significance of plants in our life. Plant blindness is a common problem faced mainly in the urban sector, where plants are just seen as a background to life and a loss of connection with nature prevails. In the rural sector, people still value and care for plants as they very much depend on them for their daily requirements. Since the decolonization of India, Western cultural influences have taken over, and it is key to know our culture to preserve it, have a strong identity, and stand out as a nation. Studying primitive societies has led to the discovery of many new plant species, their uses, and their properties. Hence, by knowing our culture we can know more about plants, or by knowing our plants we can learn more about our culture. This interlinking theory created an interesting opportunity for me to combine and imagine a few products that could help me spread botanical as well as cultural awareness.

I will be showcasing aspects of Indian culture by highlighting the use of plants in ancient Ayurveda, herbal cosmetology, festivals, symbolism, cuisine, mythology, as well as other contexts characterised by the botanical presence. The audience for this brand is going to be Generation - Z. The idea is not to target people who already like plants but to grab attention from the ones lacking interest and blinded to the value that plants add to our life. To reach out to this audience I decided to use specific design choices that they prefer like vibrant colors, nostalgia, vintage, gothic, and of course aesthetics which play a major role in appealing to them. Applying these design choices to a few products which they could potentially use like t-shirts, calendars, notebooks and stickers, and social media posts, will help me communicate my topic to them. This project can be one of the many solutions for curing

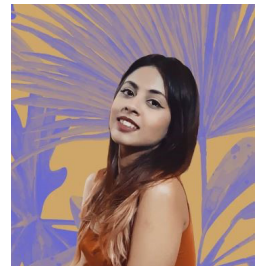
plant blindness and developing an intimate relationship with plants in general, and at the same time learning about Indian culture. The larger goal of this project is about helping people recognize the value of plants and shift to a more natural, healthier, and sustainable lifestyle while being Rooted in their culture.



**JANUARY 12**

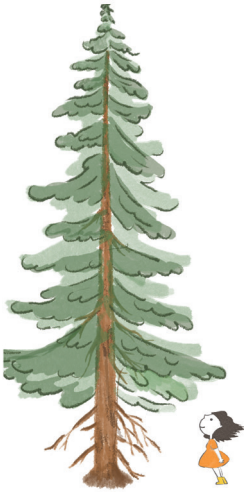
**Spikenard**  
*Phyllanthus emblica*

Hello, I am a 25-year-old Visual Communicator. Colors were always my favorite toys to play with when I was a child and flowers have been my favorite thing to doodle. Taking inspiration from nature for art and design has helped me find balance and harmony, opened new doors of creative thinking, and helped me encapture the essence of beauty and aesthetics. My goal is to become a designer who is not just great at creating and visualizing but is also aware of the environmental impacts of designing, materials, and methods and can overcome these challenges with new sustainable concepts. My niche interest lies in branding and packaging design, and I would love to explore every opportunity with vibrant hues, unique typography, and eco-friendly materials.



**RUCHIRA  
KASERA**

# Growing Up Green: Exploring Plant- based Curriculum in Children's Education



This research project aims to design educative experiences that generate curiosity and foster attitudes of care in children towards the plant world. The inquiry dwells on understanding how existing education methods introduce children to plants and tries to investigate how to build empathetic connections with nature and plants. Through secondary research, I enquired into how different spaces impact children's perception of nature and how current education practices engage children with plants. Research showed that children between the ages of 5-8 are increasingly interested in the world around them, and questioning is very common. This curious disposition they hold can be used to introduce them to the world where nature can be a big part of their life.

Through art-based workshops, children were engaged in playful activities, and spaces were created for children to interact with nature and learn through nature. The project focussed on transforming real-life experiences into educational pedagogy through art, underpinned by the lens of an artist and designer. The interviews and community participatory research methods used in this project will continue in the future. My inquiry is an iterative process that will seek to make subsequent learning engagements with the botanical world more effective.

As a part of the project's outcome, along with the workshops conducted, a brochure was designed to promote plant-based art workshops in schools. My passion in this area of art and design will continue through practice and research. Initiatives like this contribute towards building plant awareness and help tackle bigger environmental issues.

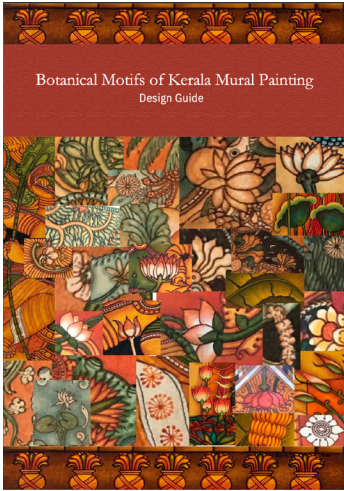




I am an engineer turning Designer. I am currently pursuing my master's in Information Arts and Information Design Practices from Srishti Manipal Institute, India. I derive the greatest satisfaction from creatively crafting narratives. I enjoy working in the area of art and education where I get to build a space for creative learning. My approach to data visualization involves leveraging material making as a medium for communication. I keep updating my skills and wish to grow more in the field. Introducing myself to different design spaces and adapting myself to changing trends is something I practice.



**SAKSHI  
MODI**



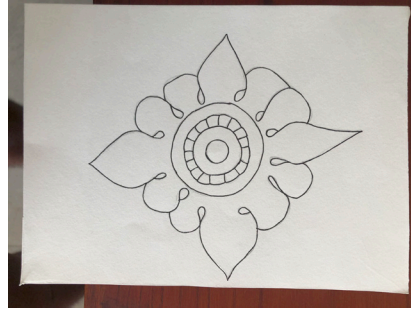
# Exploring the role of plants in Kerala Mural Paintings

Kerala Mural paintings are an ancient form of traditional Indian art that has been practiced for centuries. The aim of my project is to study the role of plants in Kerala murals in order to understand botanical aspects related to these paintings. The research involved gathering information from various sources that included mural artists, art institutes and scholarly articles. Different explanations for the use of these plant motifs to understand the significance of plants in the creation of these murals were looked into, as well as their cultural and historical importance. Along with investigating the methods used by artists to identify and incorporate plants into their work, I also studied the natural and organic material used in the mural making process. The results of the research showed that with regards to plants, the focus of artists in creating these paintings is more on the preparation of plant-based natural colours, and less on use of plant motifs as part of the storytelling in these paintings.

By highlighting the exploration of plant motifs as part of the storytelling in these paintings, my project brings to the forefront an aspect of Kerala mural art that has not been explored in-depth so far. By calling out the role that plant motifs play in mural paintings in Kerala, we can appreciate the artistic beauty of these paintings and learn about the cultural and historical importance of these plants in the region. Furthermore, by depicting the importance to those plants which are not widely recognised, it can help contribute to the global concern of environmental sustainability by preserving them. The indigenous knowledge in Kerala Mural Paintings is closely tied to the cultural and ecological heritage of the region.

Based on the research conducted, the outcome of project is a guide that can be used to learn about plant motifs in this mural art form. This guide consists of representations of botanical motifs from across several Kerala mural paintings, and suggestions on how to draw these specific plant motifs based on each one's visualisation within a painting. Illustrations have been added and drawn by me, taking references from the paintings.

The guide shows step-by-step instructions on how to draw the motif. It also contains an interactive element in order to engage with the audience. It has a consistent design aesthetic that captures the beauty and significance of Kerala mural art. Through this guide, the role of plants in the creation of Kerala mural paintings will be preserved as a document that can be used by educators, botany teachers, botanist, artists, and designers interested in learning about Kerala history, art practices, botany, sustainability, nature and cultural heritage. This project contributes to ongoing efforts in preserving and promoting this ancient form of art for new artists to continue this tradition. It presents a contemporary theme and new area, i.e. plants, with which to engage with Kerala mural art.



I was born and brought up in Ernakulam, Kerala. As a kid, the Media sector has engrossed me for building a flourishing career in the world of Media and Communication, during my school days I used to imitate the interviewers of TV shows and interviewed my family members for fun, but this interest turned into my passion as I opted for my Visual Communication course after completing my school at MOP Vaishnav. Here, learning about different aspects of the media sector made my decision to carve a career in this field even more firmer, and I decided to pursue my Master's in Visual Communication at Srishti Manipal. This course allows me to become an exemplary media professional and establish my own media house to contribute to this sector.



**SANJANA  
RAJESH**



In the picture is Parmeshwari Gowda Aji plucking firecracker flowers from her garden to make garlands. Collecting flowers early in the morning is an important ritual for flower selling Halakki women.

Belambar Village, Ankola | 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2023

ಹಾಲಕ್ಕಿ ವಸ್ತ್ರ ಕಲಾ ಚಿತ್ರ

# Plants and the Halakkis: Community through the Lens of Decorative Practice

This research project pertains treasured particulars of the plant adorning Halakkis. The Halakki Vokkaligas, an indigenous tribe from North Karnataka share a deep kinship with nature. The community cultivates crops, nurtures beautiful home gardens and also explores forests in search of herbs and medicinal plants. Even so their cohesiveness with flora is not limited to utility and engages further with the ceremonial and lyrical aspects of plants. The Halakkis indulge in decorative practices and beautification rituals that use plants in both natural and representational forms. On a regular basis, Halakki women create, adorn, and sell flower garlands. During their annual harvest festival, the Halakki men wear floral headgear known as 'Turai' as part of the Suggi Kunitha, or harvest dance. They also adorn themselves with 'Kardi Vesha', a costume of a bear made with coir. Till date there has been no focused attempt to study nor record the decorative practices of the Halakki tribe with regards to their use of plants, and these design and social practices remain unsung. As the tribe's culture is diminishing gradually and these practices are surviving amidst chaotic and unsustainable conditions, an expedition to study the tribe was deemed essential. Hence this research was conducted gingerly, with utmost diligence and devotion.

The study is centered around the Halakkis from the town of Ankola, consisting of cluster/s that are popular and dynamic among the larger Halakki Vokkaligas. While appearing as decorative art to those unfamiliar with the community, these practices — crafting flower garlands, Suggi 'Turai' and 'Kardi Vesha' each have different intentions linked to ritual, tradition, symbolism and sometimes leisure. The study focuses on these three practices to explore and understand 1) the materials and techniques used 2) the stories or myths associated within them & 3) the intention or reasons

underlying the decoration. The research methods involved a combination of techniques such as cluster visits, Q&A sessions, craft making, archive study and participant observation. The project in conclusion presents a visual account of the above practices, observed and collected over the course of four weeks of fieldwork. The findings and inferences drawn from using a visual ethnographic approach during this quest are reflected through a visual essay. Decolonization and treasuring long-lost lores are crucial as traditional practices hold within them a record of specific entities such as values, faith and beliefs, and ideas of self-admiration, amusement and humor that have built the character of the Halakki community. These stand true today and need to be preserved as part of India's traditional knowledge systems.



In the picture above is a headgear known as 'Tura'. The Halakki men wear it during the annual Suggi Kunittha (harvest dance). The dance is performed for entertainment and to invoke rainfall.

Handigodi, Ankola | 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023

ಪಾಲಕ್ಕಿ ಸಸ್ಯ ಕಲಾ ಚಿತ್ರ



In the picture above is 'Kardil Kalasha' - an installation made of coconut tree leaves and frangipani flowers. The Halakki believe that their deity Kari Deva accompanies it on the last day of Suggi Habba (harvest festival).

Kari Deva Kathe, Belambar | 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023

ಪಾಲಕ್ಕಿ ಸಸ್ಯ ಕಲಾ ಚಿತ್ರ



'Kardi Veshha' as seen above is a costume of a bear adorned by Halakki men during Holi. In recent times, Kardi is worn for amusement but traditionally it was believed that the Kardi wearer gathered people's fears and sufferings.

Amberkoldia, Ankola | 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023

ಪಾಲಕ್ಕಿ ಸಸ್ಯ ಕಲಾ ಚಿತ್ರ

Hello! My love for art began as a child. I have been introduced to the world of painting, stitching and embroidery by my grandmother and my mother quite early on in life. I have a liking for the Indian aesthetic and Indian art forms. Nonetheless as an artist I love to experiment with diverse mediums, techniques and styles from time to time. I have formerly explored design within the Textile discipline. And presently at Srishti, trying to discover my interest towards community and culture based practices and their translations in visual form.



**VIJETA BHAT**



Designed by  
Sakshi Modi



**SRISHTI MANIPAL**  
INSTITUTE OF ART, DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY  
BENGALURU  
*(A Constituent Unit of MAHE, Manipal)*



**MANIPAL**  
ACADEMY of HIGHER EDUCATION  
*(Institution of Eminence Deemed to be University)*