



Annual Report

2021-22

FigTree
NATURALIST FOUNDATION

THE
Naturalist
SCHOOL

Fig Tree Naturalist Foundation
&
The Naturalist School

THE
Naturalist
SCHOOL

Annual Report
2021-2022



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EMERGENCE

Message from the Founder



Dear Friends,

I am thrilled to present the first annual report of Fig Tree Naturalist Foundation (FTNF), a momentous milestone in our journey towards appreciating and conserving the wonders of the natural world. As the founder of this organisation, it brings me immense joy to witness the incredible progress we have made in our inaugural year.

From the very beginning, The Naturalist School (a registered trademark of FTNF) has been driven by a passionate and dedicated team of volunteers who share a common vision: to promote environmental awareness and foster a deep connection between people and nature. It is through their unwavering commitment that we have been able to achieve remarkable outcomes within such a short span of time.

Even before its formal inception, this team worked to create and institutionalise the job roles of Nature Guide, Naturalist and Lead Naturalist within the Skill India ecosystem as per the NSQF framework. This team also worked in bringing together an academic council to create a brand new course and syllabus within the Bangalore University on Wildlife and Nature Interpretation.

In the past year, we set out on our mission with resounding enthusiasm, embarking on projects across Karnataka and Maharashtra in India. One of our notable endeavours involved collaborating with the prestigious Nagarhole Tiger Reserve, a haven for biodiversity. We had the privilege of working alongside talented naturalists from all the resorts within the reserve. This partnership allowed us to touch the lives of countless visitors who have had the pleasure of encountering one of our trained naturalists since November 2021. Through their expertise and passion, we have been able to instill a deeper appreciation for the importance of wildlife conservation and the delicate balance of ecosystems.

I am proud to share that we took a significant step towards formalising the job role of a Nature Guide in our country by conducting India's first Certified Nature Guide RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) batch for the poaching community known as Pardhis in Madhya Pradesh. By offering training and opportunities to the Pardhis, we aimed to bridge gaps and build inclusivity in this noble profession. Our aim is to showcase that conservation efforts thrive when we embrace diversity and empower individuals to cherish their natural heritage.

The achievements of our first year would not have been possible without the support of our invaluable partners, stakeholders, and the communities we serve. We are grateful for their trust and collaboration, which has been instrumental in turning our vision into a reality. Together, we have laid a strong foundation for future endeavours and are poised to continue making a lasting impact.

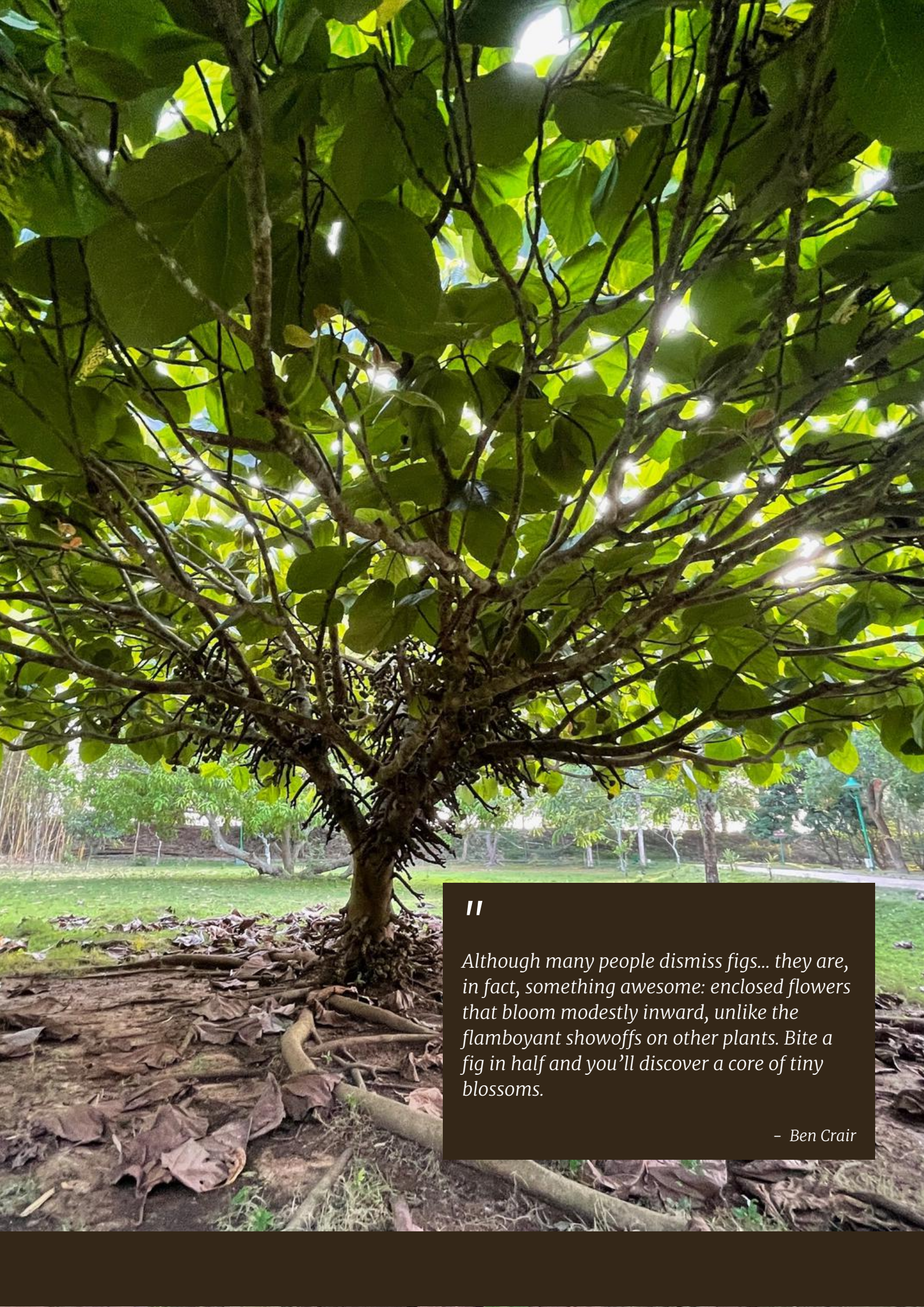
As we reflect upon the accomplishments of the past year, we are energised and inspired to take on even greater challenges in the years ahead. The Naturalist School remains committed to expanding its reach, collaborating with more conservation organisations, and creating meaningful opportunities for individuals to engage with nature.

I invite you to explore this annual report and witness the profound impact we have made in our very first year. It is a testament to the transformative power of education, passion, and collective action. I am immensely proud of what we have achieved together, and I am confident that with your continued support, we will make an even greater difference in the world of conservation.

Yours in conservation,

Priya V

Founder
The Naturalist School



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Although many people dismiss figs... they are, in fact, something awesome: enclosed flowers that bloom modestly inward, unlike the flamboyant showoffs on other plants. Bite a fig in half and you'll discover a core of tiny blossoms.

– Ben Crair



We are delighted to present the inaugural annual report of Fig Tree Naturalist Foundation & The Naturalist School.

Fig Tree Naturalist Foundation was incorporated on 27th July 2021 as a section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013 and rule 18 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014.

The Naturalist School is a registered trademark of the Fig Tree Naturalist Foundation.

To set our intentions for the foundation, we held extensive discussions and visualisation exercises with different stakeholders, founders, advisors, environmental experts and community members. We wanted to ensure that the vision and mission accurately reflect the core values and aspirations of The Naturalist School. The vision that emerged:

‘To build a sustainable future for the planet that encourages coexistence with nature’

And the mission:

‘To foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of our natural world by bringing alive the naturalist in each one of us’

These statements are shaped by a shared belief in the importance of environmental education, conservation, and fostering a deep connection with nature.

They encapsulate the overarching goals and guiding principles that drive our work.



OUR FIRST YEAR PROGRAMMES

The Naturalist School aims to provide high standards of education and certification to learners. We want to enhance their nature-interpretation skills in order to create a positive influence on visitors, their surroundings, and ultimately on conservation and climate change.

One of the ways we approach this is through capacity-building programmes. We develop and strengthen the skills, abilities and resources that organisations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in a fast-changing world.



After our proposal to add a new Qualification Pack(QP) to formalise the job roles for Nature Guides and Naturalists in India, we are happy to have introduced the Nature Guide QP adhering to the National Occupational Standards (NOS), and registered under the National Council for Vocational Education and Training, with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. These standards form benchmarks for the education and training programs, while leading to a viable vocation.

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMMES

Nature Guides 101



Kishan Bagh,
Jaipur, Rajasthan



6 participants



9 days

Aiding the professional growth of local youth

The Naturalist School's very first programme was held in Kishan Bagh, a popular tourist destination developed by the environmentalist Pradeep Kishan. Here, we trained 6 youth from the local community in a 9-day programme.

In a true validation of our focus on employability, 2 people were selected to work as Naturalists at the park, right after the programme.



Ethics, Role & Responsibilities of a Naturalist



Nagarahole Tiger Reserve, Karnataka



30 Participants



3 days

Encouraging reflection on ethical considerations

We conducted a 3-day workshop on the Ethics, Role & Responsibilities of a Naturalist. The participants were 30 Naturalists from ecolodges in and around the Nagarahole Tiger Reserve.

The workshop focussed on critical thinking and decision-making skills integral to navigating ethical dilemmas at work. It also helped foster a sense of stewardship towards both human and natural communities.



This workshop was carried out in association with the Nagarahole Tiger Reserve, Karnataka Forest Department & Jungle Lodges & Resorts. Collaborating with them to reskill the Naturalists was a fulfilling experience.

We truly believe Naturalists are change-makers. Through their interpretation and education, they connect visitors to the natural environment and promote conservation principles.



INDIA'S FIRST GOVT. RECOGNISED NATURE GUIDES

Nature Guides Course



Panna Tiger Reserve,
Madhya Pradesh



9 Participants



35 hours

Bringing in dignity and formal recognition

At Panna Tiger Reserve, we conducted India's first Skill India certification course for Nature Guides. This including an RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) component.

Our participants were Nature guides from a former poaching community, the Pardhis. The beneficiaries of the programme were identified by Last Wilderness Foundation, our partners. Since the candidates were already practicing nature guides, they were awarded with Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) certificates after the completion of the 35 hr course. The training covered nature interpretation, guiding techniques, green practices, communication skills, and gender sensitivity training.



With this certified course, we helped bring dignity and formal recognition for the community, which helps in their integration into society.

**The Naturalist School is the only training provider for the
Government of India Certified Nature Guide job role**



The Pardhis have been a nomadic hunting community since the time of the Mughal empire. They were once considered the children of the forests, but their identity took a beating when they, along with around 150 other tribes, were branded as a 'criminal tribe', segregated and forced to live in camps outside the village limits, facing extreme poverty, displacement and discrimination.

Due to combined efforts of the Forest Department and NGO's, a large part of the population have given up hunting. The 'Walk with the Pardhis', an initiative undertaken by Last Wilderness Foundation, aims to provide an alternative source of livelihood for the community members while utilising their already existing skill sets.



Community Nature Guides

Kathotiya Jungle Camp, MP



Continuing our collaboration with the Last Wilderness Foundation, we conducted a Community Nature Guide programme at the Kathotiya Jungle Camp, Madhya Pradesh, creating 15 youth change agents from the local community, largely made up of farmers.

COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS



MoU with Karnataka Forest Department

In Jan 2022, we partnered with the Karnataka Forest Department and signed a 10 year MOU to undertake capacity-building initiatives and create a talent pool of skilled Nature Guides, Naturalists and Nature Educators.

Naturalist Centre of Excellence

In March 2022, we facilitated the set up of India's first Naturalist Centre of Excellence (NCOE) in partnership with the Karnataka Forest Department.



Naturalist
Centre Of Excellence

Nestled amidst 42 acre forest land, the training centre allows us to create a nurturing and learning environment where individuals can fully immerse themselves in the study of nature, engage in hands-on activities, and develop practical skills.

We envision the space to be a hub for collaboration, networking, and community engagement. It provides a space for naturalists, researchers, and enthusiasts to come together.



INDIA'S FIRST NATURALIST CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE (NCOE)



The inauguration of the Naturalist Centre of Excellence on the 23rd of March 2022.



NCOE is the Training Centre for Skill India certified courses and has been accredited by the Tourism and Hospitality Skill Sector.

TEAM

Directors



Priya V.

A consummate educator, Priya has worked with leadership teams from across the world as a consultant and coach over the past two decades. She has been associated with WWF, Ecoedu Consultants, Jungle Lodges and Resorts and various Ecotourism Boards and Forest Depts across India. Priya has crossed the Arctic and Antarctic Circles as a climate change ambassador. She is also passionate about theatre & storytelling and has directed acclaimed productions.



Dr. Neharika Vohra

Currently the Vice Chancellor at Delhi Skill & Entrepreneurship University, Prof. (Dr.) Vohra has been a faculty member at IIM Ahmedabad for over two decades where she headed 'Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship' (CIIE). She is a passionate advocate of skill based education and believes that 'Behind everything we consume, or has survived over time, the underlying issue is skill and it doesn't come by learning theory'.

Volunteers



Latha Krishna



Shalini Mythri

THE ROAD AHEAD

Our future plans

In the coming months, we hope to:

- Reach out to communities in 5 more states across India in the coming year.
- Conduct the 200-hour Skill India Nature Guide course.
- Formalise the introduction of the Naturalist QP under the Skill India Mission.
- Engage with citizens in programmes to help bring awareness and curiosity in nature amongst us.
- Integrate skill based courses into the academic curriculum in universities at the under-graduate level in line with the The Central government's National Education Policy (NEP).

As we conclude this report, we ask you to join us in a thought experiment.

Imagine, for instance, one of those aerial maps of the country with twinkling lights scattered across. As we watch, the lights spread across towns, across villages. The lights could represent anything-- from the actual number of lightbulbs to, say, the number of households or buildings. But here is a thought. What if they represented the number of naturalists in the country?

At The Naturalist School, it is our vision, that, someday, as we travel across the land, we will be able to meet a Naturalist in every locality, suburb or village. These Naturalists would be attuned to their surroundings, passionate about nature, and eager to share its wonders with the rest of the world.

What a bright future that would be for us all!

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS



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FINANCIALS

FIG TREE NATURALIST FOUNDATION U85300KA2021NPL149978 BALANCE SHEET AS ON 31ST MARCH 2022			
	Particulars	Note No.	As at March 31, 2022 INR (In ,000).
I.	EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
(1)	Share holders' funds		
	(a) Share capital	3	200
	(b) Reserves and Surplus	4	27
(2)	Non-current liabilities		
	(a) Long-term borrowings	5	-
(3)	Current liabilities		
	(a) Short-term borrowings		
	(b) Trade payables	6	222
	(c) Short-term provisions		
	(d) Other current liabilities	7	2
	TOTAL		450
II.	ASSETS		
(1)	Non-current assets		
	(a) (i) Property, Plant and Equipment		
	(ii) Intangible assets	8	10
	(iii) Capital work-in-progress		
	(iv) Intangible assets under development		
	(b) Non-Current investments		
	(c) Long-term loans and advances		
	(d) Other non-current assets		
(2)	Current assets		
	(a) Inventories		
	(b) Trade receivables	9	81
	(c) Cash and cash equivalents	10	337
	(d) Short-term loans and advances	11	-
	(e) Other current assets	12	22
	TOTAL		450
To be read with the notes and schedules attached to and forming part of the accounts.			
For and on behalf of Board Fig Tree Naturalist Foundation		As per our report even date of	
 PRIYA VENKITESWARAN Director DIN:02319433		 NEHARIKA VOHRA Director DIN:06808439	
		 SMITHA SAILESH Chartered Accountant (Membership No.:104984)	
Place: Bangalore			
Date : 29-09-2022			

FINANCIALS

FIG TREE NATURALIST FOUNDATION U85300KA2021NPL149978			
Statement of Income and Expenditure for the Period ended 31st March 2022			
	Particulars	Note No	As at 31st March 2022 INR (In ,000)
A	Income		
	Donations and Grants	12	485
	Other Income	13	-
	Total Revenue		485
B	Expenditure		
	Programme Expenses	14	179
	Employee Benefits	15	200
	Finance Cost	16	-
	Depreciation		-
	Other Expenses	17	79
	Total Expenses		458
C	Surplus / (Deficit) before Exceptional Items and Tax		27
	Exceptional Items		-
D	Surplus / (Deficit) After Exceptional Items		27
E	Surplus / (Deficit) for the year		27

For and on behalf of Board
Fig Tree Naturalist Foundation

As per my report of even date


PRIYA VENKITESWARAN
Director
DIN:02319433

NEHARIKA VOHRA
Director
DIN:06808439


SMITHA SAINI
Chartered Accountant
(Membership No.:104984)



Place: Bangalore
Date : 29-09-2022

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Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.

- John Muir



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