



# THE RIGHT WAY 2019-20



SCORP INDIA



# FOREWORD

## From the President

Geetanshu Singla, MSAI President 2019-20

Dear MSAI members,

'The right way' is a valuable addition to our set of publications for the term. The magazine is a first for 'SCORP'. It draws attention to current pertinent human right issues nationally and globally. Additionally it addresses the human rights situation of intersex persons.

For this issue, we have partnered with The Pink List for a greater insight into the topic. The magazine includes a finely interwoven perspective from the IFMSA SCORP International Team, the SCORP National Team and innumerable other enthusiastic members who are active human rights advocates. We hope this year, SCORP contributed to your journey being doctors, THE RIGHT WAY.

I congratulate Sahiba Maniar, NORP 2019-20 and her team of ever enthusiastic SCORPIONS for this incredible feat. I hope you have a pleasant read.

Regards,  
Geetanshu Singla



# LETTER FROM THE NORP

Sahiba Maniar, MSAI NORP 2019-20,  
IFMSA Program Coordinator Ethics and  
Human Rights in Health 2019-20  
MIMER Medical College, Pune

Have you ever seen a lion chain his lioness?  
Have you ever seen a crow break another nest?  
Have you ever seen an elephant disregard his child  
for being a darker Grey? Well humans do.

Do you still see a reason to advocate human  
rights? Our society has a deep rooted crater in the  
mindset often confusing culture with intolerance  
which needs to be land filled at the earliest with the  
right ideas, principles and beliefs. Children are  
stripped of their right to education. Depression and  
oppression is at its peak. Queer community is  
looking for acceptance. Women are forced to  
remain confined to their homes. Refugees are  
helplessly looking for shelter. Food and water is a  
privilege for some. And millions are violently  
beaten black and blue for merely existing.

A doctor's role goes far beyond diagnosis and  
surgeries. We mirror every part of the society. We  
are granted the possibility to bring out a change,  
hence lets be a part of it. SCORP gives you an  
opportunity to speak the unspoken, to support the  
disregarded and fight for the unrepresented. It  
gives you a platform to show our fellow humans,  
simply how another human should be treated.

Through our activities, campaigns, workshops and  
advocacy tools, SCORP has worked relentlessly  
towards making a Right world in a Peaceful  
way. This newsletter is our attempt to ignite the  
passion within every medical practitioner to churn  
a change and initiate a journey towards becoming  
doctors, **THE RIGHT WAY.**

One year as a National Officer, I wished To be a  
part of a change. I hoped to work on the areas and  
people we forgot the existence of.



SCORP to me is an extension of who I am today, it  
has redefined the person I want to be in future.

SCORP is about the people who join us. I am  
indebted to our previous National Officers, who  
have supported us through it all. Our dear National  
Assistant officers, Local officers, and all our  
volunteers, as the woods lead us to different paths,  
I thank you for joining us on this journey. I  
congratulate you for being a part of a magnificent  
change. This term, it was all about you. Your  
passion, Your motivation and your efforts. As it  
ends, I hope SCORP leaves an imprint on all your  
lives. I sincerely hope the essence of humanity and  
the quest for equality shines through all the work  
you choose to do and the growth you yearn for. I  
hope you look for the horizon every time the  
opportunities of the sky meet the infinities of the  
sea and are blanketed by the ignorance of humans  
at the shore.

Amalgamating all our efforts through these years,  
join us celebrate as we transform a million lives  
and make this world a better place. Here's wishing  
you a happy, inspiring and fulfilling read.

*Signing off,*

*Your National Officer on Human  
Rights and Peace, 2019-20*

# A STARTLING STRUGGLE

Aditi Bajaj, MSAI LORP 2019-20  
Grant Government Medical College, Mumbai

**It takes no compromise to give people their rights...it takes no money to respect the individual. It takes no political deal to give people freedom. It takes no survey to remove repression.-Harvey Milk**

Snatching what you acquired? Still okay. But snatching what you were born with? Unacceptable.

Sadly, such is the situation today. It's startling how there's been immense progress in the path of development and technology, yet the world still struggles with giving people their basic human rights. Here, as one begins to question what lies in the basic definition of a human right, a vast array of questions will flash-

Why are certain places still bound on religious grounds?  
Why are women still caught in the shackles of injustice with their right to life and right to choice hovering?

What about the tribulation of refugees?

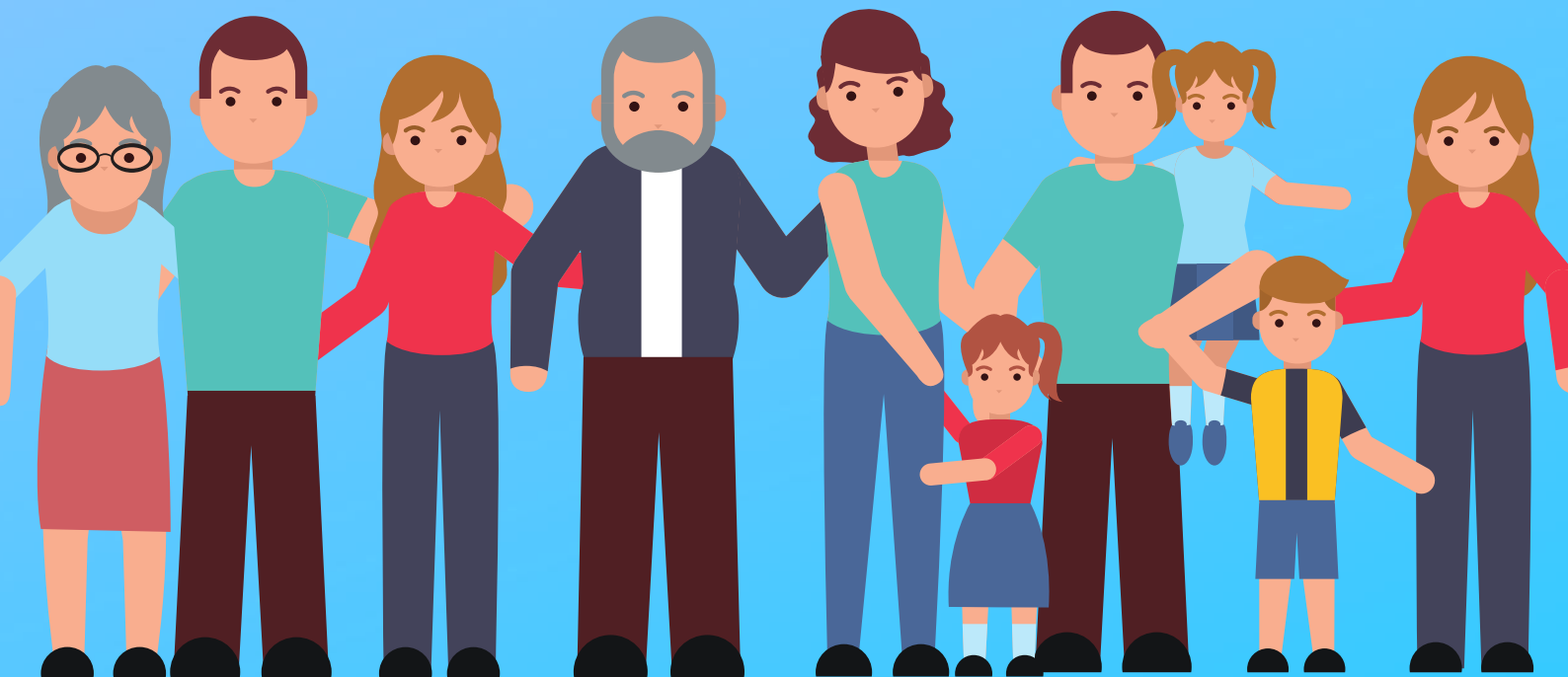
What about the journalists, who express their opinion, hovering between life and death by their opponents?

Topping the list are those who would be ready to spend their mere coins to step into school, only had their struggle for survival permitted.

Gradually, as all of these come into our field of vision, we realize that what lies before us is a long, arduous journey before we can truly call everyone 'equal'.



# HUMANS OF *Human Rights*



# Inspirers, Dreamers & Fighters

Chinmay Trivedi, LORP, GMERS Medical College,  
Gandhinagar, Gujarat

Human rights reflect the minimum standards necessary for people to live with dignity. Human rights give people the freedom to choose how they live, how they express themselves, and what kind of government they want to support, among many other things. Finally, by guaranteeing life, liberty, equality, and security, human rights protect people against abuse by those who are more powerful.

With all these darkness in the world, fortunately enough we have our torch-bearers too paving and leading the path.

Be it Kailash Satyarthi who is credited with rescuing more than 80,000 children from child and bonded labour since the 1980s and starting the "Bachpan Bachao Andolan" in 1980; or an acid attack survivor, Lakshmi Agarwal, director of the Chhanv Foundation, an NGO that fights for the cause of acid attack victims in India; or Bezwada Wilson who vehemently campaigned against the manual scavenging and saved and helped rehabilitate 3 lakh manual scavengers out of an estimated number of 6 lakh people still involved in this activity; or Sunitha Krishnan, co-founder of Prajwala for rescuing victims of sex trafficking and rehabilitating them into mainstream society.

These are Humans of Human Rights who will keep on restoring our faith that this world can and will turn into a better place to live and prosper.

The maintenance of international peace and security is one of the purposes of the United Nations Charter. Violence and conflict undermine sustainable development. Human rights violations are at the root causes of conflict and insecurity which, in turn, invariably result in further violations of human rights. Hence, all of us as a community must come forward to protect our human rights for us and everyone around and lead to a society which is healthier, promoting progress and finally leading to a better living.



**KAILASH SATYARTHI**



**LAKSHMI AGARWAL**



**SUNITHA KRISHNAN**

# The Eye Of MOSUL

Sri Hari Govind K N, MSAI VPE Assistant, 2019-20  
Mahatma Gandhi Medical College and Research Institute,  
Puducherry

*The caged bird sings  
With a fearful trill  
Of things unknown  
But longed for still  
And his tune is heard  
On the distant hill  
For the caged bird  
Sings of freedom.-*

*Maya Angelou [Caged Bird]*

A young historian caught under the deep trenches of war, unable to flee the occupation of his homeland, by the Islamic state of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), braved incredible odds and risked his very neck to shed light on the opaque happenings inside the caliphate controlled territory.

Under the pen name of 'Independent Historian', ever since the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), took over Mosul in June 2014 he created an anonymous blog in both Arabic and English called the "Mosul Eye".

While pretending to be a sympathizer he chronicled the atrocities and the brutality of the caliphate.

He documented the stoning's of alleged adulterers, men being thrown off the tops of buildings for being homosexual, destruction of ancient buildings, burning of libraries, bombing of churches and mosques, frequent public executions and secret killings- some of the most cruellest stories known to man.

"Bear in mind, I'm telling you this, the best I can, but there is really no language that can describe it."- Omar Mohammed

**Kailash Satyarthi**

In this era of misinformation and post truth, the Mosul eye became an important source of vital information for the outside world covering the IS occupation of Mosul, and for those trapped in the city it became a trusted news source which offered the oppressed and persecuted residents a "Beacon of hope".



A dark blue background featuring a large, detailed crescent moon on the right side. Scattered throughout the scene are numerous hand-drawn stars in various colors including purple, cyan, orange, pink, yellow, and light blue. Each star has a simple outline and some have diagonal hatching. The text 'GLOBAL ISSUES' is centered in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

# GLOBAL ISSUES





# CLIMATE ACTION FOR PEACE: IT STARTS WITH YOU!

Batara Bisuk,

IFMSA Asia Pacific Regional Assistant for SCORP 2019-20  
Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia.

*Climate change is unfair. While rich countries can fight against rising oceans and dying farm fields, poor people around the world are already having their lives upended, and their human rights threatened - by killer storms, starvation and the loss of their own lands. - Mary Robinson*

International Day of Peace 2019 Celebration with the theme of "Climate Action for Peace" has officially ended, but we have to keep the spirit to achieve sustainable development goal 13 "Climate Action" alive because our world is facing real threats from the climate change effects and nobody will remain untouched by its impacts.

Climate change brings problems to international peace and security. Natural disasters displace three times as many people as conflicts, forcing millions to leave their homes and seek safety elsewhere. The salinization of water and crops is endangering food security, and the impact on public health is escalating.

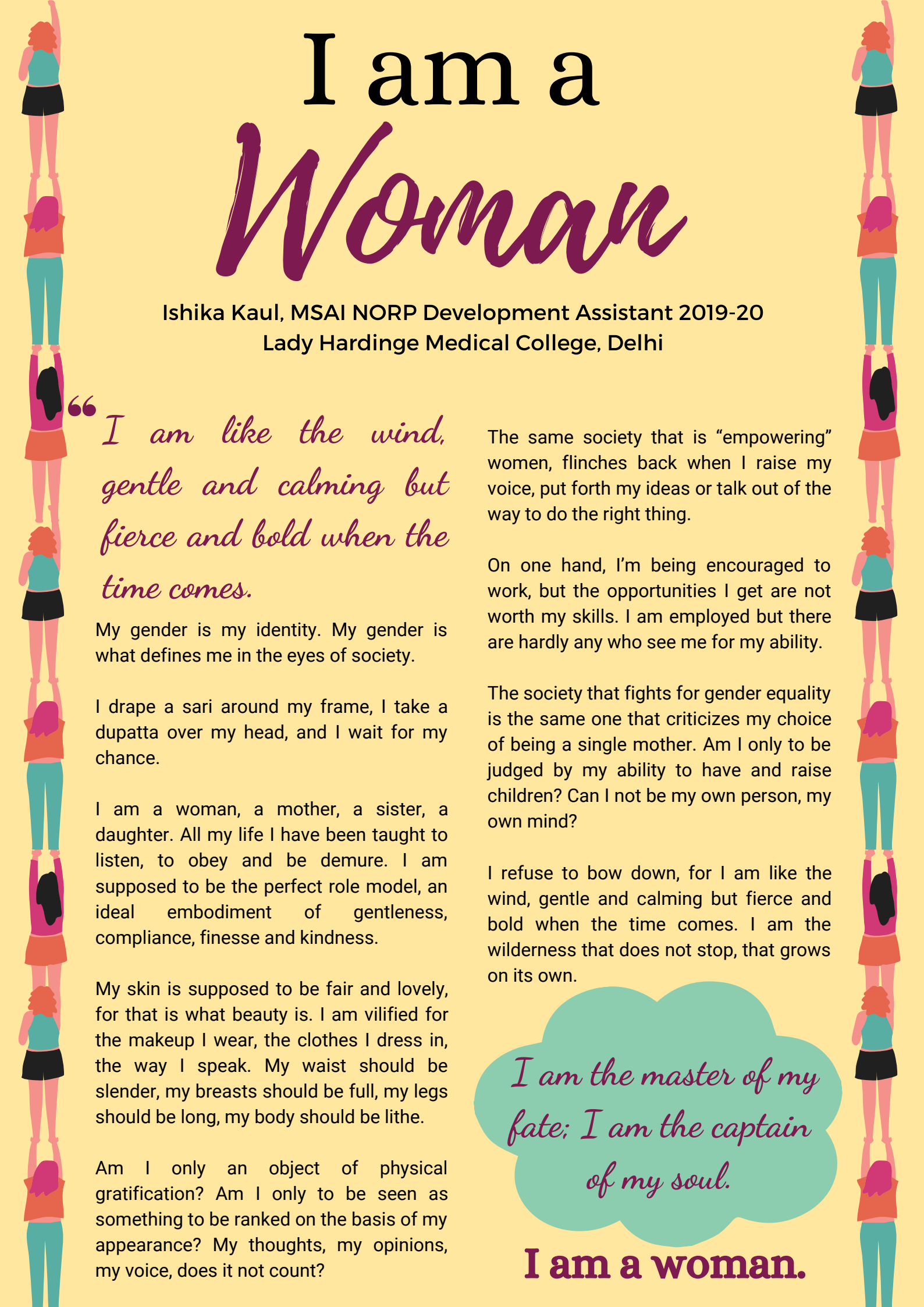
The growing tensions over resources and mass movements of people are affecting every country on every continent. These problems will be especially sharp in countries where poverty, exclusion, inequality, and injustice are already entrenched. If the relationship between climate change and violent conflict is not addressed, there will be a vicious circle of failure to adapt to climate change, worsening the risk of violent conflict and, in turn, reducing further the ability to adapt.

Peace can only be achieved if concrete action is taken to combat climate change. It's not only one person's responsibility, but it's all of the people in this world's responsibilities. Moreover, it's our responsibility!

What can we do especially as the youth? Here I give you some suggestions.

You can be the actor in raising awareness, running educational programs, promoting sustainable lifestyles, conserving nature, supporting renewable energy, implementing adaptation and mitigation projects. Maybe all these things seem hard to implement. So here I give you the easiest one, by adopting environmentally-friendly practices such as recycling, using public transportation, going paperless, avoiding single-use plastics and turning off electricity when you don't use it.

Don't wait until our world getting worse, act now because climate action for peace - it starts with you!



# I am a Woman

Ishika Kaul, MSAI NORP Development Assistant 2019-20  
Lady Hardinge Medical College, Delhi

“*I am like the wind,  
gentle and calming but  
fierce and bold when the  
time comes.*”

My gender is my identity. My gender is what defines me in the eyes of society.

I drape a sari around my frame, I take a dupatta over my head, and I wait for my chance.

I am a woman, a mother, a sister, a daughter. All my life I have been taught to listen, to obey and be demure. I am supposed to be the perfect role model, an ideal embodiment of gentleness, compliance, finesse and kindness.

My skin is supposed to be fair and lovely, for that is what beauty is. I am vilified for the makeup I wear, the clothes I dress in, the way I speak. My waist should be slender, my breasts should be full, my legs should be long, my body should be lithe.

Am I only an object of physical gratification? Am I only to be seen as something to be ranked on the basis of my appearance? My thoughts, my opinions, my voice, does it not count?

The same society that is “empowering” women, flinches back when I raise my voice, put forth my ideas or talk out of the way to do the right thing.

On one hand, I’m being encouraged to work, but the opportunities I get are not worth my skills. I am employed but there are hardly any who see me for my ability.

The society that fights for gender equality is the same one that criticizes my choice of being a single mother. Am I only to be judged by my ability to have and raise children? Can I not be my own person, my own mind?

I refuse to bow down, for I am like the wind, gentle and calming but fierce and bold when the time comes. I am the wilderness that does not stop, that grows on its own.

*I am the master of my  
fate; I am the captain  
of my soul.*

**I am a woman.**



# Designer Babies

## AN ENDLESS CONUNDRUM

Sharwari Bodkhey, MSAI LORP 2019-20

Smt. Kashibai Navale Medical College, Pune

Genetic editing has opened up a Pandora's box which has stirred a wide array of novel ideas not only among scientists but amongst varied sections of society.

One such case that sparked debate between different strata of the society about the ethical considerations was that of Lulu and Nana, Chinese twin girls who were given birth by IVF technology and their genome was modified using CRISPR/Cas9 technology to alter the CCR5 gene associated with HIV genetic alteration inherited from their father. The emergence of this novel genetic approach led to halting of all genome editing projects by WHO.

Can you imagine creating a baby made with each and every trait berry picked and customized to your needs? This exactly is the concept of designer babies.

A designer baby is one whose genetic makeup has been altered to include a particular gene or genes and/or removal undesired genes. It certainly has several advantages. For one, it provides a promising solution to genetic diseases like sickle cell anemia, Tay-sachs disease, Down Syndrome, Hunter's syndrome etc. as well as inherited diseases like HIV and cancers especially resistant lymphocytic leukaemia, thereby decreasing several abortions and infant deaths. It will increase the chances of survival in embryos and allow parents with genetic disabilities to conceive genetically normal children who will not only be able to live a productive personal life as well as contribute to the economy of the country.

“*The best way to predict your future is to create it.*”

— *Abraham Lincoln*

However, one cannot ignore the potential risks associated with it including the risks of introducing new genes and altering gene pools. It has also opened a platform of debate amongst ethicists, humanists and scientists all over the world on the concept of human enhancement and human rights. We are aiming to enhance human race in terms of their various traits, but who decides what is better and what is the best? And if such an institution is made to be established, will it further widen the gap between different socioeconomic classes of the society.

Moreover, by applying genome editing in practice, the division between germ line and somatic line will become blurred, which will require significant adjustments in regulation. It also has legal aspects in a way that is going to cast in a new light on the distinction between the stances of protecting life and giving priority to personal autonomy in reproductive rights.

The very thought of it puts us into a huge dilemma. It seems right out of Greek Mythology in which Goddess Athena gave birth right out of her mind. Genome editing has forced us to rethink the dichotomies between natural and artificial human existence. If there is a line between the two then where and when should it be drawn.

# INDIA'S BLACK HOLE

SCORP National Team 2019-20 Addresses its issue to Asia Pacific

*"Agar firdaus bar ru-ye zamin ast,  
Hamin ast o hamin ast o hamin ast"*

*"If there is a paradise on earth,  
It is this, it is this and it is this."*

These beautiful words about Kashmir were written by the great Persian poet Amir Khusro.

Today, Kashmir trembles. In the largest democracy of the world, the world's most secular soil there has ever been, a piece of the most beautiful land breathes under constant fear, unrest, violence and unpredictability.

After the Independence of India from the British rule, August 1947 saw the wake of two powerful nations of India and Pakistan. Kashmir remained a coveted state for both known for its snow capped mountains, serene skies, crystalline lakes and distinct culture.

Kashmir received a special status for as long as 72 years. Due to administrative difficulties and an urge to develop the state, the government revoked the special status, making Kashmir an integral part of India. However they also imposed a questionable communication and Internet ban in the state.

This internet shutdown is an unlawful attempt of the government to avoid criticism and to prevent people from sharing their views with respect to the current changes in the political scenario. People were unable to share news of births or deaths, call their doctors, or trade apples and walnuts.

Kashmir remained a black hole for months. And shockingly, this isn't the first time. With the Internet ban and communication blackout, life in Kashmir remains a matter of speculation and concern for activists globally. Food remains scarce. Medicines are unavailable. Educational institutions are shut. Employees are jobless. The roads are isolated. The city is doomed. The state remains a constant battlefield of human rights. The life is sad. The powerful are arrested. The people are suffering. Government is silent. Media is ignorant. Citizens are helpless.

The Violations of human rights extend from Right to speech, Right to expression, Right to life, Right to health, Right to education and many many more.

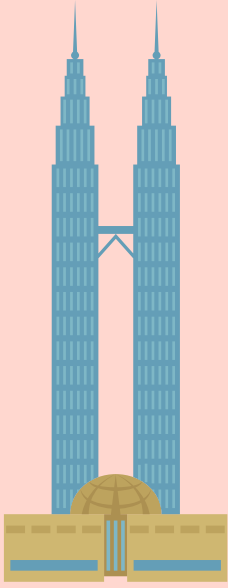
Democracy allows each of us the power to choose the life we wish to lead. This mockery of Human Rights and democracy revealed the supremacy of a few cratering the world of humanity making us live in delusion.

Tomorrow, the sun shall again rise in Kashmir. We await the day this dawn fills the brightness in the lives of the people in the most peaceful valleys of the Himalayas. We await a new sunrise. A new tomorrow.



# CAPACITY BUILDING





# Lights, Camera, **ACTION**

Katyayani Goswami, MSAI LEO 2019-20  
IFMSA ACTION IOC Chairperson  
Madras Medical College, Chennai

**ACTION is an abbreviation for Asian Collaborative Training on Infectious Diseases Outbreak, Natural Disaster, and Refugee Management.**

The ACTION initiative was started in 2004 and currently acts as the only transnational initiative within our region covering Disaster Management, Infectious Diseases, and Refugee's Health and Rights as the main field of work.

It is a transnational project spanning the Asia-Pacific region with an aim to train and educate medical students on Disaster Risk Reduction and Humanitarian Action and increase the capacity of medical students to be prepared in times of need.

When I started my ACTION journey as the Country Coordinator of India, I had no idea what was in store for me, after an year now and as the Chairperson of the International Organising Committee, I've come to realise what ACTION truly means.

It takes you through an emotional rollercoaster, you learn, you laugh and then you cry.

The sessions we attended at ACTION 2019 in Kuala Lumpur hit very close to home and brought us face to face with the hard-hitting reality of a refugee's health and rights, the sessions weren't just about imparting knowledge, they were much more than that, having actual refugees share their traumatic experiences and their fight against the system, undergoing simulations on disaster management, learning first hand about the role of medicine in emergencies expanded our views of what health-care truly meant.



**ACTION 2019, Malaysia**

While at ACTION I met people from across the Asia-Pacific and I realised how incredibly rich our culture is, we are incredibly diverse yet so similar, it was a beautiful experience and the bonds we shared will remain forever.

# TNHRT

## Training New Human Right Trainers

Ishika Kaul, MSAI NORP Development Assistant 2019-20  
Lady Hardinge Medical College, Delhi

Away from the hustle and bustle of big cities, in the quiet little town of Pondicherry, a passionate group of medical students set on the journey to becoming human rights advocates. TNHRT was held from 25th to 29th September 2019, under GoSCORP India!

23 participants, 2 trainers, 300 hours of preceding hard work, 96 hours of intensive sessions and viola!  
A NEW HUMAN RIGHTS TRAINER EMERGED.

Over the span of 5 days, we participated in interactive activities and sessions oriented towards various aspects of Human Rights. We also had the opportunity to meet Dr Kiran Bedi, the Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry. Having participants from across the world, we talked about the diversity that exists in various regions.

It was a wholesome learning experience which helped us understand and explore the horizons of human rights and healthcare. TNHRT opened avenues for me that I had not considered and explored.



It gave me the skills, knowledge and confidence to stand up for my own rights and those who could not speak for themselves. A sense of responsibility and duty was instilled in me, to be the voice of the vulnerable, to show that humanity still cared.

Over the 5 days, I made a family from across the world. We may not speak very often, but all of us know that we stand for each other and together. The experience was amazing and above all, something I would never forget.

The unmistakable French connection, the tree lined boulevards, the endless stretches of unspoilt virgin beaches and restaurants serving a melange of cuisines was the cherry on top!"



# Pocket Full of Sunshine!

## GoSCORP INDIA 2019

Rajneesh Khurana, International Delegate  
Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Batumi

First time experiences are always the ones that are most remembered and cherished in life. Such was my experience, first ever IFMSA event, that too in my home country where I was an International delegate.

GoSCORP India 2019, has been over 6 months, still feels like yesterday. Puducherry, Mumbai, or Lonavala, each destination at GoSCORP was a new learning. Working with other delegates was equally insightful. All this because everyone at GoSCORP, from organizers to the NORPs were so accommodating and helpful. We made a family, from all across the world.

Learning by doing, learning while enjoying; everything was planned around in the event. Activities and lectures were wholesome. To freshen us up after the tiring days of work, socials were bang on. Mumbai midnight cycling was my favorite one. Celebrating navratri with Garba was such an eventful night, a perfect end to the Mumbai lag of GoSCORP India. Lonavala, amongst the hills, soft breeze and rains was paradise. I made friends for lifetime.



I cannot thank Gayathri, Sneha, Sahiba, Pranav, Jahnvi and other OCs enough more for a plethora of experiences given and memories made. Good luck, cheers! "





# ACTIVITIES



# NOT JUST EQU 'ALL' ITY



Alina Rizvi, MSAI LOME, 2019-20  
RCSM GMC, Kolhapur

Mommy, which colour T-shirt should I wear, pink or blue? Why is that man wearing a saree? Dad, why only mom and grandma cook in kitchen? These are a few questions out of a million questions a child asks his/her parents while growing up, discovering things.

In these brief moments shaping a child's point of view plays a huge role in their life placing them in predefined grids.

One such amazing opportunity to do so was in, "Not Just EqALLity" event. We discussed about gender rolls, gender stereotyping, how it affects our society and what they can do about it. And the last cherry on top discussion was about those people who broke stereotypes.

## SAVE THE ARMOR

We, the students of Goa Medical College, conducted the event, 'BLEEDING ARMOR', on 15th October 2019.

We talked about laws for the safety of doctors and its status in India and abroad, where its implementation is better and the law is more stringent. In our country, the court proceedings are time consuming and expensive which is the main reason why many doctors are reluctant to file cases of violence against them. This was followed by a very heated debate where the participants were given 3 imaginary situations. 'Legalization of use of weapons by doctors in case of violence against them' Most of them agreed as the safety of the doctor always comes first. But few argued that it is the police's responsibility not doctor's. 'Implementation of severe punishment for the attendant if he causes harm to the doctor.'

Let alone children, if we see our family/friends/relatives/strangers mocking others, it is only a matter of minutes to answer and stop them and give them few human rights ideas. Sensitising others about the fact that everyone has an independent role to play and feelings involved, might later stop them from harassing or passing comments at others.

We are aware that, human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.

What we must add is Respect. To respect and be respected. Regardless of difference in race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. In the end, it is love, compassion and respect we have for each other help us become better humans.

Mansi Pankaj Rizvi, MSAI LORP, 2019-20  
Goa Medical College

They put forward that capital punishment is not wrong as the doctor is not guilty.

The others argued that proper implementation of current law will be more effective. 'If the patient is a case of terminal illness and has very less chance of survival, the doctor has the right to refuse treatment.' Most of them countered it, as we have joined this profession because we are passionate about it and we know that we can make a change. It's not acceptable that we wash our hands whenever it is a difficult case. We try our level best to cure the patient and if we refuse treatment, eventually the quality of healthcare will go down.

It was a truly amazing argument and all of them enjoyed the event a lot.

# Udaan

Mugdha, MSAI LORP 2019-20  
MIMSR, Ambala

**“OUR MIND IS NOT A  
VESSEL TO BE FILLED,  
BUT A FIRE TO BE  
KINDLED”**

It's easy for an educated person to keep his mind loaded and keep him from giving someone the benefit of doubt. Right to Education: we are aware it is a basic human right. But did this right reach every human? Well, NO

It didn't especially to the women and girls. No education means easy target by the society that ultimately results in discrimination. Women were and still are considered the inferior gender. We talk only talk about women empowerment, educating the girls and gender equality but when it comes to action the outcome we get is disappointing.

“There is no limit to what we as women can accomplish” Women empowerment can be achieved only if the females are educated.



SCORP-INDIA launched an activity 'UDAAN' that focused on women's education. The aim was to teach non-literate women above the age of 25 the basics like alphabets, numbers, writing their name and signatures, reciting the days of week and months. I conducted the event in collaboration with 'Inner wheel shine Bathinda' (It is an all women club and is a part of 'International inner wheel').

With a smile so bright all the participants knew it was a new beginning for them. We started the event by telling them about the importance of education. We continued by teaching them the basic numbers, how to write their name and signature in their local language and how to read a clock.

The members of the club also distributed stationery to all our participants and the event was culminated with a small treat.

Education can change a man's life. Educating the young girls and women is a sure way of giving them a power over their life. So educate the girls because each time a women stands up herself she stands up all women.



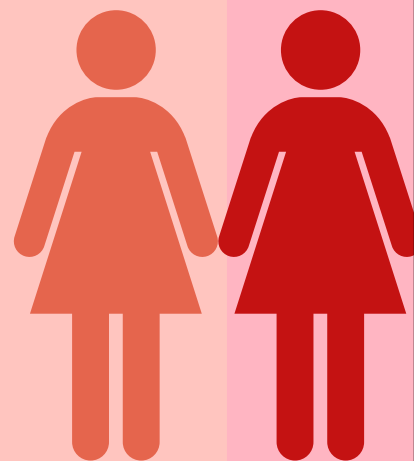
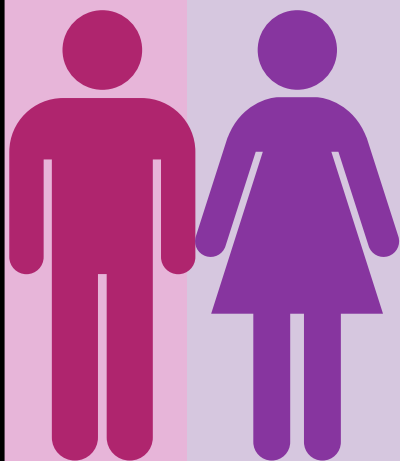
**LOVE**

**IS A TERRIBLE  
THING TO HATE**

**LOVE**

**IS A HUMAN  
RIGHT**

**All Queer, without Fear  
in conversation with**





# *In Conversation with* **ANISH GAWANDE**

**The Pink List has completed one year this month, tell us something about it.**

You're right! The year has gone by so quickly. We started Pink List India with the aim of providing a space for conversations around politics and LGBTQ+ rights in the lead-up to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. By highlighting candidates who had made favourable statements on LGBTQ+ rights, we wanted to showcase that it wasn't just urban, upper class leaders who were queer-friendly - it was also farmers' leaders, politicians from rural constituencies and smaller cities who stood up for the community.

**Why did you feel the need to develop this list?**

Growing up in Mumbai, I never thought that I would be able to come out of the closet. I was always interested in politics and public policy, I always wanted to join the civil services or enter electoral politics. The idea of being openly gay and in either of those fields seemed absurd! Staying in the closet, however, was incredibly suffocating.

Finally, at 19, I came out - and accepted that I would have no future back home in India. All that changed when I was invited to be a campaign manager for the Lok Sabha elections. I left the United States (where I was studying at the time), came back home and went on a roller-coaster journey into politics as an out gay man!

That's when the idea of Pink List India came about. As I travelled across Maharashtra, I realised that we were more queer-friendly than I had anticipated. That gave me hope. And I had to share that hope with so many others like me, who may have felt that they had to choose between their dreams and their sexuality.

**What was the most challenging part about curating this list?**

I think the research involved was back-breaking. We were operating on a very short timeframe - parties often declared candidates only two weeks before the day of voting - so I had to go through thousands of pages of archival material while simultaneously being on the campaign trail.

What was also difficult to explain was intersectionality? Just because politicians have made favourable statements towards the LGBTQ+ community does not mean that they are not Islamophobic, casteist, or misogynistic. We've always firmly maintained that we do not endorse anyone on the list or support them - we are an archive that's putting out information in the public domain for scholars, activists, and members of the community to act upon.

**How accepting is India towards the Queer community representation in Indian Politics?**

Unfortunately, we currently have very limited queer representation in Indian politics! Apart from a few members of the transgender community who have been elected as municipal corporators in parts of the country, we have no openly LGBTQ+ people in different levels of electoral politics. There's certainly a lot of stigma, a lot of uncertainty around how open you can be about your sexuality. But that's changing - quickly - for the better.

**How do you think this list would change the current scenario of queer representation in Indian politics?**

This is the first step towards a more inclusive future. I hope that the list inspired young LGBTQ+ Indians to dare to dream, to think about a future in politics.



# *In Conversation with*

## **ANISH GAWANDE**

I also hope that the list is used by activists and those in distress to find accepting politicians who are allies who can help them in times of need. I'll give you an example: in the current COVID-19 crisis, the transgender community has been hit particularly hard. With Pink List India, we've managed to reach out to Supriya Sule - an NCP MP from Baramati who's on the list - to provide emergency ration kits to members of the community in Pune. This wouldn't have happened if we didn't know which politicians were LGBTQ+ friendly.

### **What are the different human right violations you have faced for belonging to the Queer community?**

There's a range of direct and indirect human rights violations that continue unabated for queer individuals. I'll give you two examples. The first is the need to come out - which is an incredibly emotionally draining and complex process, made harder by the lack of acceptance from families and larger social networks. The second is a direct assault on queer bodies by the state - through regressive legislations like the recently passed Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019. The Act, which claims to benefit the transgender community, has actually pushed back the fight for transgender rights in India by several years. It has incredibly condemnable provisions - like the need to "prove" to a screening committee that you are transgender. What's worse, the punishment for raping a transgender person is only 6 months to 2 years in jail - compared to 7 years to life imprisonment for raping a women. The pathetic law has actually reduced transgender persons to second-class citizens.

### **What is the greatest cause of discrimination against the Queer community in India?**

The greatest cause is ignorance - and a fear of the unknown. There's also larger causes:

THE GREATEST STRUGGLE WAS RECONCILING WITH THE FACT THAT I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE THE SAME THINGS THAT I WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HAD I BEEN STRAIGHT.

there's deep casteism in the treatment of the transgender community, which has been historically marginalised. There's also patriarchal mindsets that don't allow members of the queer community - particularly women - to express themselves freely. There's also allied forms of discrimination. We cannot forget that queer people are also Dalit, also Muslim, also adivasi, also differently abled. In the current socio-political scenario, each of these identities is under attack.

### **What kinds of feelings did you battle when you acknowledged to yourself about being queer?**

For me, the greatest struggle was reconciling with the fact that I would not be able to achieve the same things that I would have been able to had I been straight. I have to think several times over before coming out in a public setting, I have to be careful about what I say about my sexuality on a public forum - because this might be used against me if I ever run for an election, or become part of a political party. Already, there's been vicious trolling on the internet - on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram - with several comments on my posts calling for the rape, murder, and humiliation of the LGBTQ+ community. It's difficult to come out to yourself when you know that it's going to be that much harder to fight it out there in the real world than it would be if you pretended to be straight.



# *In Conversation with* **ANISH GAWANDE**

**Did you face any differential treatment from your friends or family once you came out to them?**

Thankfully, I have been blessed with an incredibly warm and accepting family and set of friends! Of course, this isn't the case with everyone - and that's okay as well. Because queerness teaches you one thing: there are families of birth and families of choice. If one abandons you, you always have the other to fall back on.

**What kinds of things might a person go through when coming out?**

The first thing that many young queer people coming out face is physical or verbal abuse, especially if they come out as trans. Parents have been known to beat their children, send them to babas to "cure" them of their queerness, or send them to quack doctors who say they can "treat" their homosexuality. There's also the real danger of being thrown out of your house - which is why I always recommend to young queer people that they create some savings and find alternative support systems before coming out to their families. Finally, there's other challenges including a dismissal of your sexuality by parents who might think that this is just a "phase." Of course, I've not even gone into the challenges you face while trying to find employment - we know that most workplaces in India are not queer-friendly. What's worse, we don't have an anti-discrimination law in this country - so employers can fire you for being gay!



*There are families of birth and families of choice. If one abandons you, you always have the other to fall back on.*

**How must one react to a person who comes out to you in your college or workplace?**

With acceptance! Don't ask "are you the man or woman in the relationship." Don't ask "so what are your private parts like now." Basically, don't ask any questions that you wouldn't ask in any decent conversation. Offer support and ask if you can help them in any way - by attending queer events with a colleague who's come out, by accompanying a friend in college to a therapist if they need counselling. That's the best response you can have.

**How has the decriminalisation of Section 377 impacted the lives of the Queer community?**

The decriminalisation of Section 377 was a landmark judgement by the Supreme Court of India, which struck down provisions of the Indian Penal Code that made "carnal intercourse against the order of nature" illegally. Section 377 had been used to harass and blackmail members of the LGBTQ+ community, particularly transgender persons and sex workers. It was also used by employers to deny same-sex couples insurance or other benefits. Now that it's gone, it has been a major victory for both the lived realities and social acceptance of queer persons in the country.

**What kind of challenges and barriers do people still face after the decriminalisation of Section 377?**

The first priority is amending the regressive Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 - which I've spoken about earlier. The next priority is introducing a robust anti-discrimination act that will protect all individuals - regardless of caste, class, religion, sexuality, or gender identity - against discrimination in both the public and private sector. Of course, the larger fight and struggles are the same as for everyone else: the creation of a more just, a more humane, and a more equal society that we can all thrive within.



# *In Conversation with* **ANISH GAWANDE**

**How can one support LGBTQ people in today's times?**

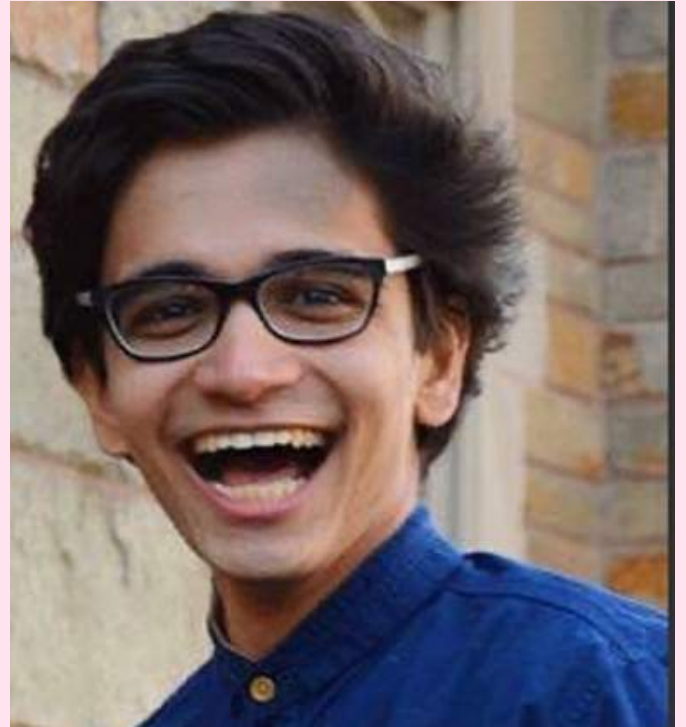
To begin with, donate to grassroots LGBTQ+ organisations providing COVID-19 relief to members of the community in distress! You can find an entire list at [pinklistindia.com/queerrelief](http://pinklistindia.com/queerrelief). In addition, write to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to demand an amendment to the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020. You can find a sample email and amendments to attach at [pinklistindia.com/transactrules](http://pinklistindia.com/transactrules).

**How must medical students contribute towards making patient centric care, queer friendly?**

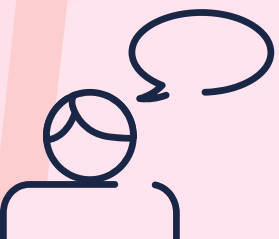
Medical students have the greatest responsibility towards ensuring that healthcare is queer-inclusive. Queerness has been pathologised for too long, treated as a disorder or an abnormality. Medical students need to familiarise themselves with transgender rights, with concerns faced by queer and trans persons and respond to patients accordingly. Doctors are often the first people that individuals confide in when they're coming out: it's their duty to sensitise themselves and be a safe space for people to come out, for them to know that they're just as normal as anyone else.

**Don't ask "Are you the man or woman in the relationship."**

**Don't ask "So what are your private parts like now."**



ANISH GAWANDE IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE DARA SHIKOH FELLOWSHIP AND THE CO-FOUNDER OF PINK LIST INDIA. HE GRADUATED WITH A DEGREE IN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AND SOCIETY FROM COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY AND IS CURRENTLY A RHODES SCHOLAR PURSUING A DEGREE IN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY AT OXFORD UNIVERSITY.





# Flowers of the Same

# Bouquet

Vidisha Maurya, MSAI NORP General Assistant 2019-20  
Grant Government Medical College, Mumbai

I wake up everyday, thinking I'll be okay  
I try to accept that some day,  
I too will be accepted.  
I fail to justify that I too am normal  
Because,  
Being a homosexual wasn't too casual

They stained the society, it's purity it's morals,  
But she hoped  
Hoped that the society accepts them someday.  
After all,  
All humans are flowers of the same bouquet!

A person's identity is limited to the pronouns that the society assigns to them based on their external appearances. An orientation is one of the many biological phenomena of a person which is bound to be natural and inherent, being controlled by biological and neurological factors. This orientation plays an incomparable role in defining a person's image which almost everyone eventually accepts; but accepting oneself is a dream that requires immense courage for few!

The discrimination faced by them based on their sexual orientation entails a violation of fundamental right of freedom of expression, which is one of the basic rights of every human. For them every passing second, their wish remains unfulfilled-- to be accepted. The contributing reason being, belief of one's perception at birth of who they are, what they do and how they live. Their transition, may it be physical or emotional or mental, is not just to be happy but it is to feel free, to be seen and to be who they truly are.

*It is utmost important to understand that dreams and identities do not have to be mutually exclusive.*

It is utmost important to understand and believe that dreams and identities do not have to be mutually exclusive. It has to be reasoned out that instead of settling down for the rules set up eras ago, accepting the change and helping in bringing up the best among people is key to progress of the society. Change should be the only constant.

The situations in India have been grave ever since the pre-independence era where Modern Societal Homophobia was introduced with subsequent enactment of Section 377 and stood for more than 70 years of independence. But after several trials and appeals, on 6 September 2018, the Supreme Court issued its verdict. The Court unanimously ruled that Section 377 is unconstitutional as it infringed on the fundamental rights of autonomy, intimacy, and identity, thus legalising homosexuality in India.

Following the verdict issued by the Supreme Court, Justice Indu Malhotra stated, "History owes an apology to these people and their families. Homosexuality is a part of Human sexuality. They have the right of dignity and freedom from discrimination."

At the end of the day, Trans Rights are Human Rights and It matters not what someone is born but what they grow to be.



**KHUSHI SHAH**

# THE STETHOSCOPE SPEAKS



**MEGHANA PARASA**

# Walking towards my Dream

Diya Garg

MIMER Medical College, Pune

Sitting in school, I was 13 years old,  
"What is your dream to become?"  
My teacher asked to unfold.  
Some Said Astronaut, some said Singer,  
I softly said 'A DOCTOR' as my eyes  
lingered.

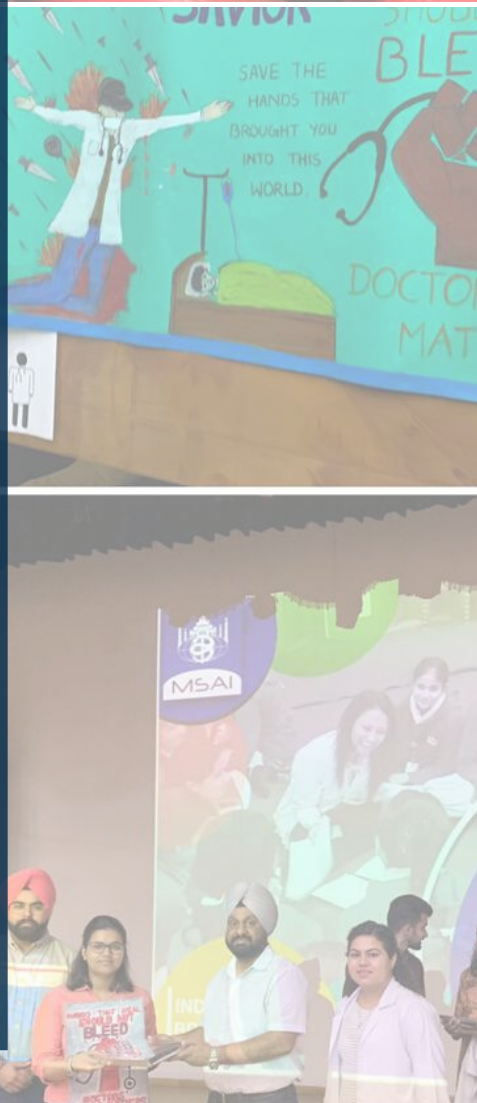
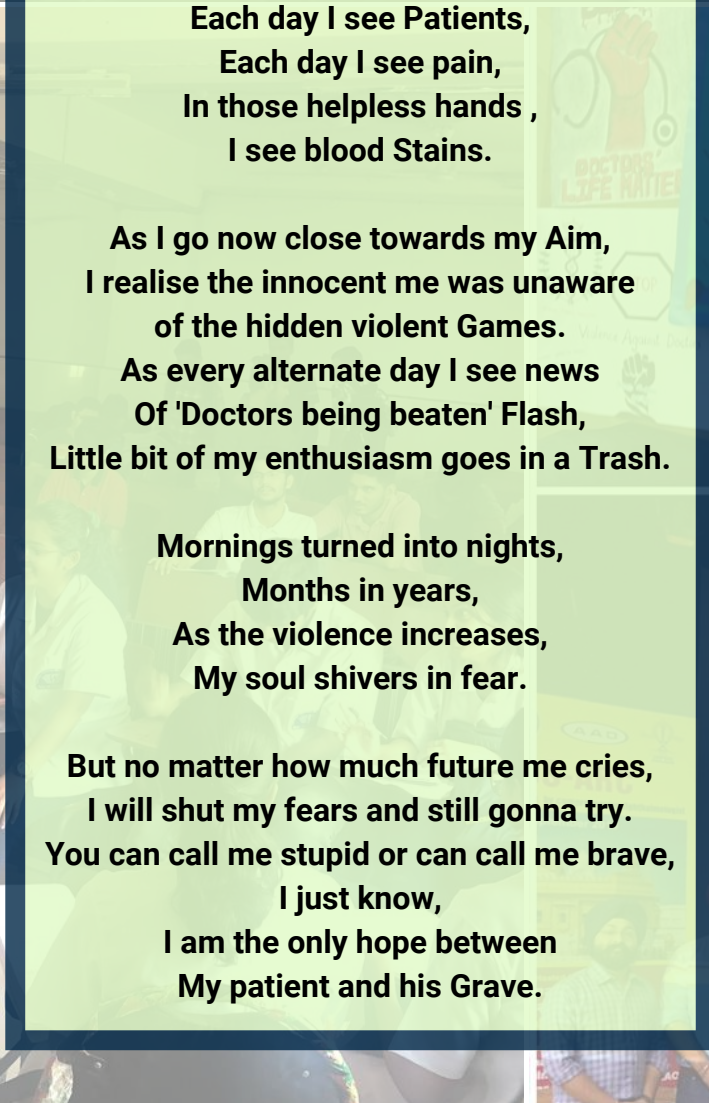
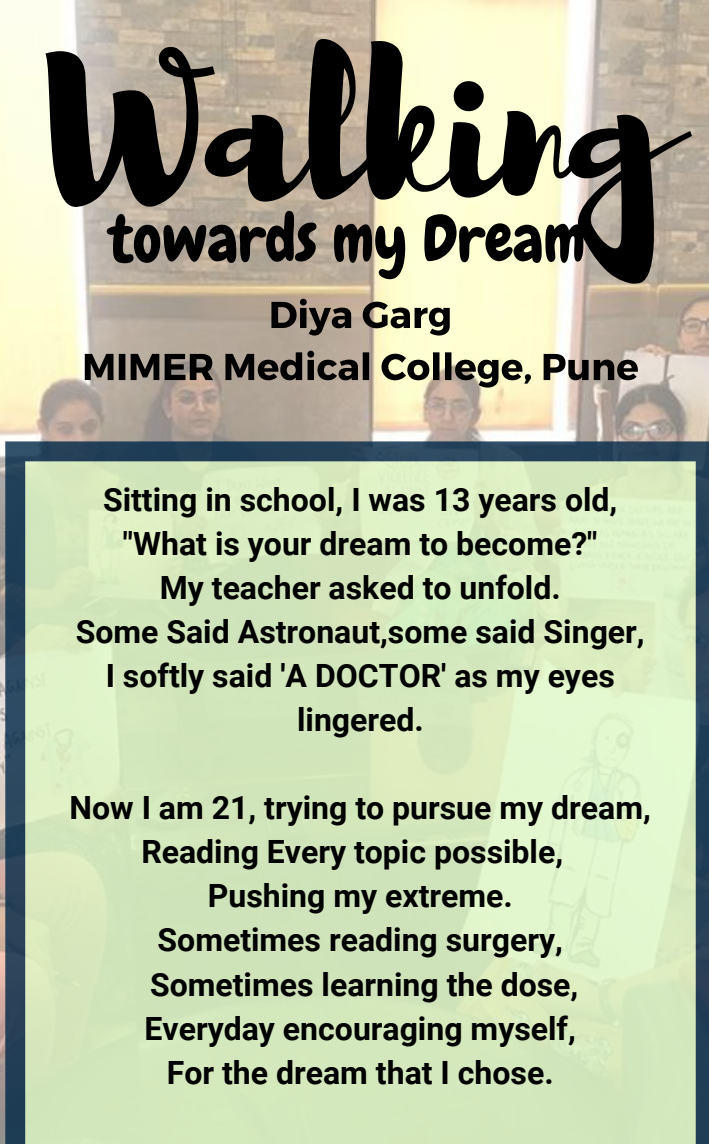
Now I am 21, trying to pursue my dream,  
Reading Every topic possible,  
Pushing my extreme.  
Sometimes reading surgery,  
Sometimes learning the dose,  
Everyday encouraging myself,  
For the dream that I chose.

Each day I see Patients,  
Each day I see pain,  
In those helpless hands ,  
I see blood Stains.

As I go now close towards my Aim,  
I realise the innocent me was unaware  
of the hidden violent Games.  
As every alternate day I see news  
Of 'Doctors being beaten' Flash,  
Little bit of my enthusiasm goes in a Trash.

Mornings turned into nights,  
Months in years,  
As the violence increases,  
My soul shivers in fear.

But no matter how much future me cries,  
I will shut my fears and still gonna try.  
You can call me stupid or can call me brave,  
I just know,  
I am the only hope between  
My patient and his Grave.



# Echoes of a First Year Medico

Yashaswi Yerunkar  
RCSM Government Medical College,  
Kolhapur.

I'm growing through this course. Blood, cadavers, formalin have made me impervious to many of my fears now (cockroaches being one of them). Gaining knowledge and the sigh of overcoming mental barriers everyday makes me feel stronger. Curiosity and compassion are imperative qualities of a doctor.

I await the day when I return home after slogging through the busy hospital wards; tired but with contentment flushing across my face. However, this feeling turned into despondence when I saw the news.

It's sad that so many episodes of violence against doctors have ended with the perpetrators walking out free and left us unnerved. Many more episodes have been hushed and unreported. Medical negligence is completely different and shouldn't always be assumed as the cause of death by relatives. Doctors don't make humans immortal. How can violence ever compensate for the numbness of death?

Disheartening. But not enough to hamper my working spirit. It's the peoples' mind-set that needs to change, not our passion. Even today I watch our doctors sacrificing their family time and social life and being severely sleep deprived only for the patients. This inspires me to work even harder. Our caring attitude towards the patients won't budge.

If people understand that death is inevitable and indiscriminating, we can perhaps save more lives. After all, doctors are living beings too.

*Doctors don't make humans immortal. How can violence ever compensate for the numbness of death?*



# HOSPITAL!

**D Sai Rachana**  
**Bhaskar Medical College**

*"Not all of us can do great things  
but we can do small things with  
great love" - Mother Teresa.*

This noble woman inspired me at a very young age to make a humble contribution to the world. Then in the quest for the ideal profession I discerned that there is no one more selfless and giving than a doctor. I have always contemplated a doctor as someone who is privileged to provide indiscriminate service for others and want to practice the same when I'm given the opportunity. The journey so far has been marvellous and I have begun to acknowledge that every high and low is crucial and I hold pride in every sacrifice I have made.

However, I fail to contemplate the prejudice that exists in the society with respect to the medical profession. Some people overlook that medicine is practised in good faith and are blinded by the misconception that all doctors are avaricious. This in turn has annihilated the trust and respect of the white coat.

In the view of recent events of brutality against doctors, for the first time a feeling of apprehension has developed amongst medical students. For the best treatment, more than often confident and courageous decisions taken by a doctor are paramount however this may now be hindered by fear of violence if the outcome is unfavourable.

People fail to understand that often, a doctor can only aid recovery and is helpless when the patient fails to show an improvement despite appropriate treatment. However, this doesn't stop doctors from being beaten up by the very people they solemnly swear to serve.

This inhumanity has to be brought to an end and I'm glad that the entire medical fraternity has decided to unite and debunk this form of violence. I hope the Government will assure the safety of doctors during such times. By spreading awareness in our close community, we can contribute to this humble cause.



DIYA GARG  
YASHASWI YERUNKAR  
D SAI RACHANA  
MEGHANA PARASA  
KHUSHI SHAH



## THE STETHOSCOPE SPEAKS



SCORP INDIA

# Background Activities

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# Online Activities

**World Refugee Day Campaign**

**The Stethoscope Speaks**

**Freedom from Cyber Bullying**

**Right To Education Campaign**

**Triple Talaq: Seekho With Meeko**

**Us Too: Seekho With Meeko**

**Voices of the Valley: Seekho With Meeko**

**The Other Indian: Seekho With Meeko**

**Humans of SCORP**

**History of Human Rights**

**Rooh: Souls of Child Sexual Abuse**



# REPRESENTATION



## *Asia Pacific Regional Meeting*

SNEHA SUNIL AND AARYA SHAH

ACTIVITIES FAIR:  
ARTICLE 25

## *August Meeting, Taiwan*

HENNA BHANDARI AND ISHIKA KAUL

ACTIVITIES FAIR:  
IT CAN BE YOU  
INVISIBLE CHILDREN



## *March Meeting, Rwanda*

VIDISHA MAURYA, KATYAYANI GOSWAMI,  
SAHIBA MANIAR

ACTIVITIES FAIR:  
UDAAN





