Several members of MSAI ventured out to various conferences and summits organised by national and international health organisations around the nation and globe.

The organisation won the ‘Best Medical Student Organisation’ award at the Indian Health Professional Awards 2016.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

The IFMSA August Meeting 2016 at Puebla, Mexico will be a time to be cherished forever. After years of efforts, MSAI was able to regain its permanent membership status at the IFMSA in quite a historic moment. With broadened opportunities and better representation, the Association plans on launching more of its activities and members on to a global level.

“When the entire plenary team stood up in ovation, my eyes welled up in tears. I felt so proud of ourselves at that instant. It was a very powerful moment.”

- Adit Desai
President, MSAI

The Medical Students Association of India would like to thank the team and all the member NMOs of the IFMSA for having shown such support and investing faith in us. Over the years we have put in efforts, having helped make a healthier community, generate a sense of understanding among the people while at the same time adding more meaning to the life of a medical student. Now that our work has been truly recognised and appreciated, we feel motivated and thus, pledge to work towards empowering the medical student more than ever before.
Our growth has been phenomenal in the past year, and we are only just started. Now I urge one and all to come together and work for a successful year ahead. We promise to maintain this momentum, to evolve and take the organisation to higher pinnacles of success.

The Executive Body and Support Divisions, whose exemplary efforts towards progress of the organisation are commendable. It has been a year of achievement, and the Organisation has received recognition and appreciation from many organisations as a result of our efforts over the past few months. Thus, we were able to launch ourselves on several global platforms.

In such a state, thoughts started to form shape and ideas have kept brewing ever since. Traditional philosophy says one mustn’t shut the lid upon an overflowing vessel; leading to a sudden conscious awareness of one’s true level of clarity. The appeal to modesty that follows reduces the amount of achievement to almost nothing, leading us to question the meaning of achievement itself.

What is an achievement? Is it an award, a tittle, a wave of fame or a truckload of money? The modern citizen would shake their heads. But then, are we to dust away all our achievements as mere milestones? The statement “Have we achieved?” Yes. Have we achieved it all? Not yet.” has become a silent motto for us.

It is true that achievements are milestones; but it is in what way they are so, that matters. In simple terms, one must realise that participation on any competitive platform provides exposure to similar thoughts coming from other people. In that scenario, it is how strong our thought or work stands that gives us proof of its quality. Having achieved something does not necessarily mean only having won a race of sorts, but also speaks of our own development. The true achievement lies in knowing that one has reached a particular stage where one is capable. Yes, the recognition of one’s capability means much more than one can see at first sight. It means that one has worked hard to be capable, and is now capable of working further — working towards a predetermined set of goals. There is no concrete theory for ultimate achievement perhaps, and the final achievement is probably bliss, receiving which one leaves life, having served one’s purpose.

At MSAI, we have achieved quite a lot this year. And it means only one thing — that we are capable of achieving the dreams that we set out with. We’re urged to meet newer targets, closer deadlines, and strive harder towards achieving the dreams that we set out with. We’ll be urged to meet newer targets, closer deadlines, and strive harder towards achieving the dreams that we set out with.

A Year of Achievement

Achievement — no term would better describe the Association’s status this term. We witnessed a rising level of enthusiasm among our members, and the large number of new members added to the zeal. We received recognition and appreciation from many organisations as a result of our efforts over the past few months. Thus, we were able to launch ourselves on several global platforms.

In our last issue, we announced and even featured a note from John J Raj as the elected President for this term. However, due to personal reasons, he resigned mid-term. In his place, Adit Desai, was declared the President while the General Secretary, Chirag Jain, was chosen to be the VPE serving as acting General Secretary simultaneously. Here, President Adit Desai leaves a message for the reader.

The year 2016 was a productive and dynamic year for MSAI. From the hordes of new members piling in, to getting more and more colleges active across the country, we are now breaking the shackles of apparent mediocrity and changing the way society perceives doctors and medical students.

Our achievements have been made possible only because of our 6 pillars, the 6 Standing Committees — SCOME, SCORA, SCORP, SCOPH, SCOPE, SCORE, the latter two having just taken flight the previous year, thus making the organisation exchanges-active as well. Our National Officers have worked relentlessly to ensure the best possible exposure and development of all our members. Not to forget the members of the Executive Body and Support Divisions, whose exemplary efforts towards progress of the organisation are commendable. It has been a pleasure to have worked with such an enthusiastic team.

In the new year ahead of us, we promise to maintain this momentum, to evolve and take this organisation to higher pinnacles of success. Our growth has been phenomenal in the past year, and we are only just started. Now I urge one and all to come together and work for a prosperous future for medical students.
Movember Modelling

The month of November was dedicated by MSAI SCORA to raising awareness about prostate and testicular cancer through the campaign titled ‘Movember’. The chief organizers of the campaign were Shashi Bhushan, Anshruta Raodeo, and Isha Rai.

The events in the campaign were held both, online and offline. As part of the online event, male volunteers or ‘Movember Models’ as they were called sported their beards and moustaches, while holding placards providing vital information about the topic and busting myths regarding the same. The campaign was carried out in old age homes across India where the topic was addressed with great fervour. (Target population: Males aged 50 and above.) Many participants took the pledge to get themselves regularly screened for prostate and testicular cancer.

The campaign was a huge success, reaching over 75,000 people via online media. Moreover, campaign received a big thumbs up from the popular music directors of the Indian film industry, Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy, who appreciated the noble cause and showed interest in participating in the campaign.

Music director trio Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy come out in full support of the campaign.

SCOREing High!

Following the footsteps of SCOPE that became active earlier in the year, the officers at SCORE rolled back their sleeves and worked hard to make MSAI a SCORE-active NMO in the 65th IFMSA General Assembly at Mexico. There, the SCORE team signed contracts with 8 countries for the term of 2017-2018. New bylaws and internal operating guidelines were drafted which were unanimously accepted and passed by the Executive Board of MSAI.

MSAI-India became the 70th NMO to become SCORE Active.

The first NEO-NORE weekend was organised in the business capital of the country, Mumbai, on the 3rd weekend of September to further discuss management of all the incoming and outgoing exchanges. Sumandeep Medical College at Vadodara and Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College at Belgaum were soon joined by Dayanand Medical College in Ludhiana in the list of SCORE-active medical colleges of India.

The campaign in its first week discussed about the LGBT rights in India and setting a baseline tone to initiate change. This was followed by an interpretation of Yogyakarta principles, a photography competition, and testimonials from esteemed professionals namely Harish Iyer, Kalki Subramaniam and Akki Padamshali. The campaign was concluded by a session on ‘what we can do as citizens of the nation’. The campaign was an instant and a massive hit among the audience.

We received support from not only our own members but also from some of the very eminent faces of LGBT community in India. On the international front, our campaign was highly appreciated as well — Carles PE (Director, IFMSC-SCORA) came out in full support of our campaign. We reached to over 35,000 people through social media over the course of the month and received an enormous response from the audience to sign a petition against Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which criminalises homosexuality.

The Colours of PRISM

India has not yet decriminalised homosexuality, forcing the LGBT community to remain in the closet. Taboos in society too can be blamed, if not more. This leads to a variety of problems for people from the LGBT community, from getting a good education to seeking employment to everything that would constitute an otherwise ‘normal’ life.

To support these victims of injustice, MSAI-SCORA, organized ‘Prism’ a month-long online campaign that spanned from mid-August to mid-September. The coordinators for the campaign were Anshruta Raodeo and Shashi Bhushan.

The campaign in its first week discussed about the LGBT rights in India and setting a baseline tone to initiate change. This was followed by an interpretation of Yogyakarta principles, a photography competition, and testimonials from esteemed professionals namely Harish Iyer, Kalki Subramaniam and Akki Padamshali. The campaign was concluded by a session on ‘what we can do as citizens of the nation’. The campaign was an instant and a massive hit among the audience.

We received support from not only our own members but also from some of the very eminent faces of LGBT community in India. On the international front, our campaign was highly appreciated as well — Carles PE (Director, IFMSC-SCORA) came out in full support of our campaign. We reached to over 35,000 people through social media over the course of the month and received an enormous response from the audience to sign a petition against Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which criminalises homosexuality.

Quiz Connect - Vision MSAI

It was indeed a glimpse of the future that was envisioned by Sinath Kathirvel of Stanley Medical College, a Local Officer of the Standing Committee for Medical Education (SCOME).

With quizzes being as common as grains of sand on a beach these days, Vision MSAI 2016 was a refreshing break from the cliché. The organizers under Sinath’s leadership broke the geographical constraints that divide us in the Indian subcontinent. The quiz was conducted solely on the social networking platforms provided by WhatsApp and Facebook. The fact that nearly everyone is active on these applications was taken advantage of to bring together 152 brilliant, young medical minds from across 14 states and union territories.

The questions were framed brilliantly, adhering to the strict principle of eliminating the usual, distributed over 3 rounds with each round being more interesting and stimulating than the other. People were quizzed on fun issues that ranged from ‘the muscles in Dhoni’s helicopter shot’ to the ‘neural pathways associated with typographical errors’ , keeping all the participants on their toes at all times. The Grand Finale, conducted for 20 finalists divided randomly into 4 teams of 5, was watched in realtime on Facebook by interested viewers at home. Concurrently, the participants enjoyed the opportunity to connect with peers across India for an electrifying race to emerge victorious.

This was not only an exciting opportunity for MSAI members, it was the first event that many non-members were exposed to. The phenomenal response and excitement it generated has led to the induction of a number of medical students into the Association. The event also served the purpose of generating interest in the MSAI-SCOME Facebook page which saw a surge in activity during and after this event.

In conclusion, Vision MSAI 2016 has managed to hit the proverbial two (or more in this case) birds with one stone. It has provided a template that future events should strive to emulate or improve upon so that every event conducted under the MSAI banner may have a similar reach across our nation; in the hope that, one day, we achieve the ultimate vision of providing a united front for medical students all across India.

MSAI Across

MSAI-India became the 70th NMO to become SCORE Active.

The first NEO-NORE weekend was organised in the business capital of the country, Mumbai, on the 3rd weekend of September to further discuss management of all the incoming and outgoing exchanges. Sumandeep Medical College at Vadodara and Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College at Belgaum were soon joined by Dayanand Medical College in Ludhiana in the list of SCORE-active medical colleges of India.

In the month of October, applications for research exchanges from medical students all over the country began flooding in. At the same time, local officers were trained for the promotion, application form collection & evaluation of the interested outgoing students and it was with their priceless efforts that twelve exceptional students from all over the country were selected for research exchanges for the year 2017-2018.

The event in the campaign were held both, online and offline. As part of the online event, male volunteers or ‘Movember Models’ as they were called sported their beards and moustaches, while holding placards providing vital information about the topic and busting myths regarding the same. The campaign was carried out in old age homes across India where the topic was addressed with great fervour. (Target population: Males aged 50 and above.) Many participants took the pledge to get themselves regularly screened for prostate and testicular cancer.

The campaign was a huge success, reaching over 75,000 people via online media. Moreover, campaign received a big thumbs up from the popular music directors of the Indian film industry, Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy, who appreciated the noble cause and showed interest in participating in the campaign.

Music director trio Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy come out in full support of the campaign.

With quizzes being as common as grains of sand on a beach these days, Vision MSAI 2016 was a refreshing break from the cliché. The organizers under Sinath’s leadership broke the geographical constraints that divide us in the Indian subcontinent. The quiz was conducted solely on the social networking platforms provided by WhatsApp and Facebook. The fact that nearly everyone is active on these applications was taken advantage of to bring together 152 brilliant, young medical minds from across 14 states and union territories.

The questions were framed brilliantly, adhering to the strict principle of eliminating the usual, distributed over 3 rounds with each round being more interesting and stimulating than the other. People were quizzed on fun issues that ranged from ‘the muscles in Dhoni’s helicopter shot’ to the ‘neural pathways associated with typographical errors’ , keeping all the participants on their toes at all times. The Grand Finale, conducted for 20 finalists divided randomly into 4 teams of 5, was watched in realtime on Facebook by interested viewers at home. Concurrently, the participants enjoyed the opportunity to connect with peers across India for an electrifying race to emerge victorious.

This was not only an exciting opportunity for MSAI members, it was the first event that many non-members were exposed to. The phenomenal response and excitement it generated has led to the induction of a number of medical students into the Association. The event also served the purpose of generating interest in the MSAI-SCOME Facebook page which saw a surge in activity during and after this event.

In conclusion, Vision MSAI 2016 has managed to hit the proverbial two (or more in this case) birds with one stone. It has provided a template that future events should strive to emulate or improve upon so that every event conducted under the MSAI banner may have a similar reach across our nation; in the hope that, one day, we achieve the ultimate vision of providing a united front for medical students all across India.
Eye-Openers

The SCOPHeroes of MSAI have always been known for their active community service. Their latest venture was in the Nashirabad district of Maharashtra where they successfully carried out a rural ophthalmology check-up camp in association with Kantai Netralaya, with sponsorship from Jain Irrigation Systems Ltd., Jalgaon.

The camp was conducted on 19th October 2016. This was the first ever ophthalmic check-up camp conducted in the area and with it, the organizers hoped to establish a level of trust and familiarity with the local people so as to be able to carry out further work in the region. The program aimed to encourage people to report their ocular problems to medical facilities instead of resorting to non-medical home remedies, and arranging for free surgical treatment for as many people as required.

The event comprised of an ophthalmology examination routine followed by a brief interaction with one of the volunteers, Dr. Alvin Rane. Patients were divided into two groups, those below 50 years of age and those above it. For the former group, refraction with an auto-refractor was done followed by detailed subjective refraction. Any error found in refraction was corrected and spectacles were prescribed to such patients. A similar procedure was carried out for patients aged more than 50 years; however, for these people, if the refraction didn't improve with correction, they were selected for surgery and referred to Kantai Netralaya at Jalgaon.

Assessment of blood pressure and blood sugar levels was also done and medicines were provided to those with positive findings. The equipment required for the procedures was provided by Jain Irrigation Systems Limited.

Those referred for surgery were taken to Kantai Netralaya the next day where the patients were given accommodation, food, post-operative medication and dark glasses, and were explained all the precautions in detail. The patients were called for follow-up after a week. The patients were called for follow-up after a week. The

Mark Your Dates!

In most Indian households, a male child is given preference over the female child. In its 2012 report on ‘Gender Equality and Development,’ the World Bank estimated that over the last two decades, around 2.5 lakh girls killed in India because of their sex. The girl child is believed to be a burden and investing in her future is considered foolish. Child marriage, early pregnancies, domestic abuse and harassment for dowry are just the tip of the iceberg. While the Indian government has created many provisions to protect women, the beneficiaries are seemingly unaware of it. Ignorance of laws, oppressive society and corrupt officials have encouraged the ever increasing rift between the two genders.

Menstruation is one of the biggest barriers for education of girls in India. According to research by AC Nielsen and Plan India, a New Delhi based non-profit organisation, at least one in five girls drop out of school when their periods begin. Those who remain, miss around five days of school each month due to inadequate menstrual protection. 68% of rural women in India cannot afford sanitary napkins. They are known to use rags, leaves and other such items instead. Such unsanitary practices lead to increased incidence of vaginal infections, pelvic inflammatory disease and childbirth issues. Studies have shown a co-relation between cervical cancer and poor menstrual hygiene. According to WHO data, India accounts for 27 percent of the world’s cervical cancer deaths. In a country of 355 million women in the reproductive age group, only 12% use absorbent pads or any other sanitary method to stem blood flow. Despite the Government’s initiative to distribute sanitary napkins at subsidised costs and waive off taxes on sanitary napkins, poor menstrual hygiene persists as a major roadblock to reproductive health.

A national-level event was organised among girls aged 10-16 to create awareness on changes at puberty, menstrual hygiene, busting social taboos and educating them about girl rights; addressing the issue of gender inequality, identifying it as a social evil and taking steps to ameliorate it by boosting self esteem and empowering girls to voice their opinion against the same. The event was organised at St. Augustine’s High School with a simple goal in mind- to engage the faculty and students in a manner so that the problems can be discussed more openly. It was an eye-opening, 45 minute session for both—the young girls and the volunteers. Chief organiser Monisha Nair says “I was overwhelmed to hear of the myths they believed in and it was quite evident that women rights was a very new thing for them”. She plans on holding more sessions in the future and attempt to ameliorate the situation in the country.

At the WHO

MSAI Member Bhavi Trivedi was selected as intern for Global Coordination Mechanism for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). The internship involves contributing to WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013-20 and organisation of Working Group 3.3 on Health Literacy and Health Education of NCDs through compilation of research material. She serves as a Member of Intern Board as Academic Coordinator at the WHO. She now invites speakers of the WHO to conduct weekly seminars for interns.

Bhavi also acts as a delegate of the IFMSA to the Executive Board, and at this position she has availed of many opportunities such as discussions with WONCA (World Organisation of Family Doctors). Additionally, she has been a part of discussions involving United Nations Inter-agency Task Force (UNITAF) on incorporating NCDs into the agenda for the Human Rights Council meeting.