



GENDER CHAMPIONSHIP CELL

SRI AUROBINDO COLLEGE (EVE)



GOONJ

UNTOLD
TALES OF
COURAGE

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER
2019-20
FIRST EDITION

COLOR OUR WORLD WITH PRIDE

#SPEAKINGHEARTSOUT



GC's Members 2019-20



Saurabh Singh Parmar
Alumnus 2018-19
Co-Founder & Chief Administrator



Niraj Kejriwal
B.Com(H), 2nd Year
Co-Founder & Chief Overseer



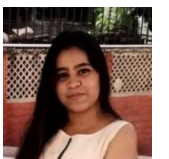
Shreyans Bothra
B.Com(H), 2nd Year
Co-Founder & Chief Overseer



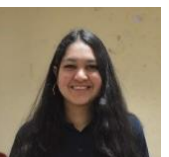
Vineeta Patni
B.Com(P), 3rd Year
Executive Member



Divya Sharma
B.Com(P), 1st Year
Coordination Executive



Yatika Mehla
BA(H) English, 2nd Year
Member



Vidhita Sangwan
B.Com(P), 1st Year
Member



Aastha Singh
B.Com(H), 1st Year
Member



Bijita Nayak
BA(P), 1st Year
Member



Urja Gangwar
B.Com(P), 1st Year
Member

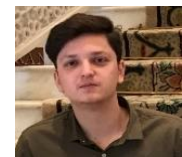
Akshit Manocha
B.Com(P), 1st Year
Member



Abhimanyu Nasa
B.Com(P), 3rd Year
Member



Mudit Tiwari
B.Com(P), 1st Year
Member



Aniket Dogra
B.Com(P), 1st Year
Member



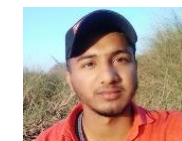
Abhinav Arya
BA(H) App. Psychology, 1st Year
Member



Sanket Arora
B.Com(P), 1st Year
Member



Sachin Vats
BA(H) Hindi, 2nd Year
Member



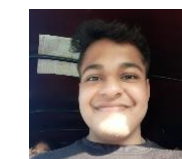
Gautam Arora
B.Com(P), 1st Year
Member



Prachi Priyadarshree
BA(H) English, 1st Year
Member



Yash Sharma
BA(P), 1st Year
Member



Palash Nayak
B.Com(P), 3rd Year
Member



CONTENTS

GOONJ

Edition - 1 (2019-20)

Official students' annual
digital Newsletter of
Gender Championship Cell,
Sri Aurobindo College
(Evening)

➤ PATRON

Dr. Namita Rajput

➤ EDITORIAL BOARD

❖ Faculty

✓ Dr. Vibha Batra

❖ Students

✓ Saurabh Singh Parmar

✓ Isha Kushwah

✓ Niraj Kejriwal

✓ Yatika Mehla

✓ Vidhita Sangwan

| | |
|---|----|
| From the Desk of Principal | 1 |
| From the Desk of Convenor | 2 |
| About GC | 3 |
| From the Desk of Student Editors | 5 |
| From the Desk of Office Bearers | 6 |
| KHANA K – Celebrating Gender Equality | 7 |
| Our Initiatives at Large | 8 |
| Sridhar Rangayan | 9 |
| Koushumi Chakraborti | 10 |
| Valentina | 11 |
| Vikramaditya Sahai | 12 |
| Tales of Revelation | 13 |
| Rise Conference | 15 |
| Yes, I cry! | 17 |
| Corporate: A New Beginning | 18 |
| My Life, Your Roles? | 19 |
| Could I? | 20 |
| Men in my world | 21 |
| Over and Out | 22 |
| Beliefs Make Dreams | 23 |
| Are you listening? | 24 |
| When my dreams came true! | 25 |
| White lies make it easier | 26 |
| Successful LGBTQIA+ Leaders and Entrepreneur | 27 |



FROM THE DESK OF PRINCIPAL



“We should indeed keep calm in the face of difference, and live our lives in a state of inclusion and wonder at the diversity of humanity” -George Takei

We are all living in a world where there is no dearth of discrimination and crimes against women and people from the LGBTQIA+ community. They are often mal-treated and side-lined due to generations-old bias and prejudices that continue to perpetuate even in the face of modernity, thus, thwarting their development, be it mental, social, or economic. In light of these challenges, it becomes crucial to educate and sensitize the masses, especially at a young age regarding issues pivoting around gender equality. With this spirit at heart, Sri Aurobindo College (Evening) constituted Gender Championship Cell that is dedicated to facilitating an all-inclusive environment at the varsity and, by extension, the society at large by engaging college students as agents of change advocating gender-equality and gender-justice. With the intent of mainstreaming LGBTQIA+ community and augmenting its outreach, the Cell is actively involved in organizing seminars and conferences, holding focused group-discussions, debates, symposia, etc. centred around varied issues and challenges of women and LGBTQIA+ inclusion to come up creatively with viable solutions and redressal of their concerns. I take immense pride in the publication of our first annual newsletter wherein you shall find shared experiences articulated in the content contributed by the students of our College. I hope every reader benefits from it and learns to appreciate and respect diversity for it is a collective effort alone that would materialize our dream of a brave new world where everyone rejoices life free of discrimination.

DR. NAMITA RAJPUT

Principal OSD

Sri Aurobindo College (Evening)

(15th May 2020)

FROM THE DESK OF CONVENER



It's a matter of pride for the college that in this rather unusual academic session 2019-2020 (because of the global pandemic) the Gender Championship Cell has been working on full throttle and has emerged as a movement of completely student-led pioneering initiatives, both online and offline.

As convener of this society, I have been a pillion fellow traveller completely rejoicing in the talent and synergy of the whole team.

*The Gender Champions led by Niraj Kejriwal coupled with the whole-hearted support of our **Alumnus Contributor Saurabh Singh Parmar** have conducted a plethora of events this year, namely #Speakingheartsout, Euphemism, Khanak, Decipher the Reality.*

Ms. Yatika left her comfort zone and attended a one-day conference on 22nd February 2020 at Rise Conference to hone her skill-set on the issues of acceptance of LGBTQIA+ persons by their parents and the society at large.

*Beginning the session with designing the logo and completing it with this **First issue of the annual newsletter which is completed with working full time in lock-down...** the vibrance of this team, lights up our spirits...*

Reflecting on the amazing job the entire team has done on such socially-relevant issues, I am reminded of a quote by Margaret Mead "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has".

The show must go on...

DR. VIBHA BATRA

Convener, Gender Championship Cell,
Sri Aurobindo College (Evening)

(15th May 2020)

ABOUT GC

Through the words of Co-Founder & Chief Administrator,
Saurabh Singh Parmar

“Be the change you wish to see in the world”.

Gender Championship Cell SACE indomitably believes in the above maxim and strives to effectively implement the above words in our actions. We at Gender Championship Cell, aspire to build an egalitarian society, a society characterized by social equality and equal rights for all people regardless of their gender and sexual orientation, where the word ‘Humanity’ sways the hearts of people rising beyond all gender stereotypes. We might have conquered the sky and defeated the waves of the ocean, we haven’t conquered the gender dysphoria that developed ages before due to lack of proper knowledge and understanding, we have crowned the LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual and '+' representing the other participants) community as unnatural and threat for our civilization.

Imagine you are in a spot where you are constantly insulted and ignored by the society for being yourself, for choosing your happiness, for choosing the way to lead your life in the manner you want it to be. This might sound easy to handle but dear readers we would like to attract your view towards the resultant cases of high suicide rates among the LGBTQIA+ community due to this societal pressure. Almost 90% of LGBTQIA+ youth are harassed or assaulted. According to the estimates of ‘The Suicide Prevention Resource Centre’, between 5 to 10% of LGBTQIA+ youth depending upon age and sex groups, have attempted suicide, a rate 1.5-3 times higher than heterosexual youth. A U.S. government study, titled ‘Report of the Secretary’s Task Force on Youth Suicide’, published in 1989 found that LGBTQIA+ youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide than other young people. And this data is increasing day by day and is becoming scary.

We firmly believe “Helping one person might not change the whole world, but it could change the world for that one person”. We believe in joining hands and keeping ourselves moving constantly forward with little steps of change because all that matters is ‘Efforts’. We believe acceptance to the LGBTQIA+ will be a win-win situation for them as well as for the society. On one hand, the community will get acceptance and love that they desire to get and on the other hand, the society as a whole will be able to see and harness their talent for the society.

After reading the above text there must be many questions in your mind, thus we would like to answer a few of them in the section below.

1. What is the LGBTQIA+ community?

LGBTQIA+ stands as an initial for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual and '+' representing the other participants. They are people like us, just having different sexual orientations. The trans community of the LGBTQIA+ section has been recognized as the third gender in the gender spectrum. The society represents itself with a rainbow-coloured flag representing the different colours of Mother Nature.

2. What is Gender Championship Cell?

In order to move towards a gender-just society that treats everyone equally, the Ministry of Women and Child Development, in collaboration with HRD Ministry have envisaged Gender Champions as responsible leaders who will facilitate an enabling environment within their institutions. Keeping in mind the view of government and the need for inclusiveness we have come up with the Gender Championship Cell in our College in October 2019. It is a student lead organization mentored by Dr. Vibha Batra and our Principal Dr. Namita Rajput as our Patron. We aim at bringing the students together to work for ending gender dysphoria and bringing equality and equity in the world.

3. What are Gender Stereotypes and what is the role of Gender Champions in putting an end to it?

If we talk in a general sense, then gender stereotype is fixing roles for a gender according to our general societal perceptions. Putting it into a formal set of words we can say gender stereotyping is defined as overgeneralization of characteristics, differences, and attributes of a certain group based on their gender. Talking about stereotypes about LGBTQIA+, it is generally associated with homophobia, lesbophobia, biphobia, or transphobia. Many social scientists are attempting to understand why there are such negative connotations associated with this community. Many believe that homosexuality is a result of abnormal parenting, sexual abuse, adverse life events that influence sexual orientation or technological advancement (marked as a major cause of homosexuality nowadays).

We at Gender Championship Cell aims at bringing down these stereotypes by involving people in the change process. We believe things will change only when we will feel the need for change and for this, it is very important to educate people about the LGBTQIA+ community, their struggles, and issues. We firmly believe that society will change

positively but as it is said 'Good things take time', we will continue to put our efforts in the right direction under the right guidance.

4. What is our aim?

“One day we won't have to 'come out of the closet' we'll just say we are in love and that will be all that matters”.

The above-written words paint the portrait of our core goal. We aim at building a society where the happiness of a person matters more than their gender/sexual orientation, where being gay or lesbian will not be regarded as breaking the societal norms, where we all will be accepted the way we are, no son has to hide his identity from his mother, no student will be bullied by his mates for being different, where smile on a boy's face will matter more than him wearing bangles.

The aim is to normalize the overrated orthodox stereotypes. We all must have seen any trans-person begging at the signals and might have given them the money out of fear that they will curse us, but have you ever imagined, why are they begging? Nobody ever wants to go and beg, then what might be the reason? The reason is "Acceptance". Rejection by family and society. They are denied opportunities of education and employment. So left with no choice, either they beg on the roads or do sex-work. It's high time that we should come forward and join hands with them and serve them the acceptance and dignity they deserve.

5. Our Endeavours.

Gender Championship Cell strives to do something that adds worth to the life of people and widens the prospect for the marginalized section of society. A few of the worthy endeavours are mentioned below.

- **#Speakingheartout:** It is a monthly talk session where students, teaching and non-teaching staff of our college are invited to come forward and talk about their concerns, experiences or any other valuable point of view relating to the community and social justice. It provides a space to people where they can speak their minds without fear of getting judged. With us we have our convener ma'am who is a worthy life coach and a stupendous counsellor as well, to guide any of the audience who feels the need to get a direction out from their problem. We are working on making this as an inter-college event, that will serve as an opportunity to many unheard voices to get the chance of being heard. Also, we have launched this hashtag on our social media for letting people share their valuable suggestions and stories which they want to share with the society through us as the medium.

- **Euphemism:** It is an online competition that is held on regular intervals on our social media pages keeping in mind the aim to raise and attract the view of general masses towards gender issue to pay attention. People across universities and any profession can participate in it. This is very effective in stimulating conversation among people from different walks of life.

- **Khanak (celebrating gender equality):** It is an early carnival of our society. This year it took place on 10th February. The core objective of this event is to celebrate the success of the LGBTQIA+ community over the societal hurdles put on them. Many magnificent personalities have been a part of it and have delivered motivational speeches, life talks and performances to deliver a message to the society, that "Whatever be the conditions, hard work always pays off". You can know more about it in our article ahead.

- **Sweekar:** It is a project that is soon going to be launched by our society. It aims at providing the required education regarding gender/sexual orientation issues. This will target the students of class 9th to 12th of different schools. The project is explained in the newsletter ahead.

- **Decipher the Reality:** This is an online initiative launched at the time of Quarantine Lockdown resulting from the Coronavirus pandemic, this is a view presenting online competition. The detailed information of this event is added in the newsletter ahead.

6. How to connect with us?

All of you might be thinking that if someday you want to join hands with us in this cause or want answers to your queries or have any suggestions, how will you connect to us?

For this we have our social media pages the links of which will be provided below, also we run WhatsApp group named "GC Messengers" where people from different age groups, communities, states and across borders have joined us. This group serves as a connection between us and the people. Any update regarding our events, projects or any other worthy developments in the society is shared there regularly. To connect with us you can directly message us on our social media handles and our team will be there to help you. Plus, if in case you need any kind of counselling, for that we have few contacts to which we can connect you for suggestions. We believe "If you are more fortunate than others, then build a longer table than a higher fence".

We would like to conclude with a beautiful saying that portrays our emotions "A gender-equal society is one, where the word gender doesn't matter". We were, we are and we will be working on the path of accomplishing this equality.

From the Desk of Student Editors

*COURAGE is what it takes to stand up and speak,
COURAGE is also what it takes to sit down and listen.*
-Winston Churchill

We, with both the views, i.e., to speak and to listen to every heart that says a story of courage, are here with the first edition of the annual newsletter-GOONJ of the gender-inclusive society of Sri Aurobindo College(E), we are Gender Champions.

We thank our Principal(OSD) Dr. Namita Rajput, Convenor Dr. Vibha Batra, team members and all other stake contributors without whose support GOONJ would not have happened.

Adding multiple levels to this beautiful presentation, we have included many UNTOLD TALES OF COURAGE that will leave you with unlimited inspiration to work for the change and stand and fight wherever required. We as a collective, believe that a dialogue should be initiated to shatter the embedded stigmatization associated with humanity.

Further, we believe that oral testimonies have the power to challenge grand narratives of the larger section of the society, which unfortunately tend to privilege heteronormativity and shuns those who go against the set binaries of gender. In the Indian context, the 'gender' trouble is not just limited to conformity but acquires a complex character due to the existence of multiple hierarchies like class, caste, creed, etc.

We hope that this exercise brings about reformation in the way the society is structured. We see this exercise as a way of providing a platform to those voices which were hitherto neglected, crushed even and marginalized.

We believe that GOONJ with its courage will turn every unturned stone of your heart.

Lastly, any suggestions or inputs are always welcome.

Thank You!



Saurabh Singh Parmar



Isha Kushwah



Niraj Kejriwal



Yatika Mehla



Vidhita Sangwan



From the Desk of Office Bearers

"Individually we are one drop. Together we are ocean".

The quote proves the efforts of the Gender Championship Cell of SACE in true sense. We here just not strive to bring favourable changes for the LGBTQIA+ community but we also aim to bring a completely discrimination-free society where emotions will matter more than anyone's sexuality. Being the Chief Administrator of this group of dynamic and hardworking people I take this opportunity to introduce to you people the first successful edition of our annual newsletter - "Goonj". Hope you will like it.



Saurabh Singh Parmar

Co-Founder and Chief Administrator

To me, getting an *opportunity to create and spread the word of equality and humanity above all is a privilege* and being able to do it in SACE is something I consider a blessing. Talking from the perspective of a Co-Founder, I have always envisioned and aspired to start the talk that is always under the cover of ignorance one way or the other, and I feel very happy to see the change that we desire, the talk in our college have successfully started and people are finally gathering the right amount of courage to accept themselves first, and GOONJ is the exact voice for the courage of acceptance. I take pride in presenting this newsletter to all.



Niraj Kejriwal

Co-Founder and Chief Overseer

I take this privilege to write a note to the readers about the society. Our college has become the 4th college to form a Gender Championship Cell in the Delhi University. Our college has seen various cases of people coming out of the closet and facing the hatred they don't deserve. I, as the Chief Overseer and the Co-Founder of the society am very proud of my team and its working. There should be a sense of belongingness in a person towards the society, which I firmly believe that my Team and I have in them and we are ready to work every day. Our team believes *HUMANITY ABOVE ALL*. This is our main motto.



Shreyans Bothra

Co-Founder and Chief Overseer

"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much". -Helen Keller

The quote above mentioned proves the efforts of all the individuals of the Gender Championship Cell as our motive is to bring equality among all genders as they're all humans and keep humanity above all.

Being the Executive member and Research Executive of this group, I wish all the luck for the future endeavours and will be always ready to lend my hand for work.



Vineeta Patni

Executive Member



KHANAK 2020

Celebrating Gender Equality

'Gender incongruence isn't a mental illness, but surely homophobia is'. These were the words of Dr. Sanjay Sharma in his concluding speech at KHANAK.

The Gender Champions hosted its first event quite successfully and looks forward to advancing on this ongoing flow of change, to create a more non-binary gender inclusive society. The event witnessed the passionate participation of various college students and community members. Dr. Vibha Batra the Convener, along with the Principal(OSD) Dr. Namita Rajput, was also an integral part of the event.

Monday, 10th February 2020 saw the coming together of various well known and established members of the LGBTQIA+ community on the event; KHANAK, the first event of the newly founded Gender Champions, the gender-inclusive society of Sri Aurobindo College (Evening).



The event commenced with the felicitation of guests. Followed by a performance by Meraki, the music society of the college. Jasleen, a gender-fluid person, beautifully initiated the dialogue, sharing their struggles and how they reached where they are. The event was further ornated by Sanshlesh's amazing classical performance.

Avantika, a trans-woman, first to be granted the Indian passport without a clinical surgery, also shared her views on the scrapping of Section 377 and the 'Trans bill'. To loosen up a bit, it was now time for some jokes, and Niraj Kejriwal, the Chief Overseer of GC, rolled out laughter with his wits.



Thereafter, the panel discussion on “Sustainable Development of the Mindset of the Society regarding LGBTQIA+ community”, graced by Nevish, an asexual person, Naina, who's a lesbian and quite established in the hotel industry, working with The Kitty Su, Reyansh Naarang, associated with Nazariya LGBT and Rishu, a part of 'Harmless hugs', was the highlight of the event, altogether the dialogue which had equal enthusiastic participation from the audience, started a discussion on all the burning issues faced by the community. The panel more specifically urged two things, firstly, 'to accept', accept anything which goes beyond their understanding of behaviour or at least, be ignorant, if not understanding. Second, to learn and unlearn. Unlearn something every day and educate ourselves more about what we don't know.

The event was beautifully summed up by Dr. Sanjay Sharma in a small presentation. The venue was a sight to behold with the spectrum of colours everywhere, subtly giving out a simple message, the world's not black and white, it's a rainbow.

A student has been quoted, "It's not about how I identify myself, it's about how you have no business in my identification". Rishu said, "Pink-washing no longer works for corporates and they've to take actual measures to ensure inclusivity now". Niraj, the Chief Overseer acknowledged the audience and the guests, "this is what we wanted, Khanak was our platform, for you guys to start this dialogue, amongst us, to learn and unlearn".

Our Initiatives at Large

EUPHEMISM

The primary online initiative on the grounds by Gender Championship Cell SACE. The noteworthy achievement of Euphemism helped Gender Championship Cell set a benchmark in the crowds of existential intensity. It's about a passage composing competition or to a greater degree a good articulation of feelings on a video posted on the online networking handles of GC both on Instagram, Facebook likewise accessible through email and WhatsApp. With the difficult work of every one of its individuals, GC figured out how to get more than eighty responses in its first contest, this not just helped GC know the outlook of individuals yet additionally let individuals talk their hearts out. To guarantee a greater amount of the investment GC thought of tagging individuals on Instagram stories as in to challenge and guarantee more support. Following 36 hours of the activity and with more than 80 passages the reaction was very gladdening and fulfilling. Results were reported inside two or three days denoting a tie between two for the third position followed by the energy about second and first position holders. With its first activity; Euphemism, the Gender Championship Cell SACE demonstrated its surprising presence.

#SPEAKINGHEARTSOUT

As the name suggests this is an initiative to let the people in this society, we live in to come out to us either online or through personal contact to speak whatever they have in their hearts. Many people have their hearts and minds heavy with different thoughts, problems, etc. They find it quite difficult to speak. There are people who want to share but there are none to listen. We at Gender Champions-SACE have taken this initiative to bridge the gap between the speakers and the listeners. We have been keen listeners since the beginning. Many people have approached us with their concerns and we have always gladly tried helping them in any way possible. Through online platforms we use the #SpeakingHeartsOut to help us reach the people who require any such help.

DECIPHER THE REALITY

Competitions are essential to an individual's success. They bring us together and create shared experiences, like scattered pieces of cloth stitched together to craft a beautiful quilt. A horse never runs so fast as when he has other horses to catch up and outpace others. The Gender Championship Cell of SACE has set the benchmark for conducting activity in such a way that the audience not only enjoys but also learns a great deal from it. With the same aim, our society organized an online paragraph writing competition named "Decipher the Reality" for 21 days during the nationwide lockdown to help the participants in developing essential writing skills, boost their confidence and most importantly bring awareness amongst the youth. A picture was posted at 8 pm sharply on WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram, and the participants were asked to present their views based on their imagination and creative skills on it in the comment section within the hour. The participant armed with unique thoughts and expressions was announced as the winner at 10 pm and a digital certificate was issued to appreciate and keep everybody else motivated. The acquisition of knowledge and skills was amazing. Not only the participants but the team members also participated with great zeal and enthusiasm. With the team effort and hard work, the event was a great success in the history of our society. The event concluded with the expression of wonderful imagination and creativity.

SRIDHAR RANGAYAN

He is an award-winning filmmaker whose films *The Pink Mirror*, *Yours Emotionally*, *68 Pages*, *Purple Skies*, *Breaking Free* and *Evening Shadows* are considered groundbreaking because of their realistic and sympathetic portrayal of the largely closeted Indian queer community. He is the founder of Festival Director of KASHISH Mumbai International Queer Film Festival, South Asia's biggest LGBTQ film festival. He has delivered TEDx talks and spoken at conferences worldwide. He currently writes a column *Rainbowsapes* in *Free Press Journal*.



INTERACTION WITH SRIDHAR RANGAYAN

1. Is film media an impactful way to bring the change for equality?

Films have always played a huge role in not only entertainment but also in focus on critical issues related to the society we live in. Be it political or social issues, films can raise the consciousness level of audiences by interestingly portraying these issues to create impact. Having studied Engineering myself, I always believe that an emotion in an audience can be 'engineered' by using certain narrative and aesthetic parameters. So, films can be seen as a strategic instrument to impact change. Of course, change cannot happen in an instance, or by just one film. It takes time. But a film can plant a seed of thought in the audience's mind that can bear fruit in years to come.

2. What according to you is the most sensible reason for parents that reduces acceptance rate?

India has been steeped in customs and traditions that are heteronormative and been dominated by patriarchy, which suppresses all other expressions of gender and sexuality. Hence it is difficult for families to accept their gay, lesbian or bisexual children's sexuality or their trans* children's gender diversity. Even if they, within their hearts, love their children, it is the perception by society that becomes a barrier for them to accept their children. Things are changing slowly but surely. Sweekar- The Rainbow Parents is a support group for parents of LGBTQIA+ children and the group has more than 75 parents from across India. They offer phone counselling and face-to-face meeting to help other parents come to terms with accepting their children.

3. How can we imbibe youth with the right knowledge and understanding to accept what is right?

I feel the sense of what is right is imparted at an early age by parents & families, and by school teachers. Hence these two gatekeepers - parents and school teachers - need to be sensitized about various issues, including gender parity and non-discrimination of LGBTQIA+ individuals. Right from day one, children need to be made aware not to stereotype people into gender binaries. Awareness about LGBTQIA+ issues needs to be incorporated in school and college curriculums. And of course, later as the child evolves, film and mass media can creatively impact their consciousness. As much as we should strive to create positive stories, we need to be critical of negative stories and fake news and strike at the very root of misinformation.

4. Being an activist yourself, what is the facet of a real fight out there?

None of us chose to be activists. We all have been fighting for a cause that touches upon oneself. Myself as a gay man, coming out in the 1990s, didn't have any information or resources that could help me accept myself. It was a long lonely struggle. Once I accepted myself and came out, I wanted to ensure that others like me didn't have to face the same isolation; that they would feel more confident when they heard me out as a gay man. Of course, since I came out in 1990, I have seen changes in the level of acceptance. Post the Supreme Court verdict in September 2018 reading down Section 377, there is a lot more confidence among both the LGBTQIA+ community and their families in coming out. Now the struggle is for everyone to be brought on the same page. We need more materials in regional languages, and we have to penetrate with the messages right down to the grass-roots level, that reach even villages. We have to ensure that everyone is entitled to love, and a life with dignity.

5. Where are we standing as a civilized society to accept the simple notion of love?

Love is Love, irrespective of sex and gender is a concept that is still new and will take time to percolate down to the masses. Recent films like *Evening Shadows*, *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga* and *Shubh Mangal Zyada Savdhaan* carry forward these messages to a mass level. Also, the newfound acceptance of social media by various brands and companies help in disseminating this concept. But these brands and companies need to walk the talk, by helping greater employment of LGBTQIA+ individuals and fostering an environment within the company to be non-discriminatory. It is not enough to colour your profile with rainbow colours but to make changes happen at ground level. That requires courage, determination, and dedication.

6. Goonj, aims to strike the courage quotient of every individual, what according to you is the need of the hour to reach every mind and heart of humankind?

Everyone needs to understand that the struggles of the LGBTQIA+ community are not theirs alone. They are the victims of perceptions by the society, and the wrong moral values imposed upon them. It is time for families and society to come out of their closets of homophobia, and accept all LGBTQIA+ individuals as equal members of society. It is time for Allies to stand up and make a call for equality. Let us not call out for Acceptance anymore. Let us call out for Integration, of marginalized communities into the mainstream.

KOUSHUMI CHAKRABORTI

She believes in the quote of Robert Brault, "There is an instinct in a woman to love most her own child and an instinct to make any child who needs her love, her own".



A mother of an intersex child, I know first-hand the impact of lack of awareness in the society about differences in sexual development. We have faced and continue to face challenges daily when dealing with people from the legal, medical, educational and social strata.

I had the choice of remaining quiet about my child being intersex. But I not only decided to be open about it but also started actively advocating for creating awareness. Reason? I love my child unconditionally and do not want them to feel at any point that being intersex is a matter of shame. I want my child to grow up as a confident, compassionate and empathetic citizen of this country and this world. This is the only legacy that I will hand over to them in my lifetime.

So, what is intersex, also known as the Difference/Disorder of Sexual Development (DSD)? When a child is born with physical/sexual/hormonal/genetic characteristics that do not fall in the typical definitions of male or female, it is known as Intersex.

Please note that it has nothing to do with gender identity or sexual preferences. Due to lack of awareness, most of the time intersex is confused with transgender, because of the above confusion. An intersex person, while physically may not be either sex, form their gender identity by themselves. Transgender is someone who is physically and sexually aligned with a certain sex, but their gender identity or affinity is towards the opposite and they choose to transition to that sex, socially and/or physically.

Medically, there are 40+ variations of intersex known so far. It is also known that one in every 2000 children are born with some variation of intersex. These traits might be identified at birth or by the time the child hits puberty or sometimes, never. Unless these traits impact a person's regular life, chances of finding out are difficult.



You would have noticed that I use the pronoun 'they' for my child. This is because my child is only 4 years old and has not concretely formed a gender identity. Hence, I choose to use a gender-neutral pronoun, to give them space and time to make the choice. A lot of intersex people might choose to use 'they' and hence one needs to be sensitive to this and address them the way they wish to be addressed. It is okay to slip unconsciously, but apologize and move on with the correction. Do not keep apologizing and please do not misgender someone knowingly.

As a society, we see a lot of hate and discrimination around us. It is up to us to understand and empathize so that the world that WE see around us changes for the better. It is not possible to explain every nuance about intersex in this article. Hence, it is my humble request to all to read up a little more about intersex and even if you do not understand completely, please accord them the same respect that you would like to be accorded to you.

VALENTINA

Valentina is working as an Enterprise Sales Professional.

She recently switched from Product to Sales.

She has been working since the last 8 years majority of which in Bangalore.



I am Valentina and my preferred pronouns are She/Her.

I identify as a genderfluid person. I am an individual, biologically male however, I appreciate and love introducing myself as the contrary sex.

For nearly my whole life I have been battling with my character of being strange. Not because I didn't care for who I was. But in light of the fact that I was apprehensive about what the world would state including my loved ones on the off chance that they discover.

This inside battle truly influenced each aspect of my life. I lost trust in myself accepting that I am not typical or that I am adequate or that there is some kind of problem with me. The battle turned out to be hard to such an extent that I even considered taking my life. I bombed in my profession, my connections all that I had once appreciated. All due to this moronic conviction that I am not typical.

It was just a year ago in September 2019, that I, at last, acknowledged myself and had faith in who I am and what I could be. I quit thinking about the

assessments of others including family or companions. It was simply after I defeated this dread of mine, I had the option to educate individuals concerning who I am. Some acknowledged and some didn't care for it.

Yet, to be straightforward, it gave me a colossal opportunity and euphoria and self-conviction that I am just as acceptable as any ordinary individual. I feel my certainty is back and I have had the option to restart my profession. My dread of confronting the world is gone and now numerous individuals in my loved ones think about me.

Their conclusion and judgement don't generally make a difference any longer. If you are likewise somebody who is battling with your sexual orientation personality, please realize that you are as ordinary as any other individual and there is nothing amiss with you. Go out there and be dauntless. Carry on with your life how you need to live. Quit thinking about other's conclusions. Take a stab at associating with eccentric networks. You will be invited with adoration and open arms. You are strange and you are astonishing. Or more all we as a whole love you.



Source- MGI Study through Yahoo!news

VIKRAMADITYA SAHAI

Vikramaditya Sahai is a researcher with the Centre for Law and Policy Research, Bengaluru. They have previously taught at the Department of Gender Studies, Ambedkar University, Delhi. They live and love in Delhi.



INTERACTION WITH VIKRAMADITYA

1. Being an ex-student of Delhi University you've personally seen and experienced things that go on campus, the way LGBTQIA+ individuals are treated. Through Goonj what message would you like to imbibe in the students who bully LGBTQIA+ individuals?

The bully isn't looking for an intervention, the bully protects themselves from any knowledge of the extent of the harm, hurt, and pain they cause to those they bully even when its awareness is precisely what drives them. Precisely because the bully is someone open to the other - affected by the pain of the other - is why the bully guards themselves against this radical vulnerability. That this can never be achieved is why the bully seeks to hurt and annihilate the other. So, the questions we should be asking is not about some singular bully but about culture and society that doesn't help us through our battles with individuality, our difficulties with dependence and our relations with others. The bully belongs to a society of borders. So, the work against bullying is building societies of vulnerability, one that attends to the pain of the bullied and the traumas of the bully, together and in relation.

2. Google defines queer as strange and odd. Since you've been a part of the Gender Studies Faculty at the School of Human Studies, Ambedkar University, Delhi. How would you define queer?

The word queer, as it is understood as a self-description, is about the history of reclamation of symbols, gestures, words of prejudice and shame by movements to build worlds otherwise. Instead of relying on a narrative of "being just like everyone else", when the queer movement began using the word, they wanted to emphasize the creativity, joy, and beauty of that which the normal abject and humiliates. Queer is strange and odd, but we must ask the question concerning what whom? Since when?

3. According to you, what is the root cause of Gender Inequality? What are the ways according to you that can reduce the gender divide?

Gender inequality seems tautological to me. The regime of gender is one of an arbitrary assignation of our complexity and multiplicity into two, three maybe ten boxes. To live as a gender is to live a life, we never consented to but have accepted. It is a life in which all our decisions are made for us and our ability to invent ourselves. We are all constantly missing lives we should

have had and resisting the onslaught of expectations that come with this. But it is precisely because we are made to fight our battles alone - the battle of being the good son/daughter, of being successful, of being everything everyone else wants us to be and what we desire - that gender has continued. The difference between our lives and those of our foremothers hasn't come due to the inevitable progress of modernity but by the resistance of anti-caste and feminist movements. It is only when we are supported by that which is more than ourselves that we can continue to fight against a world without joy and creativity.

4. Do you believe Stereotypes created define gender roles in today's society/world?

A stereotype is more than just a reductive image in the world. It is a relation between those who make these images and those who are so imaged. When you create the stereotype of the queer person as careless then what you allow is for the society to negotiate all relations based on the weight of this image. The energies of stereotyped people go in just refuting or nuancing the image so constructed, rather than in furthering their ideas, creativity, and images. It is a restriction imposed on people to curtail their capacity to change the world, it is a ploy to let those in power remain thereby exhausting those who are marginalized in fighting these images than the structure.

5. Do you think Gender Biasness can come to an end?

It is not enough to speak of mere bias. It is important that the regime of classification called gender must come to an end. It is precisely that it seems so natural that we have stopped asking more fundamental questions. Why is what is assumed to be between my legs supposed to determine my relation to the rest of my body and everybody else? Why can I not refuse this arbitrary assignation when I can change so much about myself? Why do people get raped, murdered, lynched because they challenge this norm? How is it okay for us to not know of all the violence around us and continue to celebrate this normalcy as a good and valuable thing? Instead, we have been made to think only in terms of questions of prejudice and bias, which makes it seem like the problem of gender is one of a few people and their mentality. What it requires is collective mobilization, resilient struggles, and radical imagination.



Vineeta Patni

VISHWAS

It happened during my board exams, being exhausted and tired after studying I decided to go out with my friend. We went on a long walk on our way back, my neighbor offered to give us a ride. He was around my father's age and my uncle, I trusted him. Me and my friend got on the bike with him, he took us in the opposite direction altogether. After a few minutes he asked us if we would like to take charge and ride the bike, me and my friend excitedly agreed but my friend was given the excuse of being short for not driving. I took charge and could feel him rubbing his body against mine, in the blink of an eye his hands were on my thighs and the next moment they were on my chest. I pressed the brake without thinking twice and got off, my friend took off as soon as we stopped without waiting for me. I tried running away but he grabbed my hand and asked me to kiss him, hearing this I pushed him and ran as fast as I could. This incident shocked me to my core, it made me judge myself, question whether I should trust people or not. I did not tell anyone about this, I felt alone and thought no one would understand me, no one I trusted enough to share this with.



Anonymous

The light at the end of the tunnel

In school for as long as I can remember, I've always been bullied. It was always for different reasons, sometimes the way I spoke, the way I acted or the way I did a specific task. At a certain point in time, it becomes way worse, name-calling such as Gay, girly, homo, fag, what are you crazy? Were the only thing I could hear walking down the halls, in between classes, during recess they were whispered sometimes and sometimes yelled. It was really hard to cope with, But I did.



TALES OF



Bijita Nayak

Don't judge until you walk a mile in their shoes

Seeing people of the LGBTQIA+ community in my locality and witnessing the social trauma of walking through comments and disgusted stares never caught my attention until my friend came out to me. He still hasn't found the courage to come out to his family. I would love to share with him the same comfort and safe space I share with my other friends. I'm looking forward to a brighter sky for everyone with a rainbow which not only represents this particular society instead stands out for humanity.



Saurabh Singh Parmar

Soch

Working for women's development and LGBTQIA+ rights for the past 2 years has served me with plenty of experiences. Last year, while I, was working on an event related to the LGBTQ community one of my friends (so-called literate and topper of our class) said, don't be so much involved in events of this community otherwise you will become gay. I was laughing with a sense of pity on him, how could people be so homophobic and ignorant to a particular community just because their sexual preferences don't match ours.

MUNTAZIR

It started when I was just six and it went on for 6-7 years until, one fine day I decided for it to stop and that it was enough. I didn't want it to happen anymore as I did not like it, not even for a bit. I remember threatening him that I'll tell everyone, he reciprocated with a slap in the middle of the road so hard it scared me to my very core. They say what doesn't kill you makes you stronger, but no one talks about how difficult and excruciating this surviving part is, where does being strong really leave us? It's 2020, it's time that we relearn a few things. It's time that conditioning is reversed. It's time that we talk about issues such as molestation, sexual abuse, harassment, and others in a way that the abuser and the one committing the crime feel shame, regret and pain. When I was six, I felt ashamed and disgusted in telling anyone about what happened to me because I was scared of being judged, looked down upon. Looking back now I realize I shouldn't be beating myself up for something which was not in my control, something I didn't ask for or what I wanted myself to go through.



Yatika Mehla

HARSH REALITY OF YOUTH

I have a biological male friend who identifies as a female. Her preferred pronoun is "SHE". She studies in my college, initially, she used to face a lot of eve-teasing and discrimination. I felt terrible that our college was not a safe space for her, when I was hanging out with her, roaming around the campus few of my friends told me to stay away from her, telling me it's not normal and even questioned my sexual preference. I made it clear to them that nothing about this situation is abnormal, the only thing abnormal is their mindset and how they should be changing it.



Divya Sharma

REVELATION

Humans deserve respect!

When I was 16, I visited Jammu's famous Raghunath temple in mid-December. It was a chilly day, I saw a small boy sitting outside the temple when I came out after visit, I wondered why he was outside. When I found that he was not allowed to enter the temple because people there consider him a beggar and beggars aren't allowed inside, I felt terrible and offered him some food but he went somewhere else. I think that those people who worship God should realize that children are God's favourite and shouldn't discriminate against them.



Sanket Arora

A Day to Remember!

When I was 6, my mom dropped me off at my friend's place for a day spent but something weird happened that day. My friend asked to play a game, that game required for us to strip and be naked. I refused because my parents had told me not to strip in front of anyone except them. I felt awkward and called my mom to pick me up, my mom asked me what was wrong and I told her everything that happened, she told me not to worry. My mom informed her parents, felt it was the right thing to do. I still wonder why she asked to play such a game? Was this simple curiosity? Was someone making her play this game? The necessary course of action was taken but was it enough?



Vidhita Sangwan

RISE CONFERENCE

Yatika Mehla
BA(Hons) English, 2nd Year
Sri Aurobindo College(E)

“Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance”.

~ Verna Myers

The pride circle successfully hosted its second edition of the RISE (Reimagining Inclusion for Social Equity) Conference at The Lalit Hotel, New Delhi on 22nd February 2020. India’s second and Biggest LGBTI Job Fair, Conference, and Marketplace. I, Yatika Mehla, a member of the Gender Championship Cell of Sri Aurobindo College Evening attended the RISE Event. I would like to thank our Convenor Dr. Vibha Batra who conceded me to attend this enlightening and enriching event.

The conference began with an opening keynote by TONY TENICELA (Global Leader, Marketplace Diversity and Workforce Engagement Services, IBM) who shared his personal life experience as to how hesitant he was about his sexual orientation and did not open up about it for the longest of time. He concluded his speech by asking the audience to question the 3 ABC goals which stand for A- Be Accountable (Set goals, be proactive), B- Be Bold (Dare to stand up for what you believe in), C- Be Collaborative (Be supportive).

The first panel of the day was “TAKING IT FROM THE TOP” which consisted of Sourav Majumdar (Editor, Fortune India) who moderated the Panel, Tim.E (EVP and Managing Counsel International, American Express), Pawan Vaish (Head of Central Operations RIDES, India/Sri Lanka, Uber). Tim shared his story as to how he along with other wonderful people of the LGBT community have leadership aspects but lacked confidence, for which Amex launched a program called “Out Next- Out Leadership”. He concluded by sharing how there in AMEX employees are treated as role models since it promotes diversity. After Tim, Pawan shared with the audience how uber creates a safe space for both their employers and partners. He told the audience about the BHAVISHYA program of uber which focuses on three things 1. Groups to guide the people of LGBTQ community, 2. Recognition of the LGBT individuals in the office, 3. Collaboration with government agencies and NGOs. He shared with us that diversity means mixing and inclusion means making the mix work which is the responsibility of the CEO, and they need to make sure that it works and the message is spread.

The second panel of the day was “Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow: Look Back to Look Forward”. Shivraj Prasad (Founder- Brevis Consulting) moderated the panel. The esteemed speakers were Dilip Chenoy (Secretary-General, FICCI), Zainab Patel (Director- D&I, KPMJ), Anjali Gopalan (Founder, Naz Foundation), and Vedica Saxena (Program Director, Tagore International School). The discussion started with a question to Anjali ma’am, she was asked is there anything she had done differently about the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) she filed against Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code in 2001. She said no, she mentioned how the environment was difficult back then, the police acted as Goons, how criticism was looked at the lens of HIV/AIDS. Zainab Patel added while sharing her personal life story that the things and mistakes of the past gave us the knowledge we have right now. She said there’s nothing she would like to change in her life and around the steps taken around the scrapping of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. Dilip Chenoy taking the conversation ahead talked about the three things that stand out while talking about LGBT Inclusion which is 1. History of Inclusion of Society, how India did not have this law and was imposed onto us, 2. We should focus more on the attitude of society and not the law, 3. Get people to use the LGBT Inclusive methods instead of just accepting it. Vedica Saxena shared with the audience ‘Breaking Barriers’ - a Human rights initiative by Tagore International School through which they have sensitized more than 3500+ students about gender.

The third panel of the day was “Countries’ DNA of Inclusion”. Varun Khanna (International Partnerships & Outreach, Pride Circle) moderated the panel. The guests present were Aly-Khan Rajani (Counsellor/ Head of Advocacy & Public Affairs, High Commission of Canada to India) alongside H.E. Federico Salas Lotfe (Ambassador of Mexico in India). The discussion started with Federico sharing the practices of Mexico as to how LGBTQ+ practices and people were never criminalized and even though in some parts of Mexico LGBTQ Inclusion was still considered a taboo but with the help of people the right message was spread. Aly-Khan shared with us how it’s been a journey from Canada to India regarding gender equality and environmental change would help more in LGBT Inclusion.

The fourth panel was “Movies and More: Challenging Stereotypes”. The panel was moderated by Poonam Saxena (Editor, HT & Co-Author of Karan Johar’s Memoir- An Unsuitable Boy), the guests present were Faraz Ansari (Writer & Director- Sheer Qorma & SISAK (FILM), Director/Producer- Futterwacken Films), Priya Malik (Actress- Sheer Qorma, Poet/Storyteller, Bigg Boss Season 9 Contestant), and Sridhar Rangayan (Director, Producer, Writer & Founder – KASHISH MIQFF). The discussion started with Faraz talking about how he thinks it’s important to focus on queer individuals, how essential it is to talk about sexuality in movies. Priya Malik shared how she believes that conscious art is the best art in the entertainment scenario and how her upcoming movie Sheer Qorma is a perfect example of the same. Sridhar Rangayan concluded the discussion with a beautiful line “Artists is to ask relevant questions, not to answer them”.

The fifth panel of the day was “The SOGIE World” ‘SOGIE’ stands for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression. Lush Monsoon (Drag Queen, Lawyer) moderated the panel. The guests present were Amita Karadkhedkar (Vice President, Citibank), Gaurav Pramanik (Writer, Columnist, Teacher. Tweeted about discrimination at Tech Mahindra), Mohul Sharma (F&B Associate, The Lalit). The discussion began with Gaurav sharing with everyone the discrimination he faced at Tech Mahindra and how badly he was cornered for 5 years and how much change that one incident brought in his life. He further shared how his perpetrator was then punished and was fired. Amita shared she suffered from gender dysphoria for most of her life everyone told her she was not normal and in college and schools did not have many friends to support her. She channelized all her energy into studies and completed all her studies with scholarships and completed her engineering with distinction. Next up Mohul, an out and proud transman shared his story of how he got to know of the Gender Dysphoria through the famous show Satyamev Jayate and from there his journey started. It was in between his surgeries were going on that his father passed away and he still is the only working member in his family and looking after his younger brother.

The final panel of the day was “Rainbow Parents”. The panel was moderated by Shambavi Saxena (Writer, Youth Ki Awaaz). The guests present were Koushumi Chakraborti (A single woman who adopted an intersex child), Dr. Veena Rangnekar (78 years old mother of a gay son), and Air Cmde (Dr) Sanjay Sharma (Retd) (Parent of a Transgender Daughter). The discussion started with Dr. Veena sharing her side of the story as when her son came out to her as gay the only thing that came to her mind was how did her son felt about this. Dr. Sanjay sir, when he found out about his daughter not being straight, he searched the internet but even google defined transitioning abnormal and something as a mental disorder, that is when he alongside his wife founded ATHI (Association for Transgender Health in India). Koushumi ma’am sharing her experience of adopting her intersex child told us how even the adoption agency was not aware of her now child being intersex and confused it with transgender. She concluded the panel by saying it is her child’s choice at the end of the day and would support her child no matter what.

I would like to conclude my experience with a quote from Alaric Hutchinson’s book “Living Peace: Essential Teachings for Enriching Life”.

“On the road to success, there is always room to share appreciation and gratitude for other people’s successes. Feeling gratitude for other people raises our own vibration, while adding cement to the bricks we lay. Finding the best qualities in others allows us to build those qualities within ourselves. And when we focus on our personal growth with open hearts and minds, the speed with which we construct dramatically increases, because all the while, we are attracting more like energy and like-minded people into our lives to assist us”.

Yes, I cry!

Niraj Kejriwal
B.Com(Hons), 2nd Year
Sri Aurobindo College(E)

Clearly the title suggests that this write up is going to be about ofcourse me, CRYING and not being able to do it like I should. But without getting into cliched shouting and blame games providing the reason for why I was unable to express the very simple need of human to cry, let's start with discussing how it all started.

Born into an averagely educated middle class family of parents who have faced abandonment from their family after 6 months of my birth at their difficult times when my father(sole bread earning member of my family) was operated for intestinal dysfunction, resulting into severe financial crisis for more than 2 good years and my mother handling her one year old child with a bed-ridden husband, single handedly like one women army. I grew up seeing my mother fighting with every bit of her energy to try and provide me and my younger sister, a smart upbringing with the right quality education and not having good financial backbone at the same time accompanied by family misconducts. All this resulted into her being completely focused on developing me into a strong personality who is anchored on sharing her responsibilities. I thrived as an individual who thinks that he can handle everything that life is throwing at him and who is the strength of his mother. I evolved as a fellow who conceived the idea of living life as a person who cannot express that he is freaked out, emotional or feeling low in a particular situation.

An important point to clarify here is that my MAA is not to be blamed for me being an imbecile who processed the idea of being responsible and mentally strong as the synonym for "I MUST NOT CRY".

The reality behind me adapting to this personality is that I was not able to accept and register the fact that crying is something not the sign of being feeble and weak, and hence I was never able to express even to my close and loved ones. But ofcourse being a human, I feel like crying in

difficult times or when I am very happy(khushi k aansu).

I remember the day I was tried to be physically molested in a public transport(travelling with my mother and sister) by an elderly man and when I tried to confront him and blowed a slap on his face in the heat of the moment(when the man started arguing that he is innocent), I was beaten by the mob in that locality. At that point, my mother saved me with her guts to face the mob. And when I returned home, I wanted to cry at the top of my voice holding my mother, but I was not able to! I cried and yelled like anything sitting behind the water tank on the terrace of my house.

Thankfully, I soon realised what I was lacking, that ceased my senses which made me feel that I cannot be vulnerable. Any guesses what it is? ACCEPTANCE. Yes acceptance it is. I was not able to accept that I am just another human and its absolutely okay to be vulnerable at times and crying your eyes off.

So, I very proudly prescribe everyone to have a good cry whenever and however they feel like. Crying is not just a way to express sorrow and frustration, it relaxes you from the core of your personality. Adding a fun fact to the whole crying concept, crying lowers your blood pressure and pulse rate, reducing the chances of stroke, heart failure and even dementia.

Recently, when I shared this whole situation of mine with my MAA and a very close friend of mine, both firmly said "you can and must cry, and if you think that crying will make you less of a men, you are certainly wrong, gentlemen". They both added another statement that I am adding below as an epigram.

And at the end, I again have "khushi k aansu" in my eyes for being able to write and express this.

"You are my strength and I am yours. So, we are always strong together".

Corporate: A New Beginning

Mudit Tiwari
B.Com(Prog.), 1st Year
Sri Aurobindo College(E)

On 6 September 2018, the Supreme Court of India unanimously ruled Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code as unconstitutional. It was an enormous victory for the LGBTQIA+ community in India, who have been through decades of marginalization, torture and social exclusion. Though legally, the community is getting the much-awaited and much-desired recognition but their struggle with societal acceptance continues to be a challenge. India has deep-rooted stereotypes that need to be addressed for us as a society to progress.

India is known as a land of diversity and it's proven that diversity leads to success. Diversity and inclusion are a term used to describe programs and policies that encourage representation and participation of diverse groups of people, people of different genders, races, ethnicities, abilities and disabilities, religions, cultures, ages, sexual orientations, people with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and skills and expertise. Diversity and Inclusion is not just a “feel-good” initiative. Research has found that having diverse viewpoints at all levels of an organization improves financial results, organizational and team performance, innovation, and other areas of the business.

The terms “Diversity” and “Inclusion” are often confused, but they’re two parts of a whole strategy. Many experts describe diversity as being invited to the party and inclusion as being asked to dance. In other words, a corporation can have a diverse workforce, but if those diverse people aren’t having their voices heard and their perspectives included in business strategy, their presence is only half of the equation.

We can tap into multiple fields that need structural changes for the inclusivity of the LGBTQIA+ community, but the one that remains on the top is the corporate sector.

Since the abrogation of Section 377, many companies have become more vocal and accepting of the community. A fair amount of reconsideration can be seen happening in hiring policies, employee's benefits, workplace policies to make it

\$32
BILLION

The World Bank estimates India is losing \$32 billion dollars a year in economic output because of discrimination against the LGBT community.¹

35%

Companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 35% more likely to have financial returns above their industry norms.²

15x

Companies with higher levels of racial diversity bring in nearly 15x more sales revenue than companies with low levels of racial diversity.³

70%

Organizations with diverse leadership are 70% likelier to capture a new market than companies lacking diverse leadership.⁴

58%

Diverse teams tend to produce answers to questions that are 58% more accurate than teams with zero diversity.⁵

more inclusive. A study by Boston Consulting Group showed that there is still a misconception that openly supporting the LGBTQIA+ community would incur a backlash from customers but more and more companies in India are adopting no discriminative inclusion policy. The list included the likes of Tata Steel, Reliance, Dr. Reddy, and Mahindra and Mahindra which in turn helped these companies in generating better revenue. However, on a larger scale, not much has changed. Where the hiring process is merit-based, there's a huge possibility of human bias; representative recruitment is looked down upon compared to merit-based hiring, so the entire system is flawed. Companies need to come up with a holistic approach to recruitment.

Office 'banter' should be monitored and if complaints are made, strict actions should be taken against the insensitive employees. Sensitization workshops to stop discrimination against the LGBTQIA+ community should be held periodically. Sexual harassment policies should be revised to be more gender-neutral. Steps as simple as gender-neutral toilets can be set up to make the life of LGBTQIA+ employees easier.

A lot of young talented people tend to settle abroad where they can be themselves leading to brain-drain. Homophobia affects the tourism industry massively. From an economic point of view too, it's unwise to be not all-embracing.

There's a lot that can be done but the change does not happen overnight. Small steps in the right direction can fruit wonderful results. It's high time we let our people be themselves.

My Life, Your ROLES?

Ruwaidah Suhail
BA (Prog), 3rd Year
Daulat Ram College

"The problem with Gender Roles is that it prescribes how we should be rather than recognizing how we are".

~ Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



women were inferior in intelligence and skill, or they oppress women because they fear the women would become too powerful and control them.

In today's world, a strong man has the strength to support a woman, in whatever endeavour she pursues. It means being tough enough to put their ego and emotions aside and encourage them to be the best person she could be.

Gender roles in society mean we're expected to act, speak, dress, groom, and conduct ourselves based upon our 'assigned sex'. For example, women are generally expected to dress in typically feminine ways and be polite, and nurturing while men are generally expected to be strong, aggressive and bold.

Some individuals want women to be "feminine" and men to be "strong", but it should not matter because we're all different. One should not believe in binary gender. A woman might want to become a bodybuilder while a man may want to use makeup, and that's completely okay. People shouldn't judge.

But some men may want to continue the traditional gender roles out of insecurity. Maybe it's ego and they feel emasculated because their wife/sister/mother is supporting them, while in their entire life they were told to "be the man of the house", and support a family.

I believe that traditional gender roles mask the oppression of women who otherwise would have been productive and spectacular working members of society. This continues because men either think



COULD I?

Bhavya Arora
BA(Hons) Applied Psychology,
3rd year, SACE

COULD I?

Could I be free
from the judgments?
If asking that brings me down
from society's pedestal,
then so be it.

Could I be free
from being ridiculed?
If getting it helps me
restore my freedom,
then I want it.

Could I be free
from the conditioned love of people?
If wanting that snatches away
my near and dear,
then I never needed them.

But every night,
my mind asks,
Are you sure?

And all those whispers of freedom
FADE AWAY...



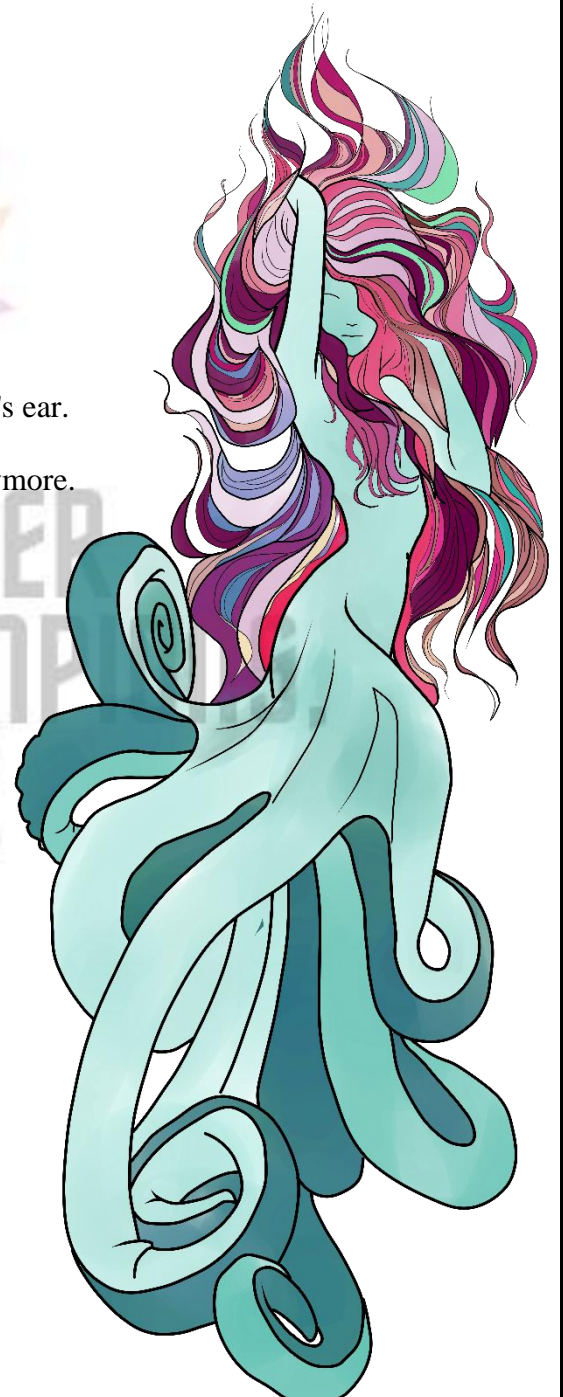
Men in my world

Piya Kar
BA(Hons) English, 2nd Year
Motilal Nehru College(E)

The men in my world
Gave women choice.
As if it needs to be given to us
Like it does not already belong to us.
And that was the first lesson I learned in patriarchy
Men gave me freedom.
Like freedom was not my own.

My father anchors love with obedience
And I am the revolution he is afraid of
So, he chokes my larynx
To quiet me down
And that shows he does not know his daughter at all.
Because his daughter has forgotten to say I love you.
And hence, writes long poems.
How her pen is an opera
A grand march,
A battle call,
And her lips have not only hidden a stubborn poem behind one boy's ear.
But more than that.
And that she has secrets in her body but her body is not a secret anymore.

So how do I tell my father,
That he taught me to pray with hands closed.
And you can only ask with an open palm.
And if God is a man, I am beyond asking him,
for anything that is rightfully mine.
I don't believe in the god that he does,
And I don't know if a god beyond that exists.



Over and Out

Harsh Sahay
BA(Hons) History, 1st year
Ramjas College

“Coming out as gay today is easier than coming out as a conservative”.

This statement reflects our society at large and how it is wrong at so many different levels. Gender is a broad concept and it isn't binary, but the fact that this society doesn't leave scope for an identity beyond the binary is horrific. I didn't know of LGBTQIA+ community or anything other than the gender binary until 9th standard. Today, I proudly identify myself as a bisexual man, but my journey wasn't as beautiful as it seems.

School days are considered the best time of your life, for me this wasn't the case. I didn't play according to the gender roles assigned by society. I didn't have many friends till 11th standard, the boys wouldn't hang out with me because “I wasn't boyish enough” and the girls had mixed reactions, some enjoyed my company while others didn't. The worst bit was being treated as an untouchable, no one realizes the gravity of this term until you are treated like one. Everyone at my school took extensive precautions to stay at one hand's distance from me and if by accident somebody brushed by, that person used to be disgusted and would elaborately wash their hands.

Slangs like chakka, kinnar, were an everyday affair. I received homophobic messages on my social media accounts. I remember a teacher who made me forcefully dance on an item song in front of the whole class when she saw me practicing Odissi. I was accused of trying to steal boyfriends when I tried to make friends, every day at least two people questioned my masculinity. I was asked questions like 'which washroom do you use, boys or girls?' 'do you pee standing or sitting?'. I was socially unacceptable. Not being a part of any friend circle, made my picnics, recess, and P.E. periods a lonely affair, being alone at a school can take a huge toll on your mental health. I was mentally harassed by many teachers, physically by bullies. I feared going to school and spent my free time at the library. Every day I prayed not to come home with yet another bad memory. Home was no better, I was ridiculed by my parents at family gatherings, I hated these family events as much as I hated school. One of my most traumatic memories? I was called 'chamiya' by my mother for asking her to buy me ghunghroo. Nowhere was my safe place, no one was my go-to person.

I faced all of this for 16 years, every day, not having a clue about my sexuality. What did all these things do

apart from scarring my childhood? It made me fear my own identity once I started realizing it. It made me hate myself for actually becoming what everyone said. It made self-acceptance of my real identity 100 times harder than it already was. I started realizing that I had feelings for guys and was attracted to them, the day I realized this, I grossed out myself. 'How can I do this? It's wrong. A boy is supposed to be attracted only towards a girl'. I tortured myself because I felt I was at fault. And isn't that exactly what society does? It rejects anything other than the binary narrative of gender. To accept oneself is itself enough of a resistance not everyone is capable of this. I, like many others, am a suicide survivor. The confusion, the disgust, the feeling of being a reject, a failure kills us. This, no matter how elaborately I put up in words, no cis person can ever understand. But it's said, what doesn't kill you, makes you stronger. Somehow, I finally accepted myself and came on terms with my real identity. I'm proud of who I'm and on the journey, I've made.

I have also been subjected to sexual harassment, 'rape' to be precise, it was hell, way worse than hell. I scrubbed myself to rashes every day to get rid of even a hint of that monster, I was in depression. I till date, fear male touch, I had nightmares for three months, every night. What's worse is, I couldn't ask for help, I couldn't tell my parents, or report to the police or talk to a friend. How does a boy get raped? That too by a man. In a country where female rape victims are stripped of their respect at police stations while filing complaints and where she is seen as the culprit and not the rapist, I could only wonder what hell would break loose if I ever told that to anyone. I have been broken yet somehow, I survived.

Little by little I'm building up courage. Courage to be who I really want to be. Clothes, jewellery, colours, jobs, passion, it's incredibly awful when you realize how many things have been gendered. We are here to breakthrough. I wear payal, somebody flaunts kajal, one kisses the transgender. We are all here, to challenge every restraint put on us. Respect every coming out story equally. Every person in the community I know has gone through harassment, or something worse. It takes a lot to look back into someone's eyes and reveal one's true identity. With the courage, I stand today is a dream of many community members, closeted or out.

Beliefs Make Dreams

Dikshika Gupta
B.Com(Hons), 1st year
DCAC

“Being transgender is not just a medical transition, it’s discovering who you are, living your life authentically, loving yourself, and spreading that love towards other people and accepting one another no matter their difference”.

-Jezz Jennings



Newspaper clipping of Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman returning to India

Indian Air Force Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman’s aerial combat against the Pakistani F16 fighter jet and his courage when captured inspired many youngsters in the country, making him the golden egg of the nation. He is also the hero of 20-year old Adam Harry, who is touted to be the first transman pilot in the country.

Unlike foreign countries, India has not enrolled any trans people into the force. It would be great if our country would allow passionate youth by giving importance to the skills than our gender. If selected and trained, they will also get the opportunity to serve our nation and this would also empower people of their community across the country. Adam’s life was never a bed of roses.

When he told his family that I am a man born in the wrong body, they mistreated and tortured me for it. Rather than love and friendship, what he got during his formative years from childhood to teens were bullying, hatred, and ignorance from family and

friends. His parents even took him to counselling and told him to become ‘normal’ he says.

Though his parents are financially well-off and helped him join a private aviation academy in South Africa, he says they later stopped paying his fees after he cut his hair short, started dressing up as a man and posted photos on his social media handles. The pilot training course helped him get a job at an aviation academy in Ernakulam, but the company didn’t pay him.

The first transman pilot is hoping for social acceptance and love. He stresses that through the school curriculum, students from a young age should be taught about the trans community.

“Families and schools must support their community as they are also normal human beings who have their dreams and right to live in this world. It is hard to live like an orphan when your parents are alive”.



ADAM HARRY

Are you listening?

Joshua
BA(Hons) English, 1st Year
Sri Aurobindo College(E)

“Sometimes it is the people no one imagines anything of who do the things that no one can imagine”.

~ Joan Clarke

I'm Joshua and I'm here to share my coming out story as a Transgender.

Being brought up on the slopes never allowed me to be vocal about my sexual orientation and reveal my personality to the world. My battle started when I understood I was not gay but rather a Transgender, Transwoman to be exact (Woman caught in a man's body). What could be more anguishing than Gender Dysphoria?

I was pondering steady domineering jerks, analysis, despondency, and disappointment since a youthful age. Subsequent to conquering all the obstacles, I chose to either change the attitude of individuals or individuals'. I most likely realized I won't have the option to change myself since I would be broken on the off chance that I wouldn't get an opportunity to turn into a lady. I at that point persuaded my folks and came to Delhi. They didn't acknowledge me by any means. My family thought I was dishonourable to them and religion neither acknowledged. However, at that point, I chose to leave

everything aside and carry on with my life as indicated by my decision. I was unable to shoulder the torment any longer so I told my mother that I was going to venture out from home if they won't acknowledge.

It took me a ton of guts when I entered the college grounds for the first time in a girly dress, with cosmetics and hair tied. I inclined that I entered the grounds acting naturally.

Gradually things fell destined for success, I didn't need to persuade my folks since they naturally acknowledged me due to my certainty. I caused them to acknowledge boldness is the main key to carry on with my life. Thus, in this manner when you pick and become valiant, no issue how troublesome a test you'll generally win.

Today, I can wear my preferred dress, talk with the individuals of my decision, dine with the correct individuals of my decision due to the brave advances I've taken and stolen all the awful days away with certainty.

Statistics and facts

APPROXIMATELY
0.5%
OF THE POPULATION IS
TRANSGENDER (BAUER ET
AL., 2015A)

OVER
10%
OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE REPORT
RECENTLY ATTEMPTING SUICIDE
(WITHIN THE PREVIOUS YEAR)
(BAUER ET AL., 2015a).

TRANS PEOPLE ARE
2x
MORE LIKELY TO THINK ABOUT
AND ATTEMPT SUICIDE THAN
LESBIAN, GAY OR BISEXUAL
PEOPLE (IRWIN ET AL., 2014).

22% to 43%

OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE HAVE
ATTEMPTED SUICIDE IN THEIR
LIFETIME (BAUER ET AL., 2015B).

2/3
OF TRANS YOUTH REPORT
RECENT SELF-HARM (WITHIN
THE PREVIOUS YEAR) (VEALE
ET AL., 2015)



Source- Transgender people and suicide report by Centre for Suicide Prevention

When my dreams came true!

Hera Aqil
B.Com(Hons), 2nd year
Kamla Nehru College

"With the new day comes new strength and new thoughts".

My name is Hera and I am pursuing my under graduation from Kamla Nehru College, Delhi University. I pretend that I had an ordinary past but it is not the case instead some instances have made this personality that I carry today. I was always a child that was looked with a perspective who knows art and food.

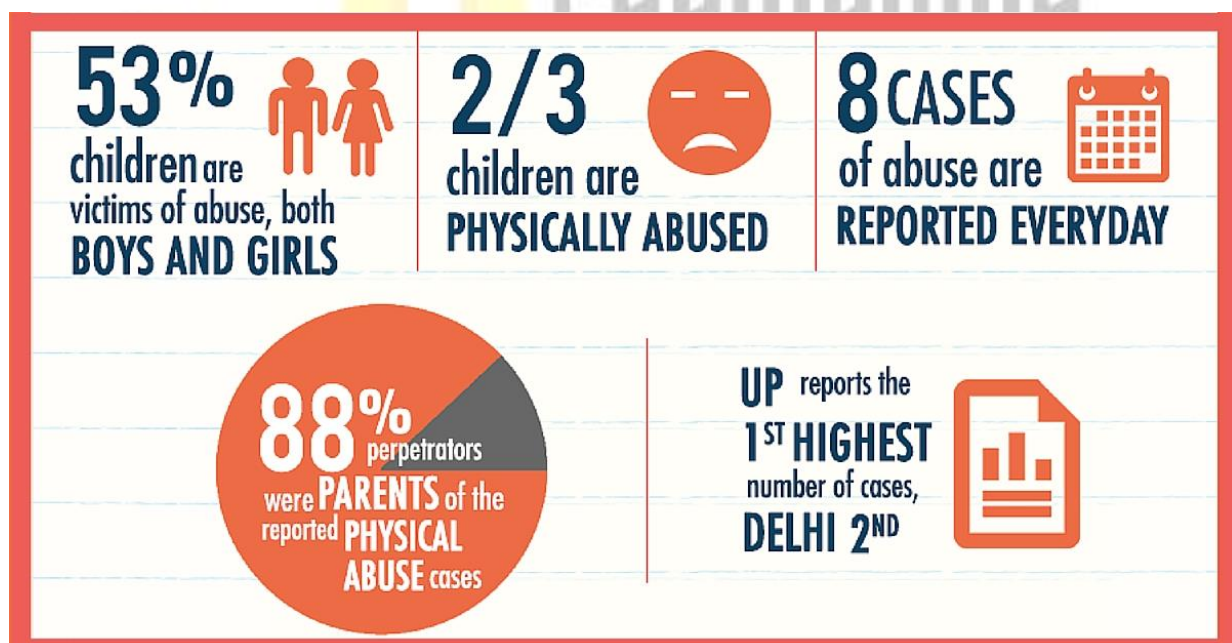
At the age of 10, I was groped by a neighbour of mine and I never gained the courage to speak about it to anyone. I kept quiet and just spent the day as a typical one. Then at the age of 11, I was again groped in my school by some senior boys which left a huge impact on me and made me even more of a silent person. This incident made me cry every day however, I decided not to share it and keep up a character that shows how solid I am. Life is rarely simple and we need to confront it regardless.

Growing up somehow was made difficult when for the very first time I got to face body shaming. I was always lying on the left side of the weight meter which was a big deal for me. It was not easy to go through and ignore easily. From time to time

people would ridicule my appearance, my decisions, and so forth.

After 3-4 years, I introduced myself to Calligraphy and different forms of art when I was nearly 17. Art was one medium that helped me let out all those thoughts, the idea that I have kept deep down in my heart for years now. In starting even, I took it as a passion but now within a year it's a business that I have started my journey in. Being only 19, I have collaborated with more than 50+ societies all over Delhi University, Catered to 10+ Companies with customized commissioned projects.

I thank my loved ones who bolstered me in the long journey and even right now and wish for the same in the future too.



Source- Report on Child Abuse by The Better India

White lies make it easier

Sonali Dhingra

Computer Science with Applied Mathematics

1st year, IIITD

"My crush is a girl", I told my college friends.

"Ohhh so you 'like' girls too?"

"Yeah, I'm bisexual".

"Cool".

That is how easily I came out to my friends and honestly, I thought it wasn't a big deal.

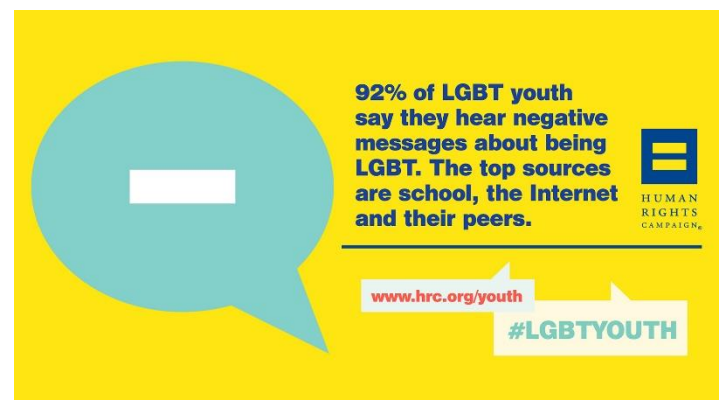
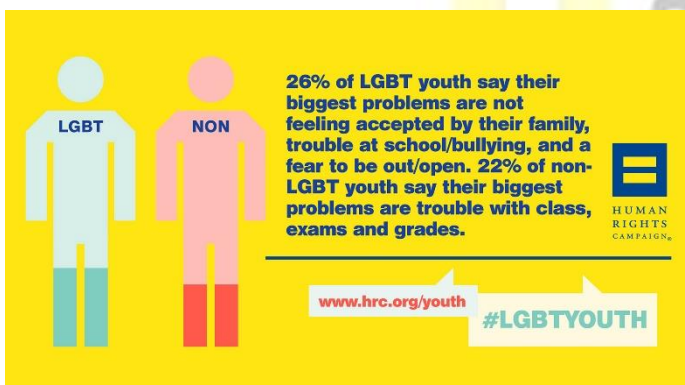
But I remember a time when it wasn't this easy, to talk about or even think about. I wasn't scared that people around me would start hating me, but I did wonder if they would somehow change their behaviour towards me.

If ever they'll think I'm creepy if I'm complimenting them, or if I'm hugging them. It sounds like an unreasonable fear but I couldn't help myself, I am who I am.

But when I think about the people whom I'm closest to, my parents, I remember, maybe that fear isn't all that unreasonable. I can't imagine telling them ever. Because they'll go on ignoring this fact like it never happened. They won't ever believe me, though I know they'll still love me.

"At least I like guys, I can 'pretend' to be straight if needed" a thought that crosses my mind often. It's a sad thought but I can't help myself.

LOVE IS TOO BEAUTIFUL TO BE HIDDEN IN THE CLOSET!



Successful LGBTQIA+ Leaders and Entrepreneurs

Muskan Bharadwaj
B.Com(Prog), 3rd Year
Sri Aurobindo College(E)

*“Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim.
Accept no one’s definition of your life, define yourself”.*

~ Robert Frost

Leadership comes in different ways. Leadership within the LGBTQIA+ community has in the past been in the form of coming out, campaigning and political advocacy. Most of the advancement being made in terms of LGBTQIA+ equality is because businesses recognize the importance of providing a diverse and committed workforce. Businesses like Amazon, JP Morgan, and The Gap understand that if the workers feel free enough to be themselves, then all of them understand the bottom line is improving and the consumers are happy. Employees who don't have to spend their own time removing pieces have more resources to do better work.

Tim Cook: CEO of Apple

Since 2011, Tim Cook has held the reins of the electronics giant, Apple INC. He held the title of COO (Chief Operating Officer) at the company before becoming CEO (Chief Executive Officer) and is credited with giving Apple a much-overhaul of its inventory and outgoing expenses. Cook came out officially as a homosexual in 2014, though in his personal life he'd already been transparent about his sexuality. His announcement made him the first to be an openly gay person to be incorporated in the fortune 500 lists. Tim told Christiane Amanpour in an interview that “I’m very proud of it, being gay is God’s greatest gift to me. I was public because I started to receive from a kid who read online, I was gay. I needed to do something for them, I wanted to demonstrate to gay children that they can be gay and still go on and do some big jobs in life”.

Megan Smith: Former CTO of US

Megan Smith's been keeping a storied career. She was Google's Vice President and Planet Out's former CEO. In 2014 she became the United States first female CTO(Chief Technology Officer), and the third person ever to hold that position. Under President Barack Obama she served as CTO until 2017. She is today a member of the MIT team. Smith is openly lesbian and won praise from both Out Magazine and GLAAD for her visibility as an LGBT+ leader. The White House's second LGBTQ Tech and Innovation Summit, at which

Smith discussed the need for innovators in gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender to bring their expertise to government. In an interview, Smith said, “It’s through all of us getting together and being really smart and coming up underneath our innovators who have answers to a path that the government can make an impact. Because of our identity, we’re just natural innovators; we’re natural outside-the-box thinkers”. And we have a unique perspective, “We’re all Americans, and we all care about making this world a better place”.

Chris Hughes: Co-founder of Facebook

Chris Hughes co-founded Facebook at Harvard University in 2002 alongside Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz, Eduardo Saverin, and Andrew McCollum. He has since gone on to become co-chair of the Project for Economic Stability. Hughes is openly gay and married Sean Eldridge in 2012. The toast of the Liberal party was Chris Hughes and Sean Eldridge. The co-founder of Facebook and his politically ambitious husband embodied all the attributes of a bona fide "gay power couple". Hughes purchased The New Republic in 2012, rescued the flagship liberal magazine from financial peril and established himself as a player in Washington. Simultaneously, Eldridge was secretly getting ready to campaign upstate New York for Congress. In one post, the Daily Beast called Hughes and Eldridge "The Worst Gay Power Pair in America".

Martine Rothblatt: CEO of United Therapeutics

Martine Rothblatt is currently the top-earning CEO in the biopharmaceutical industry, and her company's founder, United Therapeutics. Her fascinating and storied career has spanned the political, aerospace, and medicine sectors. Martine came out publicly as a trans woman in 1994 and remains an ardent advocate of trans rights. She is married to four children and devotes a large part of her time to transhumanist efforts. Rothblatt defines herself as Martin Rothblatt in her bio and in all the publicity for the book, an individual, contrary to the way many transgender people describe themselves, explicitly not disclosing their former identities and identifying themselves as having always been the gender they claim to have been and not the other gender.

GLIMPSES OF KHANAK'20



**Convener Dr. Vibha Batra
addressing the audience**



**Respected Principal and Teachers with
the magnificent guests of KHANAK'20**



**Principal Dr. Namita Rajput
addressing the audience**



**Felicitation of our guest
Dr. Sanjay Sharma**



Guest Performance of Sanshlesh Singh



**Performance by Meraki- The
Music Society of SACE**

TEAM GENDER CHAMPIONS



**"ALONE WE CAN DO SO LITTLE;
TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH".
– HELEN KELLER**



Follow us on:
[@genderchampions.sace](https://www.instagram.com/genderchampions.sace)

