The Prophecy
Creativity involves breaking out of established patterns in order to look at things in a different way.

- Edward de Bono
THE BÊTE NOIRE OF GENDER INJUSTICE

‘Nothing is more dangerous than ignorance and intolerance armed with power - Voltaire.’ Vikram Chandra Sekhar, reporting from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), pens down a comprehensive critique on the paradoxical topic of gender injustice and violence, and articulates how they are ultimately two sides of the same coin.

One would assume that inhabiting the earth in the 21st century amidst rational beings would be a place which is far more tolerant than the barbaric ages of a bygone era. The human intellect forged and
revolutionised by cultural awakenings like the Renaissance is still perpetually surrounded by a jargon of anxiety, mounting insecurities and vilified despair; making our very minds a burden on our shoulders. History has shown us umpteen times that, when human beings fail to reconcile with their differences and allow their prejudices to eclipse their judgement, the resulting injustice and violence is a catastrophe to say the least. When a plenitude of anger and resentment is alarmingly built up among the masses, a valve of pressure is released which culminates in abject violence towards an innocuous individual or a vulnerable group. This type of violence is witnessed in the form of marginalisation, assault, sexual crimes and a host of other predicaments.

Some of the gut-wrenching stories of these victims include that of Maurice Jones, a 44-year-old black cisgender man, who was strangled and mercilessly left to die in a burning car. Erykah Tijerina, a transgender woman, was fatally stabbed within the walls of her own apartment. In these two cases, the horrific acts were committed not by random, hate-mongering individuals but by members who shared a close a relationship with the victims. Sexual violence, as another example, is a morbid conundrum that affects every demographic but is deplorably intensified when it is directed towards the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community. Meticulous reports and data assimilation by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has revealed appalling results where the quantum of discrimination and prejudicial violence faced by homosexual and bisexual people is far greater in magnitude when compared to those experienced by heterosexuals in any given region.

Moreover, the ways in which society both hypersexualizes the LGBTQ community and bombards them with internalized homophobia can manifest as violence and cause an irretrievable breakdown of their morale, while also subjecting them to unjustified stigmatization. The state of affairs has reached such an appalling extremity that nearly 44 percent of lesbians and 61 percent of bisexual women have endured rape, physical violence, or stalking as per a report by the CDC. Furthermore, it is exasperating that many of the victims of heinous sexual crimes are often preyed upon during the formative years of their early childhood. Nearly half of bisexual women who are rape survivors have alleged that they experienced their first rape between ages 11 and 17. This condition is further aggravated
when every year nearly 300,000 children unwittingly become victims to human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

The woes of the LGBTQ community do not end here; even after surviving these horrific tales of sexual assault they are unable to seek the justice they rightfully deserve. This is often due to the inevitable discrimination which they face as a backlash of their nonconformist identities. This inadvertently makes them reluctant to seek help from law enforcement officials, shelters or rape crisis centres. Thus, the very government institutions ordained with the task of care and assistance become mere instruments of regression in their eyes. It is also pertinent to note that the paradigm shift in the political scenario and the emergence of a radical far-right leadership has further deteriorated this pitiable situation and has culminated in a drastic rise in incidents of homophobic and transphobic violence. Rather than going down the illustrious path of the Obama administration and pledging to uphold the dignity of transgender Americans; the Trump administration has taken a step back by withdrawing legal defences of transgender rights and rescinding federal guidance.

Following an approach which is evidently marred by prejudice and predisposed misconceptions, the LGBTQ community now stares at a downward spiral of incessant violence that they are compelled to endure. For nearly every living moment of their lives, the constant fear of judgement and stigmatization looms over their head like a guillotine. Thus, instead of incarcerating them and further fuelling their misery, these individuals should be rehabilitated and guided to supportive services. When providers create services that are easy to access, it drastically lowers these youths’ risk of exploitation while also concurrently increasing accountability in them. This, ultimately results in them having a purpose in life. Sometimes, waking up knowing that there’s more to this life than pain and suffering is the most phenomenal sentiment that can be evoked in a human being.

Edited by Amisha Mascarenhas and Anya Batra
EVERYONE IS FREE TO LOVE

"Let us spread love and not hate." Siddhi Agarwal, reporting from Social Humanitarian and cultural council (SOCHUM) talks about ending violence and discrimination against the LGBTQ community.

Change is a commonly used word but is a goal rarely achieved. Writing articles or talking about it will not make a huge difference; the major difference arises when there is a shift in the mindset of people around.

These changes can be brought about by powerful and popular personalities of the world. One such personality is Gauri Sawant; a transgender activist who adopts children of sex workers and gives them
the comfortable life that they deserve. There are many such people that we should seek inspiration from.

"I am just four years old", said Gauri Sawant quoting the recognition granted by the Supreme Court to the transgenders in India. Four years ago, when Shri Gauri Sawant filed a petition in the honorable Supreme Court of India for recognising a third gender. She is also the founder of the Sakshi Char Chowki Trust and this NGO promotes safe sex and also provides counselling to the members of the LGBTQ community. Gauri Sawant took a bold step at the age of eighteen when she left her home because her father did not support her gender choice. Her only question was, "what is my fault in who I am?" The future generations must not only recognize these people but also give them equal opportunities. We must accept them with all our hearts and must remember that they deserve to be treated better.

Ellen Lee Degeneres is an American comedian, television host, writer, producer and LGBTQ activist. She once said, "I was raised around heterosexuals, as all heterosexuals are; that's where us gay people come from, you heterosexuals". She came out as a lesbian in an appearance on the Orphan Winfrey Show. She is not only a day time host but is also very influential. The former President of the United States of America who initially opposed same sex marriage ended up being one among those who convinced many people that homosexuality is not a crime. She also won a presidential medal for all her humanitarian work.

People belonging to the LGBTQ community must not be treated as untouchables and no one has the right to treat them badly. Many people brand them as special but still exclude them from society. No one should be denied equal rights solely on the basis of their sexuality because that really does not define them as individuals. No one realizes that they did not wish to be the way they are; God created them just like the rest of us. Everyone is not similar and that's what creates a variation in mankind and makes each person unique. Just because these people do not confirm to societal gender standards, they are deprived of their basic rights as human beings.

It is an undeniable fact that the members of the
LGBTQ community also have feelings and they are shown the highest form of disrespect. We should strive to change the taboo created by our older generations and take society a step ahead. We should be the change we wish to see. This statement implies that we must not only accept them in the eyes of law, but also treat them like normal citizens around us.

Edited by Anusha Mascarenhas and Anya Batra
TERRORISM AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICT

“Political leaders still think things can be done through force, but that cannot solve terrorism. Backwardness is the breeding ground of terror and that is what we have to fight.” -Mikhail Gorbachev. Reporting from the United Nations General Assembly - Disarmament and International Security (UNGA - DISEC), Urvi Jalan talks about the main reasons for the downfall of the international security in the Middle East.

There exists many reasons that contributed to the downfall of international security in the Middle East. Of the many reasons, a few are; the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) gaining popularity, the Israel - Palestine conflict, the ongoing Civil War in Syria, etc. The most important reasons for the downfall were terrorism and religious differences. The unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially
against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims is known as terrorism; something that has gained popularity in the Middle East.

One of the most famous terrorist militant groups that gained popularity is the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). It is a Salafi jihadist militant group and former unrecognised proto-state that follows a fundamentalist, Salafi doctrine of Sunni Islam. It gained popularity in early 2014 when it drove Iraqi government forces out of key cities in its Western Iraq offensive, followed by its capture of Mosul and the Sinjar massacre. Other terrorist activities initiated by this group were inclusive of the Tunisian National Museum attack, the Sana'a mosque bombings, the crash of Metrojet Flight 9268, the bombings in Ankara, the November 2015 Paris attacks, the killing of Jaafar Mohammed Saad, the governor of Aden, the 2016 Brussels bombings, the 2016 Atatürk Airport attack, etc.

The Syrian Civil War is an ongoing multi-sided armed conflict in Syria fought between the Ba'athist Syrian Arab Republic led by President Bashar al-Assad, along with its allies, and various forces opposing both the government and each other in varying combinations. The ongoing war induced poverty and provoked people to choose terrorism as their means of living.

Religious conflicts are very common in almost every country, but to find a solution for such conflicts is what matters. The Israel - Palestine conflict escalated with the split of the Palestinian Authority into the Fatah government in the West Bank and the Hamas government in Gaza, and the following violent ousting of Fatah after they lost the election to the Hamas. Palestinian rocket attacks on Israel and the joint Egyptian-Israeli blockade of Gaza have exacerbated the conflict. The international community considers indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian structures that do not discriminate between civilians and military targets illegal under international law. This conflict however has not been resolved even after multiple attempts.

In order to stop terrorism and conflicts, it is to be understood that every human being is the same at birth and religions is not something they are born with. It is we who define and differentiate people on the basis of their religion. The government should also create more employment and should consider all strata of society while making employment policies.
But even after the government introduces these policies and implements changes, it is up to the people to choose between the right and the wrong decision.
OPIUM CULTIVATION IN AFGHANISTAN

"Drugs are hell in heaven’s clothing." This is Shrishti Jalan reporting from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. In this article, Shrishti speaks about the fatally growing rates of illegal opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan has been the world's leading illicit opium producer since 1992, excluding the year 2001. Afghanistan's opium poppy harvest produces more than 90% of illicit heroin globally, and more than 95% of the European supply. More land is used for opium in Afghanistan than is used for cacao cultivation in Latin America. In 2007, 93% of the non-pharmaceutical-grade opiates on the world market originated in Afghanistan. Afghanistan first began producing opium
insignificant quantities in the mid-1950s, to supply its neighbour Iran after poppy cultivation was banned there. Afghanistan and Pakistan increased production and became major suppliers of opiates to Western Europe and North America in the mid-1970s, when political instability combined with a prolonged drought disrupted supplies from the Golden Triangle.

In July 2000, Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar, collaborating with the United Nations to eradicate heroin production in Afghanistan, declared that growing poppies was un-Islamic, resulting in one of the world’s most successful anti-drug campaigns. The Taliban enforced a ban on poppy farming via threats, forced eradication, and public punishment of transgressors. The result was a 99% reduction in the area of opium poppy farming in Taliban-controlled areas, roughly three quarters of the world’s supply of heroin at the time. The ban was effective only briefly due to the deposition of the Taliban in 2002. While U.S. and allied efforts to combat the drug trade have been stepped up, the effort is hampered by the fact that many suspected drug traffickers are now top officials in the Karzai government.

In 2017, opium cultivation in Afghanistan reached a record high with an estimated 328,000 hectares, up 63 per cent compared with 201,000 hectares in 2016. According to the latest survey report released today by UNODC, last year’s record levels of production has led to unprecedented levels of potential heroin production. From the 2017 opium harvest, some 550-900 tons of heroin of export quality can be produced.

The cultivation of opioids in Afghanistan is hard to reduce or completely put a ban on is because this cultivation provides huge amounts of revenues to the farmers. It is a million dollar market that is spread all around the globe. Also, due to the involvement of politicians and party leaders, it is even more difficult to keep a check on drug trafficking.

Opium poppy has become a crucial component of the Afghan economy that secures the livelihoods of many Afghans who engage in cultivation, work on poppy fields or partake in the illicit drug trade. In rural areas, a considerable share of the population
was affected and potentially profited from opium poppy cultivation. In the Western and Northern regions, farmers cultivated poppy in more than a third of the villages; in the Eastern region in more than 50 per cent and in the Southern region in almost 85 per cent of villages. In addition to farming households, opium provides access to daily wage labour to a large number of local and migrant workers hired by farmers. In 2017, opium poppy weeding and harvesting provided the equivalent of up to 354,000 full time jobs to rural areas.

It is very clear that measures have to be taken to eradicate poppy cultivation for illegal drugs although cultivation for medicinal purposes is acceptable. The Afghan government has a stated policy of eradicating poppy crops, but the crop is widespread in many government-controlled regions, and officials are often accused of turning a blind eye.

The people of Afghanistan need to realise that the poppy cultivation needs to stop for the welfare of not just citizens of the country, but for those around the world as well. Also, new, more legal means of revenue need to come up in Afghanistan to motivate the farmers to leave poppy cultivation and work elsewhere. If implemented properly, the existing policies can also help change the current picture of opium cultivation in Afghanistan.
THE CONTEMPTUOUS BANE OF INDIFFERENCE

‘The most destructive criticism is indifference.’ - E.W. Howe

Vikram Chandra Sekhar, reporting from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), provides vital insight as to how this pragmatic organ of the United Nations aims to tackle the mounting discrimination and indifference towards the LGBTQ community.

The Delegate of Greece ignited the debate by stating that a liberal and inclusive approach to the intricacies of gender and sex was quintessential to his nation’s policy. The delegate also affirmed that mitigating and curbing gender injustice while also concurrently striving to uphold the ideals of non-discrimination and mutual harmony were of paramount importance for the nation’s development. The Delegate of Pakistan’s approach to this controversial topic was in stark contrast to the views put forth by the preceding
Moreover, the delegate was unequivocal in the stance that Pakistan did have a rather “venomous view” with regard to the divergent LGBTQ community and that this was not mere propaganda, but rather a reverberation of public sentiment. The delegate clarified that, while Pakistan was oblivious to certain perplexing practices like homosexual marriages, it was not entirely apathetic in its approach towards the civil rights of the people. The rights of transgenders were especially safeguarded under comprehensive statutes and laws so as to uphold the spirit of equality and bolster their progress in society.

The Delegate of China highlighted the aspect of how homosexuality was neither illegal nor legitimate under the prerogative of any doctrine in China. Thus, while the law chose to remain ambiguous with regard to this peculiar topic, it did not vitiate the prospects of any possible changes in the near future. The Delegate of North Korea retorted to this ambiguity in the law by criticizing it as a wilful neglect of the rights of a nation’s citizenry and stated that this was an apt portrayal of hypocritical tendencies by the delegate’s esteemed counterpart. The Delegate of the United Arab Emirates vociferously agreed with the views expressed by the Delegate of Pakistan and reiterated that the Sharia as well as their sanctified customs would frown upon any revolutionary change in their traditions, and that the notion of homosexuality was one which the masses would not come to terms with instantaneously. Thus, though gradual progress with regard to this tenacious issue was necessary, it was reaffirmed that no radical measures must be taken in haste as it could have catastrophic consequences on the very foundations of society.

Edited by Amisha Mascarenhas and Anya Batra
PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHES

“We need to reject any politics that targets people of race or religion. This isn't a matter of political correctness; it is a matter of understanding what makes us strong. The world respects us not just for our arsenal; it respects us for our diversity and our openness, and the way we respect every faith.” - Barack Obama.

Reporting from the United Nations General Assembly - Disarmament and International Security (UNGA- DISEC), Urvi Jalan describes the presidential speeches and their effect on the other delegates.
The fifth session of the General Assembly was ignited by the introduction of a crisis. The second update gave a hint about the involvement of the United States of America (USA) in devising a plan against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). There came a point where nearly every member blamed Pakistan, Iraq and USA as the ones responsible for the crisis. The representatives were required to make presidential statements in order to ensure that their relations with other countries are not ruined. One of these presidential statements included the statement of the president of USA who was one among the accused. The representative of USA in the presidential stated that, “USA does not support the ISIS and would do anything to stop this terrorist group from becoming a major global threat and instead, support groups that are against ISIS like the Syrian Nobel Groups. Instead of blaming each other, there is a need to come together to solve this crisis.” This statement urged many delegates to believe that USA meant no harm, but the delegate of Syria was not convinced and it was quite evident in the representative’s presidential speech. In the speech, the president of Syria mentioned that the representative was unclear as to whether USA was trying to help or was planning against the others.

This statement made a impact on the mindset of almost every delegate leading them to believe that USA was indeed a part of the crisis.
RAISED QUESTIONS

“The idea of peace is universal. The only difference is in the approach.” Shrishti Jalan, reporting from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) talks about the various innovative ideas and topics raised in the committee.

The first session of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Day was an interesting one. The delegates decided to discuss drug trafficking, trafficking of humans and small arms. Issues related
to drug trafficking and its causes, effects of globalisation, drug policies of separate countries and opium poppy cultivation in countries like Afghanistan were points of discussion. Following this, the delegates engaged in constructive debate and several opinions were put forth.

During formal session, the discussion revolved around the medical effects of drugs like opioids. The Delegate of Canada quoted Switzerland as an example in reference to the reduction in the number of people infected by HIV due to needles that were unclean and unsanitary by decriminalizing the drug. A measure was adopted where uncontaminated needles and drugs to people who would have otherwise illegally bought them. Drug users now started using these government provided needles and drugs. Due to this, the number of people with HIV caused due to contaminated needles decreased drastically in Switzerland. The Delegate of Canada then raised a question, whether it was more important to totally criminalize drug usage or to first reduce casualties caused due to drugs.

The point raised by The Delegate of Canada urged the other delegates to find different and unique solutions to the problem of drug trafficking. This was affirmed by most of the delegates and provided them food for thought. Further, this will also be kept in mind while drafting a feasible resolution.
FIRST TIME EXPERIENCES

“My MUN was terrifying. It forced me to do my best at writing. I met a lot of different people and explored different mindsets. All in all, it was once-in-a-lifetime experience and will be cherished forever.”
-Siddhi Agarwal, IPC

“Everything! The hospitality, the ambience, the Organising Committee, the Executive Board and the food was great. Maybe the agendas could have been a little more controversial so that the committee could have been more active.”
-Sathyajith M.S., AIPM
THE TEAM

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SIDDHI AGARWAL - SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND CULTURAL COUNCIL
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