



CHARAIVETI...

Charaiveti...



SUMANTRITÉ SOVIKRANTÉ
Think Collectively, Achieve Valiantly

WORLD HINDU CONGRESS 2018, CHICAGO

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Yerevan, Armenia, taken during a golden hour sunset. The sun is a large, bright orb in the center of the sky, casting a warm, orange glow over the entire scene. The city below is densely packed with buildings of various heights, with mountains visible in the far distance. The word "CHARAIVETI..." is written in large, white, serif capital letters across the middle of the image.

CHARAIVETI...

Charaiveti...

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON 'HINDU'

When a man has begun to be ashamed of his ancestors, the end has come. Here am I, one of the least of the Hindu race, yet proud of my race, proud of my ancestors. I am proud to call myself a Hindu

Common bases of Hinduism, lecture at Lahore, 1897

Intensely love the very word Hindu and everyone who bears that name. Mark me, then and then alone you are a Hindu when the very name sends through you a galvanic shock of strength.

Common bases of Hinduism, lecture at Lahore, 1897

Hindu will stand for everything that is glorious, everything that is spiritual, by our action let us be ready to show that this is the highest word that any language can invent

Common bases of Hinduism, lecture at Lahore, 1897

My idea is the conquest of the whole world by the Hindu race.

Lecture at Victoria Hall, Madras, September 2, 1897



Copyright © World Hindu Foundation

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, without the prior permission in writing from World Hindu Foundation. Any breach will entail legal action and prosecution without further notice. Utmost care has been taken to avoid errors while editing and printing this book. However some errors might have crept in unintentionally and are deeply regretted.

World Hindu Foundation

Bharat Mata Bhavan,
Sankat Mochan Ashram,
Sector – 6, R.K. Puram,
New Delhi – 110022 (Bharat)

Price: Rs. 1000/-

I N D E X

1. Charaiveti...Charaiveti...	9
2. Introduction	11
3. About World Hindu Congress	13
4. Inaugural Session	16
5. Plenary Session: Collective efforts for Hindu Resurgence	22
6. Plenary Session: Past, Present and Future	25
7. About World Hindu Economic Forum	28
8. World Hindu Economic Forum Report	29
9. About Hindu Education Board	42
10. Hindu Education Conference Report	43
11. About Hindu Media Forum	60
12. Hindu Media Conference Report	61
13. About World Hindu Democratic Forum	80
14. Hindu Political Conference Report	81
15. About Hindu Women Forum	96
16. Hindu Women Conference Report	97
17. About Hindu Students & Youth Network	112
18. Hindu Youth Conference Report	113
19. About Hindu Organisations, Temples and Associations (HOTA) Forum	126
20. Hindu Organisations Conference Report	127
21. Confluence	148
22. Concluding Session	154

Charaiveti.....Charaiveti.....

The first World Hindu Congress 2014, New Delhi, was a Samaarambha..... a new beginning laying the foundation. The World Hindu Congress 2018, Chicago, was a building on the foundation. The Journey will continue..... Charaiveti! Charaiveti!

Hindus are a 1.2 billion-strong community, comprising 16% of the world's population with a presence in around 200 countries. Across the world, we are the leaders and catalysts in all spheres of human endeavour business, economy, education, governance, media, technology, and culture. As a Civilisation, we have always aspired for a Dharmic world that is prosperous, just, and peaceful. However, such aspirations can only be realised if the Hindu leadership - spread across nations, societies, and cultures - comes together to organise and combine its energies for global welfare. The World Hindu Congress (WHC) is the only global platform where this translates into reality.

The WHC enables all Hindu leaders, activists, thinkers, and influencers to come together and work towards a common vision. It provides Hindus a platform to connect, share ideas and inspire each other for the greater common good. Thus, the WHC is a facilitator for the cultural, spiritual, and material advancement of Hindus. The WHC is also a place where critical issues impacting Hindus worldwide are addressed. These include denial of human rights, discrimination, and downright physical and cultural assaults.

The WHC, through its seven thematic parallel conferences, articulates Hindu values, creativity, and talents in areas as diverse as the economy, education, media, and politics. These conferences also bring into the spotlight the centrality of women, youth, and Hindu organisations. The deliberations at these conferences help in learning from the past and analysing the current challenges and opportunities facing Hindus across the world. This draws a roadmap to achieving the prosperity and progress of humanity. As a 1.2 billion-strong community, we ought to have a significant voice in global affairs for establishing a fair and equitable society.

World Hindu Congress 2018 Chicago was to commemorate the 125th Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's famous Chicago Lecture at the World's Parliament of Religion 1893.

The World Hindu Congress journey will continue.....

Swami Vigyananand



INTRODUCTION

In Order for Hindu society to move forward, it has to be strategically placed to influence crucial areas such as the economy, education, media, and politics in the world.

Kautilya, one of Bharat's greatest political and economic realists, attached the greatest importance to the economy and wrote: "Dharmasya Moolam Arthah" which means "Economy is the source of strength". This insight applies even more to the modern world where a nation's strength and prominence in world affairs are directly proportional to its economic strength.

A society that is not well-educated is incapable of sustaining itself over the long term. It is education that drives positive social change and sustains the betterment of a nation. Civilizations that do not value education are susceptible to decay and deterioration. For Hindu civilization to remain robust it must develop an inspired and viable system of education so that it can prosper and endure.

It is already common wisdom that "He who controls information and communication, controls the mind of the people and the world". The media is one of the most potent forces on the global stage. Powerful countries have an almost unchallenged hold of the global media as well as the flow of information around the world. It is imperative that Hindus establish themselves and have a vigorous presence in all forms of the global media.

Politics plays a decisive role in modern societal discourse and governance; it is therefore vital that Hindus be deeply involved in the political process. Hindus around the world have lagged far behind their counterparts in politics due to the indifference and non-participation of a large part of the Hindu population. In addition, Hindu communities have not fully grasped the importance of participating and asserting their Hindu identity in the political affairs of the countries where they reside. Remedying these lacunae must be a priority for the Hindu resurgence.

Hindu women have displayed brilliance in different spheres of life, from the Vedic ages to the present times. They are playing an increasingly important role around the globe in many important fields, ranging from business and science to politics and culture. Hindu women should be encouraged to take on leadership roles for the Hindu resurgence. By strengthening their position in society, we will be able to bring about a quantum jump in the overall progress of Hindu society.

The emerging generation of Hindu society, comprising young professionals and students, is endowed with wisdom and vast professional talent and knowledge. This generation has been attempting to work for the Hindu resurgence around the world in their individual capacities. The youth is highly motivated and they want to not only challenge the status quo but also change it for the better. The rejuvenation and revitalization of Hindu Dharma throughout the world will rest predominantly on the shoulders of the next generation of Hindus, who will be the harbingers of the Hindu resurgence. Hindu perception of Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam (the world is one family) should be imbibed with due care. Hindus should no longer be victims of sadgun vikrti, which refers to overindulgence in their intrinsic characteristic of piety or moral values, as it has left the once strong and prosperous Hindu society emaciated and weak. Moreover, it is naive to believe that good times come unsolicited.

Our forefathers worked hard through unfavourable times and adverse situations to nourish and sustain Hindu society. Their struggle and courage in the face of difficulty should be a source of inspiration for us. It is the time for the present generation of Hindus to take this legacy forward and assume the responsibility of shaping and nurturing Hindu unity and organisation throughout the world. It is also time to take the movement for Hindu solidarity to the next level. This task needs to be undertaken with a single-minded focus on rebuilding the spiritual and material heritage of Hindus. Often we wonder, when will Hindus be shown respect in the world? The Hindu society will command the world's respect only when its present generation and the next work hard and intelligently, using their minds and resources in the right direction.

Swami Vigyananand



WORLD HINDU CONGRESS

“

**YATO DHARMASTATO JAYA,
WHERE THERE IS DHARMA,
THERE IS VICTORY**

”

An Instrument for Organising the Global Hindu Community

The World Hindu Congress is not a formal organisation. Its only aim is to provide a forum where vital and historical issues of importance to the Global Hindu community will be discussed every four years.

BACKGROUND

At the end of World War II, the world witnessed the rapid emergence of newly independent countries unshackling themselves from the clutches of weakening colonial powers. Bharat was at the forefront of these countries in obtaining independence to chart its own destiny. Hindus in Bharat and throughout the world saw these changes and the opportunities that arose with great expectations. Bharat finally obtained its independence on August 15, 1947, although this independence came after a painful and horrific partition of Hindus' historic and spiritual homeland. During the violent cataclysmic event of the partition, the world witnessed one of the largest migration and mass slaughter of people ever seen in recorded history, with the Hindus bearing the brunt of the killing and forcible displacement. The overwhelmingly majority of the Hindu population was driven out of West and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). It was through this ultimate ordeal that the Hindus finally obtained independence after one thousand years of brutal occupation by genocidal, non-Hindu forces. After partition, Hindus of independent Bharat and those residing outside Bharat hoped for a better future. Hindus had suffered humiliation and impoverishment for thousands of years due to hostile anti-Hindu rulers, but they had survived. Hence, with great expectations and possessed with tremendous potential, Hindus after independence looked to the future with the hope that it will herald a new age for them.

NEW CHALLENGES AND THE NEXT PHASE

The world economy has seen major shifts since the late 1960s. There is a market driven world order and Hindus have kept up with the times by using the economic opportunities and movement to their advantage. While on one hand the Hindus rose up to the economic opportunities, on the other they were baffled by the challenges like human rights violations, discrimination, cultural assaults and other onslaughts against their identity. The situation in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Indonesia and Malaysia are some of the examples of the challenges confronting Hindu society today. In Bharat, Hindus continue to face disadvantage and discrimination vis-a-vis other communities.

WHY WORLD HINDU CONGRESS?

The Hindu community does not have a consistent global platform to raise and address issues that affect it. The global Hindu community has only held such forums and conferences intermittently, with the implementation of resolutions and proposed policies being sporadic, at best. The fatal convergence of these developments greatly undermines the effectiveness of any gains made at previous conferences. It is time to break this inconsistency and take the Hindu society into the 21st century and beyond. For that to happen, the Hindu society has to come together on a common platform with a common purpose and a shared vision to march confidently into the future. The World Hindu Congress (WHC) is an informal organisation, solely dependent on the efforts of associated Hindu organisations and activists. It will be organised every four years, jointly consisting of all like-minded Hindu groups. Each Congress will be held in different parts of the world. All Hindu organisations, associations and institutions are encouraged to participate and welcome to become partners of the World Hindu Congress. The Congress will consist of delegates from around the world. Delegates are people of accomplishment and achievement and in general committed to working for the Hindu resurgence. Delegates are from the ranks of activists, academicians, industrialists, businessmen, parliamentarians, legislators, media personalities, etc. Delegates also consist of leaders and representatives of various Hindu organisations and institutions. There will be multiple conferences held during the Congress, to deliberate on challenges and articulate specific solutions in areas of strategic importance to the global Hindu community.

WORLD HINDU CONGRESS 2018 INAUGURATION



Swami Vigyananand performing the 'Shankh Dhvani' (blowing of conch)



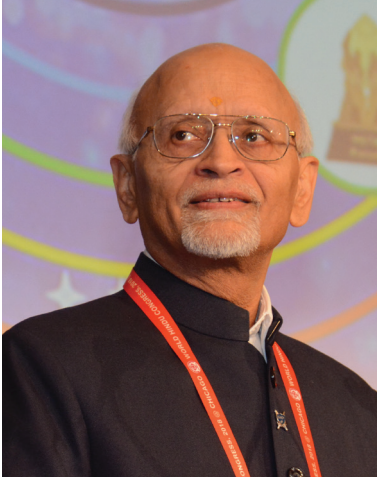
WORLD HINDU CONGRESS 2018 INAUGURATION DEEP PRAJWALAN



**Dr Mohan Bhagwat, Swami Swaroopananda, Swami Purnatmananda, Prof SP Kothari
Shri Ashwin Adhin, and Satguru Dalip Singh lighting the lamp.**



*INVOCATION (Ekatmata Mantra)
Smt. Chandrika Tandon*



Dr Abhaya Asthana

Co-ordinator, WHC, 2018

Introductory Remarks

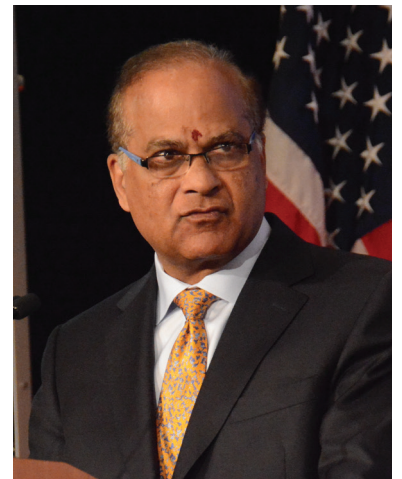
Delivering the introductory remarks Dr Abhaya Asthana said that this congress commemorates 125 years of Swami Vivekananda's address at the World Parliament of Religions, where he introduced Hindu Dharma on the world stage emphasising the universal values of Hindus. This single act paved the way for Hindus to carry their traditions and values with confidence and pride to different corners of the world. The platform of WHC encourages the Hindus to ascend to the highest levels of excellence in different fields. In order to connect, share ideas, inspire, contribute and project the presence and strengths of Hindus globally as a collective and as change agents, Dr. Asthana described the theme of WHC 2018 "Sumantrite Suvikrante (Think Collectively, Achieve Valiantly)". He introduced seven parallel conferences focusing on the economy, education, media, politics, youth involvement, women participation, and collaboration between Hindu organisations. The WHC is about how we build upon Dharma as the root and reflect inner strength, self-control, resilience, and deep capacity to work with commitment. Hindus encourage wealth creation, and quality education, promote a robust presence of Hindus in media, cultivate future Hindu leaders and tap the unique strengths of Hindu women. This is the only way to have a positive societal impact globally. Dr. Asthana expected WHC 2018 to be a landmark event. He said that it is our Dharma to not let this heritage of wisdom and unbridled exploration of life that our ancestors bequeathed to us be lost.

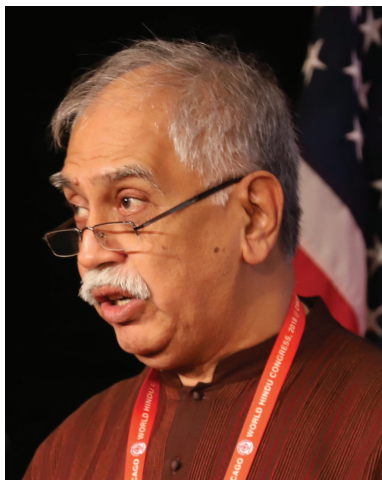
Prof SP Kothari

Chairperson, Organizing Committee, WHC, 2018

Welcome Address

Prof SP Kothari welcomed local and international delegates and guests to the WHC 2018 commemorating Swami Vivekananda, the greatest ambassador of Hindu Dharma. He hoped that the events at WHC 2018 would inspire everyone to share knowledge and encourage critical thinking. Prof Kothari listed three goals that he had for Congress: Enlighten, Reform, and Advance. Being Hindu is about being guided by Dharma which educates us to differentiate between right and wrong. It develops a sense of righteousness, morality, and the importance of duty. He quoted Swami Vivekananda stating that Hindu philosophy exhorts us to be inclusive. Anticipating that WHC 2018 would create greater awareness and enlighten people of all faiths and nationalities about the noble inspiring message that Hindu Dharma offers. He concluded by remarking that WHC is a platform of inclusiveness that practices mutual respect towards people of all religions, nationalities, and colours.





Shri Ashok Chowgule

Working President (External), Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bharat

Recognising BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, Geeta Press Gorakhpur Chinmaya Mission, ISKCON

Shri Ashok Chowgule read the citation of following four organisations who were honoured for the incomparable work they had been doing for the Hindu community.

BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha

BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha for making Hindus visible through magnificent mandirs. It was established by Bhagwan Swaminarayan in the late 18th century and was formalized in 1907 by Shastriji Maharaj. BAPS has developed a worldwide network of over 3850 cultural and spiritual centers that strengthen Hindu Dharma by providing Hindus with a visual identity that is a strong blend of aesthetic tradition, technology, and spirituality. The complexes of BAPS have stimulated curiosity in Hindu architecture, its intricacies, and Hindu Dharma.



Geeta Press Gorakhpur

Geeta Press Gorakhpur for making Hindu Shastra and literature universally accessible. Its journey began with the establishment of a trust Govind Bhawan Karyalaya in Kolkata in 1923 as Geeta Press. It later shifted to Gorakhpur and was renamed Geeta Press Gorakhpur. 'Sewa' and 'Parmarth' have always been the guiding principles of the organisation, which remarkably operates on a non-profit basis. Till date, Geeta Press has published over 720 million copies of Bhagavad Geeta and over 700 million of Shri Rancharitmanas. Geeta Press has contributed immensely to the beautiful iconic visual depiction of Hindu deities and important events in Hindu history.



Chinmaya Mission

Chinmaya Mission for popularising the knowledge and essence of Bhagavad Geeta through Geeta Gyana Yagna across all ages and geographies. It was founded in 1953 by Swami Chinmayananda Saraswati, the first President of Vishva Hindu Parishad. Chinmaya Mission focuses on spreading the knowledge and understanding of Bhagavad Geeta amongst the multitudes. They have produced prolific books, magazines, and other content to make the teachings of Geeta universally available. Chinmaya Mission also runs numerous institutions to provide contemporary quality education anchored in Dharma.

ISKCON

International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) for spreading the message of Geeta to remote areas. ISKCON has translated the Bhagavad Geeta into more than 70 languages. ISKCON was founded in 1966 by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Srila Prabhupada in New York. Over the years, the organisation has propagated the Hindu Dharma in remote areas and provoked interest in Hindu traditions among various ethnicities.



The contribution of these organisations to Hindu Dharma deserves special mention and recognition. Each organisation has contributed uniquely, and in its own way, to strengthen and position Hindus globally.



H.E. Shri Ashwin Adhin

Vice-President, Republic of Suriname

Shri Ashwin Adhin quoted a Mantra from Rigveda that translates as: “Supplemented with inner strength, let us spread to make the world civilized, and let us remove wickedness of being not liberal and jealous.”

A Hindu has always been the missionary of ‘Tyaga’ and ‘Sewa’. As our duty, we Hindus need to put forth the right ideas of peace and harmony and frame them in terms of their moral importance, evoking the right imagination and views. These ideas will then integrate with our economic policies, and educational systems, through media networks, politics, youth, and women. Shri Adhin listed five concepts that must be spread across the world. The first one is renunciation

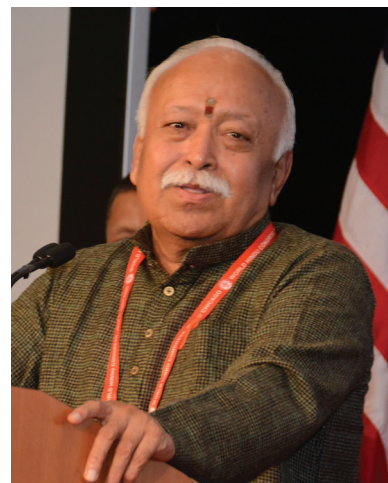
and service. Second, rising above our lower nature, that is to lose self-interest. Third, Dharma, is a universal law for socio-economic growth and spiritual liberation. Fourth, by distinguishing state from nation, with mutual understanding, a nation will grow. The fifth concept was that leaders should be Rajrishis, signifying that all the holders of public power should have a duty towards Dharma. These concepts can help create a balanced and sustainable world.

Dr Mohan Bhagwat

PP Sarsanghchalak, RSS, Bharat

Inaugural Address “Sumantrite Suvikrante”

Dr Mohan Bhagwat started by sharing the teaching of Bhagavad Geeta, that for any endeavor to be successful, five components are essential: values, efforts, goals, path to goal and luck. However, luck has a very small role if the other four are not given emphasis. Hindus have given to the world values that are today known as universal values. These values encompass humanity, the environment, and everything that we know needs to be in order for us to flourish as humankind. For the betterment of the world, it is the duty of each Hindu to do their Dharma and take these messages to the rest of the world. The Hindu community has the greatest number of meritorious personalities in different walks of life but sadly they don’t come, stay or work together. History shows that Hindu empires and the influences globally are still cherished due to our non-desire to be supreme. Hindus aspire for sameness and giving our best to the world. As an entire Hindu community, we have the capacity to aspire and bring everyone together. We have stopped our descent and have commenced a global ascend. World over, everyone is seeking Hindu wisdom and studying our ancient wisdom. As Hindus, we need to own, be proud, and take our knowledge to everyone around us. This can only be achieved if we work together. For a long time, the global Hindu community has been disparate. The strength lies in all of us coming together. As Hindus, we do wonderful work in our organisations. We now need to learn how to work together. Exactly like marching together in a formation in one direction. We need to perform different functions and advance as a society without colliding with each other. We need to learn how to work separately but for the same Hindu goal.



**Shri Raju Reddy***Vice-Chairperson, Organising Committee, WHC, 2018*

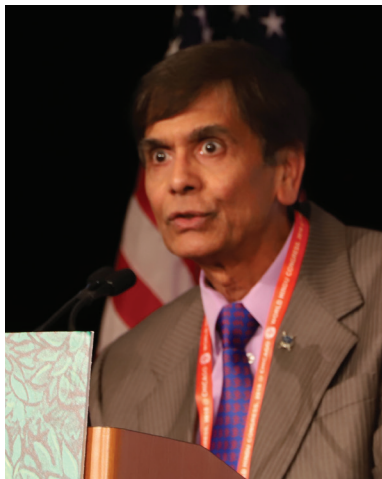
Shri Raju Reddy encouraged WHC 2018 to take the opportunity to shape the dialogue around Hindus. He shared that half of the business-to-business start-ups in Silicon Valley are run by Hindus. He urged Hindus in America to step up and be more active as philanthropists, take up roles in public policy and be positive change-makers. Shri Reddy said that through such platforms Hindus have the opportunity to create wealth for all and provide the best way to address social challenges. The WHC platform can help create more mentoring relationships, realise dreams and create wealth for millions of people around the world. He concluded by addressing the Hindu youth and

by assuring them that the entire Hindu community is here to help them achieve their aspirations that can subsequently bring laurels to Hindus globally.

Shri Anupam Kher (Padma Bhushan)

Shri Anupam Kher said that it was his honour to address the Congress and he used the opportunity to salute Bharat, the nation, a place on Earth that has been home to numerous beliefs, practices and customs. He recounted that while leaving Shimla in 1974, he received the Bhagavad Geeta as a parting gift. He said that our minds are like Kurukshetra, as we battle the forces of evil in our daily lives, the teachings of Bhagavad Geeta help us conquer them. As a Hindu, one can fly only if he/she has strong roots. In his childhood, he had seen every Hindu practice being followed at home. Hindu teachings have taught that there is a time for peace and a time for war. It is painful to see how ignorance and half-knowledge are trying to destroy the world's oldest and most peaceful Hindu Dharma and society.





Dr Sham Seth

Host, Organising Committee, WHC, 2018

Vote of thanks

Dr Sham Seth thanked everyone for the turnout in making WHC 2018 a success and showcasing the theme 'Sumantrite Suvikrante'. He thanked the team from Chicago for their enthusiasm, and initiative, in putting together a grand platform. He thanked local and international invited guests, dignitaries, delegates from different disciplines, various organisations, the volunteers and the organising committee members, and the staff of the venue for the successful culmination of the event.



PLENARY SESSION: COLLECTIVE EFFORTS FOR HINDU RESURGENCE

Panellists - Swami Purnatmananda (Bharat Sevashram Sangh); Dr Mohan Bhagwat (RSS); Swami Swaroopananda (Chinmaya Mission); Satguru Dalip Singh (Namdhari); Swami Paramatmananda Saraswati (Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha); and Shri Madhu Pandit Dasa (ISKCON Bangalore).



Shri Dattatreya Hosabale

Joint General Secretary, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Bharat

Introductory Remarks

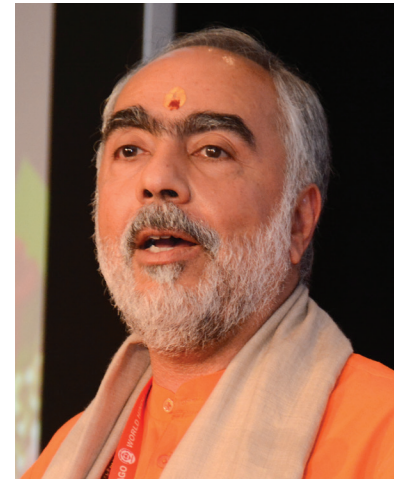
Shri Dattatreya Hosabale reminded morning address of PP Dr. Mohan Bhagwat and mentioned 3Ds – Direction, Dressing, Distance. He said that we need to keep our identity but go together in one direction, without disturbing the dressing. Keeping the theme of World Hindu Congress Sumantrite Suvikrante - meaning “Think Collectively, Achieve Valiantly” - in mind Hindus have to work together and achieve together through their actions. They need to take the concept of unity in diversity to all corners of the world. Today, Hindu Dharma is not confined to one geographical area but a global community. Wherever

Hindus have gone, they have taken our glorious cultural heritage to share with the host community. Hindus are welcomed everywhere because they are a contributing community and render services in all fields including health, and education. We need to work in the field of politics, economics, trade, and commerce. But there are many challenges - intellectual, demographic, and human rights - before the Hindu society in some corners of the world. Illustrious speakers here will guide us on how Hindu resurgence is required to improve the quality of the Hindu community.

Swami Swaroopananda

Head, Chinmaya Mission Worldwide, Bharat

Swami Swaroopananda said it is the responsibility of everyone to pass on the pride and greatness of Hindu culture to the following generations. Everything begins at home. Family is the unit of Dharma in society. When a family breaks down, traditions and cultures break down and people go directionless and start living in disharmony. Swami Chinmayananda had said many years ago that we have to convert Hindus to Hindu Dharma to bring the resurgence with the spirit of Yajna and spirit of unity. In midst of our diversity, we have a common goal, and a common altar of dedication amongst our Hindus, and that spirit has kept our Dharma alive. It is important to bring Hindu organisations together to work for this great grand culture that gave us yoga, sewa, karma, bhakti, devotion and knowledge. When the language is lost, culture is lost. With the culture lost, a certain mindset is lost. It is because our mindset has been changed through the education system. We have geniuses, highly qualified and intelligent people, and strong and courageous people amongst our Hindus. We have to bring them as a group and work towards making our education system, starting from our family, be able to think the way our great rishis thought. We have to rediscover that way of thinking. So, we need to get them together and not just talk about changing curriculums but do it.



PLENARY SESSION: COLLECTIVE EFFORTS FOR HINDU RESURGENCE



Swami Purnatmananda Maharaj
President, Bharat Sevashram Sangh, Bharat

Swami Purnatmananda Maharaj spoke about Bharat Sevashram Sangh, a spiritual movement that was started by Acharya Pranavananda with the nation-building program. Many youngsters dedicated their lives to making it a powerful unitary force with the aim to build a powerful Hindu nation. Where there is strength indeed is salvation. Hindus are devotees of the cosmic power and worshipping the deities of the strength and energy who are well equipped with the weapons. Hindus have everything: strength, knowledge, and wealth but we need unity. This Hindu conference brings all organisations together to help each other and go forward. Traditionally, the Rishis and Munis used to run

our education institutions but now the government is controlling it. We need to open schools and influence our government to promote our cultural heritage based on our Vedas and Upanishads. We have to start our religious study but not any 'ism'. We need one and that is humanism. It is possible to develop that quality through education. We need more schools to teach our children and people. In life, we need Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha. We need all those with experience in education and spirituality to come out of their home and work for the community and help each other.

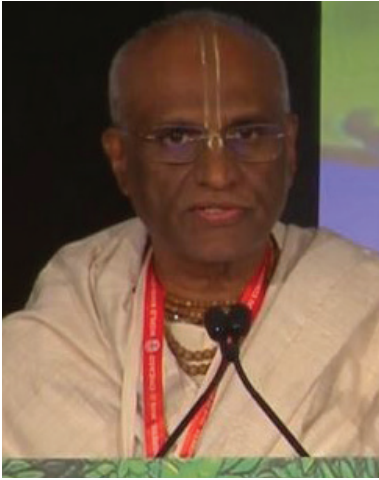
Satguru Dalip Singh
Namdhari, Bharat

Satguru Dalip Singh said that we must avoid talking about Hindu issues in English – words can be translated, but their bhaav (sentiment) cannot. He explained that the Namdhari sect is one of 5 Sikh sects, and their guru Satguru Ram Singh has ordered them to live life according to the Guru Granth Sahib. The Guru Granth Sahib teaches us that Hindus and Sikhs are blood brothers who can never be separated. Our country Bharat, not India, was once a Vishwaguru, and to regain that spot we first need to change our mind wherever we are. When we run down our country and its people, we are slighting our own ancestors. Our intellect has been damaged due to brainwashing by foreigners.

We are told that our itihasa (history) is mythology. As a result, there is a class of intellectuals in our country who might look at Bharatiya but denigrate us and our culture. We have to create a swadeshi thought and develop self-respect. Spread the good things about your nation, and vigorously counter the negative propaganda against it.



PLENARY SESSION: COLLECTIVE EFFORTS FOR HINDU RESURGENCE



Shri Madhu Pandit Dasa

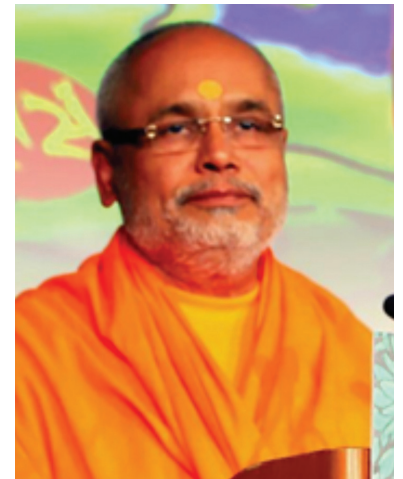
Chairperson, Akshaya Patra Foundation, Bengaluru, Bharat

Shri Madhu Pandit Dasa said that Hindu organisations have to work together in areas where they agree and work separately in areas where they differ. Bharat is a land of diverse philosophies. Philosophical diversities are like the variety of sweet dishes. It caters to people having different transcendental inclinations to attain their respective ideas of absolute truth. The four common guiding principles of Dharma are sathyam (truthfulness), soucham (cleanliness of mind and body), daya (compassion for the suffering of other living entities), and tapas (self-sacrifice), and they transform a common way of life into a rich culture of practices, customs, and traditions. English education was introduced to break our Gurukul system of education but Srila Prabhupad used the same English to present the Bharat's culture to the westerners including dhoti and shika. The mission of the World Hindu Congress is sure to become a reality if we focus on cultural oneness. Preservation of Hindu Dharma in Bharat will bring good not only to Hindus but also to the whole world. Recently, the trend of having only one child has had a damaging effect on the Hindu population. Only Hindus follow this while the other religious communities continue to have more children. If something is not done to change this paradigm among Hindus, it will be devastating with the passage of time and in 100 years even our survival is at risk. Every Hindu organisation must come together to promote Hindu culture. Every Hindu couple must take pride in having more children.

Swami Parmatmananda Saraswati

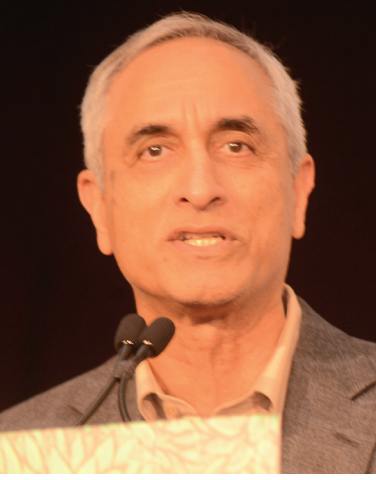
Secretary General, Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha, Bharat

Swami Parmatmananda Saraswati said we have to think collectively not only for resurgence of Hindu Dharma but also for the resurgence of the world. There are different problems we face today such as ecological problems and relationship problems. Extended families have become nuclear families. This is because of ecological disturbance caused by theological thinking. However, Hindu Dharma says that every individual - animate or inanimate living or conscious being - is an expression of the same divine. Since we all share the same space in terms of consciousness, the responsibility to maintain ecology rests on Hindu Dharma. We say ecology means harmony. For example, in Dakshin (South) Bharat, rangoli is always done with rice flour which is food for ants. Westerners tend to confine ecology to air, space, and water. But there is also social ecology and religious ecology which are disturbed by aggressive religions. The societal ecology is also disturbed. They think they have the exclusive right to save others. The Charter of Human Rights adopted in 1948 by the United Nations talks about the right to freedom of religion. That doesn't mean that anyone has the right to convert others by terrorism or allurement or deceit. This charter of human rights needs correction. We have to stop them from ridiculing all traditional and aboriginal religions as primitive, non-thinking, and animistic religions. We have to share the Hindus vision that all religious cultures are nothing but the social capital of this world. We must connect ourselves with the sense of Bharat Mata, Vedic Rishis, Siddha, Arahant, and universal peace.



PLENARY SESSION: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Panellists - Dr R. Nagaswamy, Dr Sonal Mansingh, and Shri Mohandas Pai.



Prof Subhash Kak
USA

Introductory Remarks

Prof Kak explained the contributions of Bharat. He started with the importance of the number 108, which is fundamental to Dharma. For example, we have 108 beads in the Japamala, the very idea of it is to make a symbolic journey from our body (the earth) to the inner lamp of consciousness (the inner sun). He said our rishis knew that the diameter of the sun is 108 times the diameter of the earth. Similarly, he gave many examples. He said Panani could be considered the true father of computer science as his grammar has 4000 rules in Sanskrit in the form of a computer program. Recently, 30 leading physicists, neuroscientists, philosophers, and computer scientists from the US and UK had several intensive discussions on “will computers eventually become conscious?”. While some thought yes, others said machines won’t because machines are not governed by quantum mechanics. But all agreed that machines will be able to do all those human beings do. There is something more to consciousness than just computation. Ramanujan, the great mathematician, had support from the cosmos. Mankind can receive guidance from our tradition, from the Vedas because they are about consciousness. Prof Kak said that the next 100 years would be a Vedic century. Erwin Schroedinger, who laid the foundation of quantum mechanics said in his autobiography that the fundamental idea behind quantum mechanics came to him from the Upanishads.

Dr R Nagaswamy (Padma Bhushan)
Historian

Dr R Nagaswamy said that our ancient Bharatiya scholars have distinguished two types of Dharmas: spiritual dharma and laukika dharma. Manu compiled the first and earliest form of Bharat’s constitution called Manudharma Shastra about 3500 years ago based on scientific and Vedic universal principles. It is not related to any religious ideas. Manu says even if one is a great vidvan but he must be honest, have no enmity or hatred towards anybody or have no greediness. We are all inheritors of this law code Manudharma shastra. Manudharma defines how to bring up children and students with discipline, grihasta dharma for married life, and finally, on sanyas. It explains the qualities of a king, and how a ruler should conduct himself. It also explains in detail how a man must live in the society following rules and laws, and the categories of crimes and punishment. Without studying Manu, modern people say dharma is a religious term. But, Manudharma is wonderful scientific literature and was taken as a law code that influenced all the kings that ruled from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. In fact, the whole of Southeast Asia followed this; thousands of inscriptions on copper plates and on temple walls are proof of this. Thirukural was taken from Manudharma shastra. In the third century, much before the present era, we had a written script of law. This script was adopted in all transactions, money, law, agreements, and courts.



PLENARY SESSION: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE



Dr Sonal Mansingh (Padma Vibhushan)
Nrityangana

Dr Sonal Mansingh greeted everyone with a 'Namaste'. She explained that 'Namaste' basically means bowing to the divine force that is behind this universe and which exists in all of us. She said she was lucky that she went to a Gujarati-medium school and not a convent – so instead of English rhymes, she learned bhajans and shlokas in Sanskrit, Gujarati, and Hindi. Art and cultural knowledge are the other face of scientific knowledge – they balance each other. The body is ephemeral, but everyone desires eternal bliss. All of us are dancers in a way – with every breath our prana dances, our heartbeat is the taal or the cosmic rhythm, and the unheard sounds within us are the

swara. Anuraaga or love is the foundation of Bharat. Art is the prana of a Rashtra (country), if it is not nourished properly the country will wither away.

Shri Mohandas Pai (Padma Shri)
Businessman

Padma Shri Mohandas Pai spoke on the economic condition of Bharat, a \$2.6 trillion economy, the sixth-largest in the world. On the basis of purchasing power parity, Bharat is the third-largest economy after US and China. In 2030, Bharat and China will make up 30-35% of world GDP. Bharat has been a rich country. Will Durant, the author of Case for India, writes that between 1757 and 1930 the British took away \$400 billion to build the empire called Great Britain and fund the industrial revolution. Bharat was the largest economy in Asia in 1850 but our economy was ruined. In 1991, following the free-market economy, we grew at 8.7% a year for 27 years. In 2030, it will be a \$10 trillion economy. We need to provide every Bharatiya with the bare necessities of life and create jobs. We need to fund our universities for research, create innovation, and develop the technology. We need highly skilled people to get into politics and become a globally powerful community. By 2030, Bharat will be the third-largest economy in the world, will provide a good quality of life, will be spiritually and culturally dominant and the world will respect us for our great civilization.





WORLD HINDU ECONOMIC FORUM
Making Society Prosperous

MISSION

Making society prosperous through the generation and sharing of surplus wealth.

INTRODUCTION

The World Hindu Economic Forum brings together financially successful elements within the Hindu Society such as traders, bankers, technocrats, investors, industrialists, businessmen, professionals, along with economists and thinkers, so that each group can share their business knowledge, experience, expertise and resources with their fellow brethren. We encourage, support and mentor budding Hindu entrepreneurs. The end goal is to generate surplus wealth and make society prosperous.

Today, while some economies are passing through a turbulent phase, many emerging economies are providing us great opportunities. The issue is how to leverage the global situation for collective growth. Hindus should cooperate and collaborate globally so that market access is facilitated amongst them. We need to create market access across geographic zones and countries, spreading from Auckland to Alaska and Oslo to Johannesburg, cutting across the entire globe. Similar cooperation can be envisaged in the area of capital, enabling availability of appropriately priced capital. Also, technologically savvy Hindus should be matched with those who can convert technical innovation into business with ideas, funds and market access.

FOUNDATION

We Hindus know how to create wealth, and also freely share this knowledge. Our ancestors have expressed their wisdom in the Vedas “Sat Hasta Samahara, Sahastra Hasta Sankira”. It literally means “Create wealth with 100 hands and share it with 1000 hands”. Hindus contributed 33-49% of the world economy from the 1st to 15th century CE.

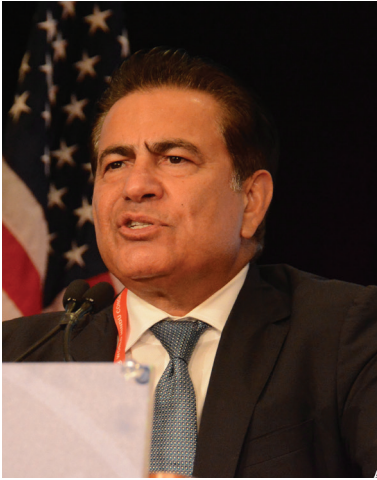
Hindu civilization was wealthy and prosperous. The magnificent monuments of past and present such as Harappa & Mohenjo-Daro, Lothal, Nalanda & Takshila University, Ayutthaya in Thailand, Angkor Wat in Cambodia, Prambanan & Borobudur in Indonesia, Wat Phu in Laos, My-son in Vietnam, Rameshwaram, Brihadeshwara and Meenakshi temples in Bharat etc, are ample evidence of the wealthy times. This prosperity was lost during the period of Islamic invasion, colonial rule and post Industrial Revolution.

WAY FORWARD

The 21st century economy is driven by knowledge and youth. With larger part of the Hindu population being youth, there is an inherent potential waiting to be unlocked. WHEF is that platform which will utilize this available potential to trigger the creation of surplus wealth. The Economic boom of previous two decades followed by a recession of major economies has placed the entire world into turmoil. The responses to these challenges are complex and needs to be addressed outside the current institutional framework and mindsets. It requires a new and creative response, which can propel creation of surplus wealth to rescue the world economy from its current crisis. WHEF's present approach is based on the foundational wisdom in the Bhagwad Gita: “Think in future, for the future”.

The basic problems of the world today are hunger, poverty and illiteracy. These problems cannot be solved just by donations and charity. A growing population has growing needs, and these can be overcome only by creating surplus wealth and sharing this wealth to empower the masses, i.e. those at the bottom of the pyramid. WHEF is that step towards creating “That, which sustains” and eradicating hunger, poverty and illiteracy in the world.

The WHEF journey began in 2012 at Hong Kong, followed by successful annual forums in Bangkok 2013, New Delhi 2014, London 2015, Los Angeles 2016 and several regional forums along the way.



Dr Mukesh Aghi

Coordinator, WHEF 2018 @ Chicago

Introductory Remarks

Dr Mukesh Aghi began by quoting Swami Vivekananda, “I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance.”. These words, Dr Aghi said, have become even more powerful and valid today. The focus of the WHEF sessions was on exploring the potential of Bharat’s growth, partnerships between Bharat and USA, and the ways in which Hindu community can engage within themselves and with their local environments.

He stated that the three million strong Hindu-American community in the USA is one of the most affluent, educated, and philanthropic minority groups, and it is becoming increasingly influential in corporate and political spheres. He also mentioned the recently concluded 2+2 Dialogue between Bharat and USA, where the crucial COMCASA defense agreement was signed. Also, both countries want to increase their mutual trade to \$500 billion over the next 10 years. Dr. Aghi argued that this shows there is a significant collaboration between Bharat and USA. With Bharat’s economy growing at around 8% in recent quarters, and structural reforms put in place by PM Modi, he predicted that this growth will only accelerate over the next 20 years.

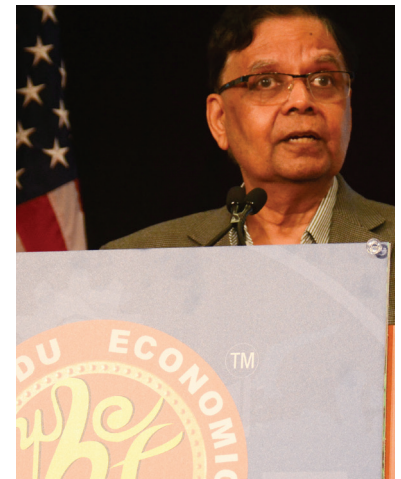
SESSION-1: BHARAT ECONOMIC GROWTH STORY - NEXT 20 YEARS

Prof Arvind Panagriya

Professor, Columbia University; Former Vice Chair NITI Aayog

Prof Panagriya characterized Swami Vivekananda as a sage who was modern in his thoughts and who sought rapid eradication of poverty through the commercialization of agriculture, industrialization, education, and creation of wealth. He lamented that somehow, we have failed to follow what Swamiji had advised and have lagged behind even after Independence. However, he argued that the last 15 years have seen an incredible transformation. In terms of the Rupee we are growing at 7.6% whereas, in terms of the dollar, the growth is close to 10%. Thus, he surmised, that on a very conservative estimate of 7% growth over the next 20 years, Bharat would become an \$11 trillion economy from the current \$2.6 trillion. With our currency appreciating as we grow, it will be a \$16 trillion economy.

He also said that with our savings rate sustaining at 20% there is a huge scope to catch up with the gap in the productivity levels relative to the US. This would be similar to the growth stories of South Korea, Taiwan, and China. He said that it is now our turn to catch up and in this our digital infrastructure would be a powerful enabler.



Shri Richard Rossow

Senior Advisor, Center for Strategic & International Studies, USA

Shri Rossow expressed an optimistic view of Bharat, saying it has managed stable growth. Looking forward to the next 20 years, there are many grand challenges to grapple with such as urbanization. Shri Rossow specifically focused on two of these challenges: finding ways to rebalance the economy, and the role of trade.

Looking at rebalancing the economy, he argued that while agriculture represents about half of the workforce it only contributes a small part of Bharat's GDP. In contrast, services generate about 60% of Bharat's GDP but employ about 30% of the workforce. He wondered whether services can create the kind of employment necessary to bring in tens of millions of new employees, or whether the manufacturing sector has to grow rapidly. He argued that for the creation of skilled manufacturing jobs, we must tap into the experiences of Japan, China, Taiwan, and other developed countries.

Talking on the issue of trade, he said Bharat must make steady progress in bringing down its custom rates to East Asian levels. This will provide companies more access and allow them to do a lot more on the ground.

**Shri Subhash Thakrar**

Former Chairman, London Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Shri Thakrar lauded the naming of the Convention Hall as "Ashok Singhal Hall" and recollected Singhalji's influence on him and on Shri Anil Puri, especially in the context of starting Ekal schools in Nepal, which now number around 2500. He recounted how his interest in Bharat developed in 1994 when he noticed a very powerful entrepreneurial spirit in Bharat backed by meager capital. This got him involved in several infrastructure projects.

He argued that over the next 20 years Bharat's growth will be fuelled by information technology, artificial intelligence, mobile telephony, internet usage, offshore operations, rapid reduction in poverty rates, strengthening of the bond between resident and non-resident Bharatiyas, and the can-do attitude of second-generation NRIs who are looking to create value through growth.

SESSION-2: CORPORATE AMERICA - HOW BUSINESS LEADERS FROM BHARAT ARE PART OF THE C-SUITE



Shri Manoj P Singh

Former COO, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu,
Board Member DXC Technology, USA

Shri Manoj Singh listed six attributes that helped him reach where his current position. These attributes were - first, being culturally aware and becoming an aggregator of divergent viewpoints for which one has to be persuasive, flexible, a good listener, and a communicator. Second, doing the right thing even when no one is looking as it takes years to build a reputation and only a fleeting moment to destroy it. Third, developing the ability to look through the fog with intuition. Fourth, is the ability to cultivate mentors, as it's never a solitary journey. Fifth, competing with oneself so that one can develop and

grow continually. Sixth, focusing on the journey rather than the destination. He outlined how to create opportunities, take risks, and enjoy the overall process. He reminded everyone that growth and mobility never occur linearly and continuously, rather they occur in spurts.

Shri Arun Kumar Sharma

Chief Investment Officer, IFC World Bank

Shri Arun Kumar Sharma identified the principal reasons underlying the success of people from Bharat in the USA. First is the tough filtration process one has to pass to come to the USA. This ensures that only the best and brightest make it. The next advantage is proficiency in English relative to other communities. Further, a significant financial burden on families when one starts in the USA drives a culture of hard work and perseverance. Another positive is our adaptability and the ability to accept a range of divergent views due to our diversity. Also, our ability to manage adversity and innovation to overcome challenges helps us in the corporate world. Finally, he argued that our innate sense of conservatism, risk management, and experience of operating in a low-resource environment is also an enabling factor underlying our success.

He acknowledged the role of the host society in the USA in terms of its system of effort, delivery, and reward, and its inclusiveness and culturally mature broad mindset which facilitate the success of all those arriving from Bharat.





Shri Rajesh Subramaniam

Executive Vice-President/Chief Marketing Officer, Federal Express

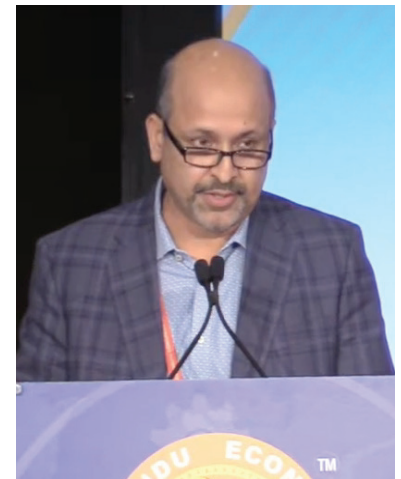
Shri Subramaniam recounted his growth in FedEx starting from the lowest level in FedEx when the US experienced severe economic recession. He explained that growth within an organisation strongly depends on whether the values and culture of a company match your own. This is particularly true as one goes up higher on the corporate ladder and is responsible for a large number of people. He explained that one has to take calculated risks with opportunities that come one's way, and we should learn to deal with the negative fallouts as well. He said that while deep analytical and technical skills are innate to those from Bharat, the trick is in translating the same to something strategic and entrepreneurial. That is what he learned at FedEx. He argued that leadership should be inspirational and that implies putting oneself in the shoes of those at the front line. He expressed his gratitude for his Bharatiya heritage, which provided him with several skills relevant to the American corporate world. Going forward, his mission would be to pay back to society and help immigrants from all walks of life.

Shri Sachin Lawande

President and CEO, Visteon, USA

Shri Lawande informed that Visteon supplies electronic and software systems to the automotive industry and is a Fortune-1000 company. He stated that there are as many as 10 CEOs of Bharatiya origin in the club of leaders of Fortune-100 companies. He stated that a CEO has to have several qualities to achieve business foresight, deliver on operational goals, and develop corporate culture. A good CEO, in the view of Shri Lawande, has six key qualities: vision, communication, courage, optimism, humility, and integrity. One must provide a clear vision for the business and a strategic plan of action to achieve it. One must be able to communicate this vision to internal and external stakeholders.

A strong leader must have the courage to take and own difficult decisions. Good leaders tend to be positive thinkers and possess an infectious optimism that inspires people. A leader should demonstrate genuine humility as nothing saps the motivation of a workforce more than a highly politicized and ego-fuelled environment. Finally, one needs to possess unquestionable integrity to gain the trust of employees.



SESSION-3: US-BHARAT CORRIDOR - BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Shri Edward L Monser

President, Emerson Electric, USA

Shri Edward Monser said that Emerson is a medium-sized company with about \$20 billion in sales. Emerson's strategy for Bharat is 'What we sell in Bharat, we want to make it in Bharat.' Emerson also wants to make Bharat a hub for the region for all of its activities in the Middle East and Africa. Since 1971, Emerson has worked its way through different governments in Bharat, and the most improvement they have ever seen has occurred in the last three to four years. By 2050, Bharat will be the second-largest economy and most likely emerge as the innovation hub of the world. Thus, the 'Make in Bharat' initiative makes tremendous business sense and is indeed a strong initiative that has led to improvement in manufacturing infrastructure, licensing, IP protection, and investment capital. Emerson is currently building its largest manufacturing campus worldwide near Pune, Bharat. Shri Monser further stated that despite all these positives, Bharat is not yet connected to the global financial system in a transparent and secure way, and this needs to improve. Thus, the government also needs to move on from L1 bidding and consider Swiss models or other models that allow new technology to be embraced effectively. However, he observed that Bharat has indeed opened up for business and is embracing FDI in a way that has not been seen in the past.



**Shri Daniel Bryant**

Senior Vice-President, Global Public Policy and
Government Affairs, Walmart, USA

Shri Daniel Bryant said that Walmart's founder Sam Walton had a vision that all people should be able to get quality goods at a low price, near their homes. Driven by this philosophy, Walmart has grown from a single store 55 years ago to 10,000+ stores located all over the world. He said that Walmart believes that its future success will come from its thoughtfully calibrated investments in Bharat. Thus, Walmart has invested \$16 billion to acquire a 77% ownership share in Flipkart, a Bharatiya e-commerce company. Flipkart has 30 distribution centers around the country, a state-of-the-art logistics capability, and an excellent e-commerce ecosystem. Through this endeavor, Walmart plans to build strong, durable supply chains wherever they go. He also reported that 98% of everything that Walmart sells in Bharat is made in Bharat. He projected that the number of Walmart's cash and carry stores that sell to other businesses (kiranas, mom & pop stores) will increase from 21 to 50 over the next five years. Walmart will also work with kiranas to improve e-commerce delivery. As part of Walmart's global sourcing hub, it sources Bharat-made goods and sells these goods to 14 other countries around the world. Walmart will also continually invest in its best-in-class technology hub in Bengaluru. He reported that 57% of Walmart's revenues last year were food-related. Thus, they are building relations with farmers in Bharat and have started training farmers in direct farming. In this way, farmers get connected directly to the marketplace of buyers.

Shri Adrian Mutton

CEO and Founder, Sannam S4, USA

Shri Adrian Mutton visited Bharat 26 years ago and spent his first-year teaching English in a public school in UP. Later, he started conducting expeditions for foreign students, mainly in the Himalayas. He learned lessons about how Bharat operates on the ground, about dealing with people, humility and the challenges of managing a diverse team. He sold this company in 1998 and went home, but returned to Bharat after hearing about Her growth story and established Sannam S4. Sannam S4 helps small and medium-sized companies to enter and expand in the Bharatiya market. The challenges he sees for his clients are: finding the right people for hiring and identifying reliable distributors and channel partners; designing a business with a pricing model which is appropriate for Bharat; and intricacies related to administration, paperwork, and office infrastructure. He moved back to the US in 2015 to develop a practical framework for helping small and medium-size companies to succeed in Bharat, facilitate their integration with the supply chains of larger corporations, and provide appropriate advice and day-to-day support. Having moved to the US two years ago as an immigrant, he interestingly discovered that setting up a business in the US is much harder than it was in Bharat 26 years ago. This is a cause for great concern in the US for all immigrants. He expressed pride in being a part of the US immigrant community, holding the flag of Bharat high in the US.



SESSION-4: BUSINESS TRENDS - WHAT ARE THE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Prof S P Kothari

Professor of Accounting and Finance
MIT Sloan School of Management, USA

Prof SP Kothari stated that Bharat has done very well in recent years. Going forward, in order to grow, several things have to come together: physical and financial capital, ideas, risk-taking ability, and infrastructure, both soft and hard. Government can play a big role in infrastructure, providing moderate regulation, law enforcement, and improving the ease of doing business. Our resources are limited compared to our 1.3 billion population, so we need to invite foreign capital. Instead of sprinkling our limited resources across the country, it is better to invest them in pockets and certain sectors/regions. Politically this is not an easy thing, especially in a democracy, but political acumen is needed to recognize the natural advantages of certain regions and go forward.



Shri Mukesh Chatter

General Partner, Neonet Capital, USA



Shri Mukesh Chatter said that we've come a long way over the last 70 years, but we could have done a lot better. In his view, economists sometimes create fictional boundaries like the poverty line, but the reality is a little less sanguine. He said that we cannot remain a consumer economy, and thus there is a need to create, produce and only then consume. This is so because our growth has to be sustainable as well as symmetric, i.e., the bottom must rise along with the top. He stated that no country has ever succeeded in achieving rapid economic transformation without basing itself on science and technology. He observed that the Chinese today are investing hundreds of billions of

dollars in strategic areas like energy storage, AI, and semiconductors. Thus, he argued that there is no alternative to a home-grown R&D base.

He pointed out that our biggest issue is that everybody is working in silos, whether it is in academia, research labs, or industry. Thus, there is a need for right policies that promote R&D, and our bureaucracy needs to show a sense of urgency in this regard. He warned that we are at a crossroads, because in 10 years the Chinese economy will grow to \$28 trillion, and if we just stay the course, we would have no choice but to become subservient to our neighbor. Thus, he concluded that we are at a critical juncture in history, and science and technology are the only way out.



Shri Mohandas Pai

Chairman, Board of Manipal Global Education, Bharat

Shri Mohandas Pai started by providing an overview of Bharat's growth story post-liberalization. He mentioned that since 1991 our GDP has grown from \$275 billion to \$2.6 trillion, averaging an annual growth rate of 8.7%. In contrast, China grew faster because it opened up its economy earlier in 1978, and have a larger female participation in the workforce. He observed several notable features that influence Bharat's economy. Our population growth has declined, and today we are close to the replacement rate. The government's fiscal situation has improved, subsidy leakages have reduced, and an ambitious health insurance program has been launched. We have made good strides in various industries and agriculture and our financial markets have matured. However, we are still under-investing in infrastructure, and lag in manufacturing due to the socialist mindset bequeathed by the Nehruvian era.

Shri Pai cautioned that we are at an inflection point in global history. By 2021, the emerging markets will have a higher share of world GDP than the developed markets, and this would be a dramatic reversal after 200 years. Our tech entrepreneurs are reshaping Bharat and they will create a \$10 trillion economy by 2030. We have the third-largest ecosystem in terms of start-ups and innovation in the world. However, we have to guard against the risk of becoming a digital colony.





Shri Nikhil Nanda

Founder, Svendgaard Laboratories Limited, Bharat

Shri Nanda pointed out that ancient Hindu texts, like the 2300-year-old Arthashastra written by Chanakya, explain at length about economic and political management including concepts like compound interest, the relationship between interest rates, and business risk. The Western world has caught up with these ideas in just the last few hundred years. He further pointed out that in the modern era, digital and technology-enabled services are the foremost areas of opportunity in the global economy. Thus, we need Bharatiya-owned tech giants, and our focus should be on entrepreneurship and technology. In this regard, government programs like the MUDRA Yojana, Start-up

India, and Skill India are aiding in the growth of this entrepreneur ecosystem. He foresaw that we are going to achieve double-digit GDP growth in the coming decade, and that will be the real 'Hindu rate of growth.'

SESSION-5: ENTREPRENEURIAL START UPS - RAISING CAPITAL & SUCCESS STORIES

Dr B R Shetty

Founder and Chairman of BRS Ventures Neopharma Dubai, UAE

Dr Shetty began by reminiscing his early association with Jan Sangh and his role in launching VHP in Udupi, Bharat. As part of these organisations, he devoted himself to social service such as abolishing manual scavenging in Udupi. Later, he went to Abu Dhabi to work and repay the loans he had taken for social work. He has received Abu Dhabi's highest civilian award and developed an excellent relationship with the government there.

He appreciated the Modi government for its visionary programs aimed at promoting the start-up economy. Such programmes include Start-up India, Skill India, and Make in India, among others. His Abu-Dhabi-based company BRS Ventures operates in the healthcare sector as well as other sectors and has operations in 17 countries with a total market capitalization of \$11 billion. He is now also entering the healthcare and education space in rural, urban and tribal areas of Bharat.





Shri Ragunathan Kannan

Director, Sathguru Management Consultants, Bharat

Shri Kannan stated that most start-ups are first funded in bootstrap mode, i.e., such ventures are self-funded. This generates confidence in potential investors because the founder has invested his own funds in the start-up. He informed that in 2017, Bharat had \$13.7 billion of start-up capital, which is approximately one-sixth of the start-up funds used in the US. This is a significant increase from earlier years, but there is still a long way to go. Start-ups could also seek crowd-funding. However, there is little proper regulation in Bharat to enable such funding in any meaningful sense. Bharat has a good saving rate (approximately 30%) and thus there is tremendous potential for the

emergence of a powerful crowd-funding system. Then there is peer-to-peer (P2P) funding, which has taken off well as it is regulated by RBI.

Shri Kannan pointed out that some of the largest companies in the world have benefited from angel funding. Significant angel funding is available in Bharat as well. However, emerging markets like Bharat still have substantially less start-up capital compared to that available in developed markets. Shri Kannan also said that if one has a completely disruptive idea, then angels are not the best option since they prefer investing in systems that they can understand. In such a case, one may have to go for venture funding. Such a resource is easier to tap into once one starts generating revenue. Shri Kannan also noted that most start-ups need mentorship, and Bharat still lacks a robust mentorship structure like the one the US has. Incubators and accelerators are a better option for start-ups as they provide mentorship, infrastructure, and funding assistance. Grant funding is currently huge for drug discovery and early-stage trials, but we are struggling for funding companies that are in the growth stage. He concluded that in an overall sense, some challenges remain in the area of policymaking, mentorship, and fuelling growth, but Bharat has taken a huge leap over the last few years, and the future looks promising.





Shri Satya Narayan Bansal

CEO, Barclays Wealth, Bharat

Shri Satya Narayan Bansal pointed out that start-up funding occurs in three phases: Early-stage, Growth, and Revival. Very often, our emphasis is on early-stage funding, whereas funding during the growth stage is equally important. The challenge in Bharat's SME sector, which generates maximum employment, is raising capital for the growth stage. This challenge becomes harder for SMEs as most of the SME units are proprietary set-ups, and these systems are not as institutionalized as expected by the investors. He also observed that right now, we are also facing the challenge of raising distress capital because of the huge amount of NPA accruals and the fact that

many businesses need funds for revival. Overall, Shri Bansal argued for a sound capital ecosystem. Traditionally, the community would provide seed capital to entrepreneurs, and during tough times, it would support floundering businesses. That system is not strong anymore. Further, he stressed that we need to start respecting capital more - the cost of capital in the Bharatiya context is not less than 20%. He noted that the vital link between requirement and availability of capital is credibility. Credibility can be gained by attracting a suitable anchor who is knowledgeable about the start-up and its related industry. Such an anchor would bring in initial investors, and they in turn will attract other investors.

Shri Jwala Rambarran

Former Governor, Central Bank of Trinidad

Shri Ramabarran said that the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are similar to the WHEF goal of making society prosperous and eradicating poverty. For this, we have to know how to match the supply and demand of capital in a credible manner. Globally, he assessed the need to be as much as \$90 trillion for funding the SDGs, and there is a gap of \$3 trillion every year. We need a paradigm shift to unlock private capital to overcome this shortage. One such concept could be Diaspora Bonds. Hindu Diaspora Bonds, could be a debt instrument that taps into the wealth of the Hindu diaspora. It could be an innovative source of finance that resonates with the WHEF thinking of 'creating wealth with a hundred hands, and sharing it with a thousand hands.'

He said that in the past, Bharat, Israel, and Nigeria have been the three countries to issue such bonds. Israel has raised as much as \$40 billion through this route. However, no private entity has issued such bonds so far. This could be an opportunity for the Hindu community and WHEF to become pioneers of this new financial concept, and tap into Bharat's diaspora which is the largest diaspora in the world. He pointed out that the 3.3 million Hindu Americans (USA, Canada, Trinidad, Guyana, and Suriname) have annual savings of roughly \$4 billion dollars. These savings can be routed to attractively structured Hindu Diaspora Bonds. Currently, these funds reside in North American banks and produce very low yields. As Hindus, we have the power in our hands to provide the type of society the whole world aspires to have.



SESSION - 6 : PLANNED NETWORKING SESSION

The sixth session was a planned networking session. Prior to the session, a brief presentation was made by Shri Srinivas Chidumalla and Shri Sanjay Kumar to set the tone, process, and expectations for the session. The networking session was planned after conducting an online survey for a better understanding of participant interests. The group was divided into four categories: joint ventures, trading, services industry, and investment. Delegates with the right synergy were then collected together to ensure people with complementing requirements meet and take their goals forward. A team led by WHEF Committee members facilitated the process. The session lasted more than two hours and the response was overwhelming.



Coordinator:
Shri Srinivas Chidumalla



Coordinator:
Shri Sanjay Kumar





HINDU EDUCATION BOARD

Quality Education For All



MISSION STATEMENT

The aim of the Hindu Education Board is to ensure that all members of society receive quality education. Additionally, the Board seeks to encourage creation of high quality affordable educational institutions for all members of society, regardless of their social and economic status.

THE NEED

A society which is not well-educated is incapable of sustaining itself over the long term. It is education which drives positive social change, and ensures betterment of a nation. Civilizations which do not value education are susceptible to decay and deterioration. So, the Hindu civilization must develop a strong and viable system of education so that it can prosper and remain strong. It must strive to ensure that all members of society, regardless of their socio-economic status, have access to quality education, thereby becoming meaningful contributors to larger and multifarious societal goals. The Hindu civilization has had a splendid record of investing in education over last several millennia. Great institutions such as the universities of Takshashila and Nalanda are a testimony to this fact. In more recent times the Hindus have created a large number of wonderful institutions including Banaras Hindu University, Madras Institute of Technology and Birla Institute of Technology and Science. However, despite these later initiatives, a large part of the society still does not have access to affordable quality education. This has seriously impaired the overall progress of our country. The Hindu civilization, which is more than a billion strong, and constitutes more than 15% of global population, cannot rely primarily on external resources and efforts to meet its educational needs. Rather, it has to urgently develop, through internal resources, a significant number of institutions providing superior education in all fields including natural sciences, engineering and technology, social sciences, liberal and performing arts, law, business and management, ethics, religion, philosophy, and spiritual sciences. Also needed is the establishment of numerous educational institutions of excellence which set benchmarks and standards, and induce innovations in diverse areas of knowledge, thereby offering educational leadership to the world. A civilization which does not provide leadership in the area of education, progressively feels more insecure and less confident, since its perspectives remain perpetually under-appreciated and prone to distortions and misrepresentations. Creation of numerous institutions of excellence in different parts of the world will address this very serious anomaly by generating competent and confident Hindu leaders in their respective areas of academic specializations.



Prof Nachiketa Tiwari

Coordinator

Hindu Education Conference, WHC 2018, Chicago

Introductory Remarks

Prof Nachiketa Tiwari welcomed the audience and introduced the theme of the Hindu Educational Conference. He said this conference brings together educators, academics, administrators, government representatives, students, advocates, and other stakeholders to discuss challenges and opportunities in the field of education, including access to high quality, affordable education, the academic study of Hindu dharma, history, and society, as well as investing in creative modalities for dharmic values-based education. He said the objectives included a

universally accessible quality educational system for all and enabling people to become meaningful contributors to societal goals. He laid these out in the context that 16% of the global population cannot rely on others to educate it. He said that in the past we have had our own institutions, and we need institutions of excellence once again to set benchmarks and standards, provide leadership, enhance self-confidence, and immunize from external distortions.

SESSION 1: PROVIDING QUALITY EDUCATION IN GROWING ECONOMIES

Chairperson:

Dr G Viswanathan

Founder and Chancellor

VIT University, Vellore, Bharat

Introductory Remarks

Dr G Viswanathan thanked the audience for their presence and introduced the theme of the first session. He said that education and health need to be focused in Bharat, as in other advanced countries, to overcome the challenges of population and lack of resources. He emphasised that economic advancement is possible only with the advancement of education. So, we need to educate our children and scholarship schemes should be made available for middle-class students to access higher education. Ministry of Education in both state and central governments should take some measures to make sure that quality education is provided and is accessible to all. There needs to be a level playing field in institutions rather than basing it on the caste system. Education reforms need to start so that education can be liberalized and that is how we would be able to compete in the world. We need to focus on our local students before attracting foreign students for education in our country.



Prof Satish Modh

Director

VESIM Business School, Mumbai, Bharat

**Policy changes needed to make
Education affordable and of high quality**

Professor Modh outlined that the purpose of education is not only to provide employment but also to provide the knowledge of 'para' and 'apara' for one to become self-sufficient. He said there is a notion that high quality of education is associated with high cost. All youths in our country need to be educated because an investment in education is an investment in the future. Prof Modh suggested that subjects such as psychology and sociology should be brought forward to create more opportunities. He also suggested some ways to improve quality education. His suggestion included curricular innovation - in addition to languages and mathematics, emphasis should be given to social sciences; improving teaching quality, and promoting research innovation. Prof Modh expressed his strong belief in the Right to Teach and he said that a person with knowledge can spread the same knowledge and make a difference.





Shri Rahul Vishwanath Karad

Managing Trustee

MIT University, Pune, Bharat

**Promoting human values on campus: MIT
World Peace University – a case study**

Shri Rahul Karad shared that MIT World Peace University (MIT-WPU) was set up with the thought of providing education and building constructive mindsets. The spirit of MIT-WPU lies in individual achievement, social enhancement, national rejuvenation, and universal influence. MIT-WPU has the biggest peace dome where there are 54 statues of saints, philosophers, and change-makers, which will soon be open for the world to see. The unique method of teaching and learning

that MIT-WPU follows are learning peace, practicing peace, living in peace, and sharing in peace. He shared that every year 5000 students get a chance to stay at farmers' houses in the villages so that they know about the culture and get a chance to innovate and find ways to solve their problems.

Yoga is performed every Thursday, peace prayers take place every day, and Guru Shishya Parampara is followed in the University. He said that through this MIT-WPU, they are trying to bring a change in the teaching-learning method.

Dr Kiran Patel

Entrepreneur and Philanthropist, USA

**A Sustainable Business model for a school for
Providing affordable and quality education**

Dr Kiran Patel highlighted a few statistics to prove that Bharat can be an intellectual capital only if we focus on education. He pointed out that we have made a progress in the number of educational institutions being set up in the country but the quality of education has to be a focal point. Serious attention has to be paid to teachers and their quality for better dissemination of quality education. A strong curriculum should be prepared and even the local schools should be targeted. He ended by saying that we should try to inculcate spirituality in education to shape humans into better versions of themselves.



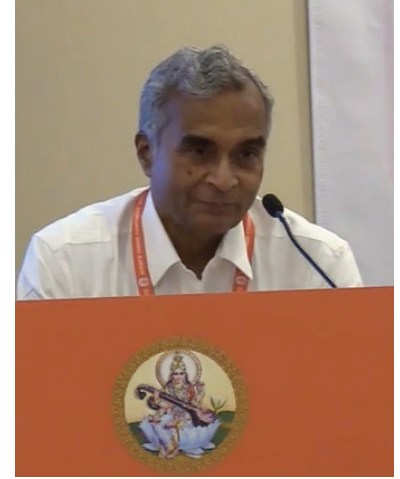
SESSION 2: ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS IN DEVELOPING SCHOLARS IN HINDU STUDIES

Chairperson:

Prof Saradindu MukherjiMember, Indian Council of Historical Research,
New Delhi, Bharat**Introductory Remarks**

Prof Saradindu Mukherji introduced the session. He explained the historical evolution of academics, historical studies, and how it is related to Bharat's political culture. He shared the importance of the spiritual, and religious aspects of Bharat and how they should combine with modern science and education. All our philosophers and historians knew before Independence about the importance of religious studies in the making of a nation and the institutions like Takshashila and Nalanda are testimony to this. To understand how Bharat had repeated invasions, subjugations, and slavery, one has to become aware of our history, the Bharatiya education system and Hindu society, their achievements, and challenges.

He was surprised that Islamic studies were conducted by various universities like Jamia Millia Islamia University and Aligarh Muslim University are funded by taxpayer citizens but no such Hindu Studies are available.

**Swami Mitrananda**

Chinamaya Vishwa Vidyapeeth, Bharat

The cost of not developing our own scholars in the area of 'Hindu studies'

Swami Mitrananda emphasised the importance of having our own Hindu scholars. He said that in the absence of such scholars we risk authentic information getting compromised through wrong interpretations. Hindu Dharma is a very scientific culture but because we didn't have our own Hindu scholars, we are not aware of it. Moreover, our rich Hindu history became mythology, and due to this an element of doubt arose. Also, we grew up learning about others' history and glory and we felt ashamed and inferior about our own.

For example, till the 18th century, Bharat was one of the world leaders in sea trade but most of us are not aware of this fact. Lack of knowledge about our history and heritage made us feel inferior and we were conquered. Also, we lost pride in our own Dharma. Swami Ji stressed that we need to create more Hindu scholars through higher education in Hindu Studies and also start orienting Hindu academics and PhDs.

Dr William F Sands

Dean, Maharishi University of Management, USA

The importance of scientific data and experience in developing Hindu scholarship in all areas of modern knowledge

Hindu Dharma is scientific knowledge. The speaker emphasized the importance of teaching Hindu Dharma and evaluating it in terms of science. He said Vedic sciences and Vedic technology must be evaluated by modern science and adopted globally for the good of entire humanity. He said that the greatest scientists to walk on Earth were the rishis of Bharat who saw the entirety of the laws of nature and understood how to utilize this knowledge for happiness and peace in the world. He said that modern education mostly concentrates on what is known and ignores the knower and the process of knowing, but these three elements together make total knowledge. He drew a line of similarity between modern physics and Vedic science. To be relevant, useful, and universal, data must be understood in terms of the most advanced theories of modern science. Now, hundreds of scientific studies on the effects of Vedic technology have been published in scientific journals. He shared those kids have been practicing Vedic medicine, technology, and meditation all around the globe and it has been helping them mentally, spiritually, and physically.



Brahmachari Dinesh Kaashikar

Art of Living Foundation, USA

A Plan for developing scholarship in the area of 'Hindu studies'

Brahmachari Dinesh Kaashikar said we need a long-term plan to make sure the scholarship in Hindu studies gets appreciated and has value, right from primary education and higher education to research. He said that in the traditional Vedic system, a student studies and gets the knowledge directly from their guru and such knowledge includes both intellect and heart. He requested academic institutions to come forward and create opportunities for research and scholarship on Hindu studies. He said it is worth funding and supporting Hindu studies because the research in this field has a very practical

application and tangible output. Hindu tradition was always about enquiry: the spirit of observing nature was cultivated and an intuitive ability was developed to gain knowledge and that brought about the scholarship. This makes Hindu studies valuable. The modern education system puts a lot of emphasis on memorizing. He said that each one of us is responsible for the state of affairs today, everyone should add value, take action and create more scholarships.

Smt Chandrika Tandon

Board Member

New York University, USA

**Opportunities and Challenges for
educational institutions developing Hindu scholarships**

Smt Chandrika Tandon shared some personal experiences with educational institutions. She is a part of many boards in different universities and trusts and has funded several schools. She shared her ideas on how learning and knowledge can be brought into the mainstream. According to her, we first need a goal. Second, we need to create a master research strategy and a strategic view. Finally, we need to invest in it by bringing together contributors, donors, departments, and scholars. All this needs to be done at a global level. She also suggested that we should have a common curriculum that gives a cradle-to-grave view of research. Lastly, she said we must find a way to own things that have already been taken hold of. She hoped that we all move forward and not look back.



SESSION 3: NETWORKING, CREATING AND ENCOURAGING HINDU SCHOLARSHIP ACROSS THE GLOBE

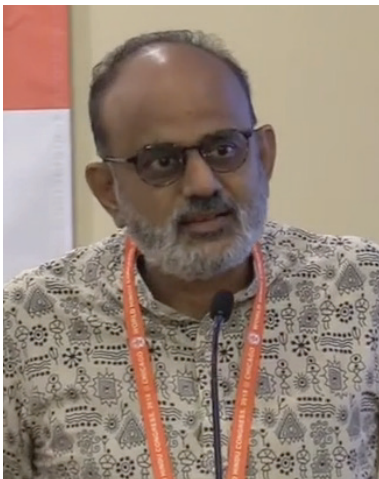
Chairperson:

Dr Manoj Khandelwal

Joint Coordinator, WAHA, Australia

**Introductory Remarks & WAHA: Networking
Hindu Academicians across the globe**

Dr Manoj Khandelwal informed that WAHA, which stands for World Association of Hindu Academicians, was formed in 2014. It is a global network to bring together all the Hindu academics to a common platform with an aim to facilitate interaction and sharing of information. WAHA aims to have meetings from time to time at different levels – city, state, national and international. It aims not only to put up a positive narrative about Hindu Dharma and Hindus in the media but also to have a counter mechanism to fight against the false or negative narratives. The objectives of WAHA include better networking and academic collaboration, joint research publications, and grants, opportunities for new talent, mentoring of future leaders and scholars, and community service and development. Dr Khandelwal said WAHA's web portal has been made to increase interaction among researchers and academics across the globe and share information.



Shri Hari Kiran Vadlamani

Founder, Indic Academy, Bharat

Networking to create Hindu scholars across the globe – A case study

Shri Hari Kiran Vadlamani said that creating a network of academia (Universities), acharyas, media, NGOs that work for vocational perfection, public intellectuals, and cultural entrepreneurs would help in transferring the knowledge from academia and acharyas to public consciousness. He shared the genesis of Indic Academy where academics and public intellectuals are brought together. He said academics can be classified as traditional (that include Acharyas who teach shastras) and non-traditional (that include students, undergraduates, and PhDs). Public intellectuals include authors, activists, and artists in different domains. This model is like an open university like a grahagurukulam. Currently, 39 students are under this model. Many events have been organised through the Indic Author network, Indic Activist network, Indic Economist Network, and Indic Angel Network. He suggested an app with which scholars can go and give or organize talks by showing their willingness to host or to give talks using a Google calendar. Lastly, a global network of Bharatiya cultural entrepreneurs to transfer knowledge from the fountainhead to where it is actually needed.

Shri Sankrant Sanu

MD, Garuda Publications, USA

A charter and a Sustainable model for a global network for Hindu scholars

Shri Sankrant Sanu said Hindu Dharma is an ecosystem of knowledge traditions that were developed in Bharat and that covers every area of human endeavour. It is the knowledge of self and of ultimate reality. The Hindu tradition is a methodology to know what is real. He said that we do not limit our thoughts and work to Hindu studies but encompass every field of human endeavour and thought. Talking about how traditional knowledge is relevant in different fields, he said it doesn't just include textbook knowledge but includes folk knowledge as well. He outlined three areas that can be impacted through these knowledge traditions: conceptual frameworks; the methodology used to approach knowledge; practitioners themselves. He said to bring the Hindu ecosystem into Bharatiya languages, we should know all languages but promote our own language. He lamented that we have been robbed of the right to share our own stories and said that Garuda Publications helps you to share your stories and seize the narrative.

**Dr Manohar Shinde**

Founding Director

Dharma Civilization Foundation, USA

Challenges of networking scholarships in the area of Dharma/Hindu studies

Dr Manohar Shinde shared his personal intellectual journey and said that he took voluntary retirement to reach out to scholars and intellectually oriented institutions in US and Bharat. He said the scale and complexity of challenges are so huge that no single institution or person will suffice to encounter them. Only the networking of Hindu scholarships across the globe is critical for a successful outcome. He gave examples of the efforts within and outside academia, both in Bharat and beyond. He outlined a few challenges that networking of scholarships faces. These include no legitimate space for academic focus on religious studies and world religions in Bharat; a pervasive presence of colonial consciousness where one wishes to look at their culture, traditions, and religion through the eyes of the colonizer and in this process, they get disconnected from authentic experiences; the slavish mentality to blindly imitate Western themes. Dr. Shinde suggested that the Hindu community needs to invest in building temples of knowledge and learning and promote academic philanthropy.

SESSION 4: STRENGTHENING OUR KNOWLEDGE, TRADITIONS AND LANGUAGES

Chairperson:

Prof K Ramsubramanian

IIT Mumbai, Bharat

Introductory Remarks & The relevance of Hindu knowledge traditions in the present world

Prof K Ramsubramanian said Vedic science and technology offers many branches. For example, Panchanga, the Hindu calendar system, is aligned to what is happening around us and is based on the systematic schedule of the celestial bodies. He said the Hindu Vedic science helps to find the exact direction and these techniques need to be popularized. Similarly, finding the local time from shadow measurement is another example of Vedic science. All these methods and techniques are recorded in Sanskrit verses. He said Vakya Panchanga can help a person make his own Panchanga by memorizing a few sentences (vakyas). Prof Ramsubramanian shared verses from shastras that give formulae to make mathematical calculations. He said that mathematics and Vedas are very closely related. In sutra method of teaching and learning, students can understand and memorize with ease. He concluded that there is a lot to learn and take from Shastras and there is a need to build a positive narrative about Bharat.



Shri Ramji Raghavan

Founder Chairman

Agastya International Foundation, Bharat

Popularizing science education at the grassroots - a case study

Shri Ramji Raghavan shared that since childhood he had the dream of building a school for creative kids. He said that unless we cultivate a creative temper among the masses of Bharat, the country will not transform and realize its true potential. He found that creative people tend to be great observers and have a spirit of curiosity. Therefore, he made it the mission of his foundation to spark curiosity, nurture creativity and instill confidence and fun in learning. He shared that the foundation has about 1500 employees and has reached over 1.5 million underprivileged kids across Bharat in 19 states and thousands of teachers. The foundation was named Agastya on his friend's recommendation which also means spreading knowledge, overcoming barriers, integration, egalitarianism, and being inclusive. He said that Agastya isn't just teaching science and maths to the poor and underprivileged but is also trying to instill a spirit of enquiry in the external and inner world.

Dr Oscar Pujol

Reimbau, Instituto Cervantes, Brazil

Why should we learn Sanskrit these days?

Dr Oscar Pujol said he was amazed to experience the richness of Bharatiya culture when he went to Banaras Hindu University to learn Sanskrit. The difference between Western learning methods and indigenous ones stuck with him. The traditional Bharatiya way of memorizing things is much more interesting than the Western system. When Dr Pujol started learning the Sanskrit language, he felt that Sanskrit is powerful, analytical, and spiritual. One of the problems he noticed is the neglect of traditional Pandits, who are the storehouse of knowledge. They know shastras deeply and can help us with knowing about them. He talked about how Sanskrit contributed to universal knowledge and changed Western human Science in the 19th century. He said learning and preserving Sanskrit is important to recover traditional information. The ideas contained in Sanskrit commentaries have to be integrated in the mainstream of human Science. He said that we should use Sanskrit as a root that sustains all other Bharatiya languages. He also stressed the need to decolonize our minds and become true citizens of the 21st century.

**Swamini Pramananda**

Purna Vidya, Bharat

The relevance of Vedanta, the spiritual knowledge tradition in the present society

Swamini Pramananda said that education has been defined in two ways - religious and secular. But the Vedic model of education talks about Paravidya and Aparavidya. Paravidya is the knowledge of the self and Aparavidya is the knowledge of the world. She was of the view that Paravidya should be included in formal education because if we don't know about ourselves then all knowledge about the universe is pointless. She said we need Paravidya to know our essential nature.

She said that the culture of Bharatiya civilization is very sacred and unless we awaken to it, we can't be called awakened Hindus. She concluded by talking about the Purna Vidya and explained that it has different self-awakening programs lined with Vedanta teachings and knowledge traditions imparted through a simple method of instruction with specific guidelines.

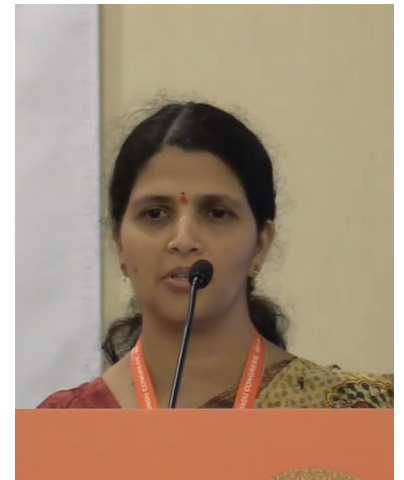
Dr Shirin Kulkarni

Co-founder

Council for Creative Education, Finland

Creativity: The Hindu perspective and how it can be integrated into the modern education system

Dr Shirin Kulkarni talked about the characteristics of a Hindu 'janamanas' who are peace-loving and respectful towards everyone. Creativity and Hinduness, she said, are closely related based on three aspects: open to approach things with different perspectives and room for debate and enquiry; flexibility and accommodation and acceptance; and freedom of experimentation and flexibility. She said that because of the negative narrative towards the Hindu culture, we have started feeling inferior. She compared the education systems of Bharat and Europe over the period of time and explained how colonization has affected our rich systems. She said we need to understand the importance of identity, self-realization, and passion like Europe realized after the standardization of education. She said that there's a need to bring this to the education systems of Bharat. She suggested that we can have an open curriculum and freedom to approach education through different approaches.



SESSION 5: RESPONDING TO WESTERN ACADEMIC CHALLENGES

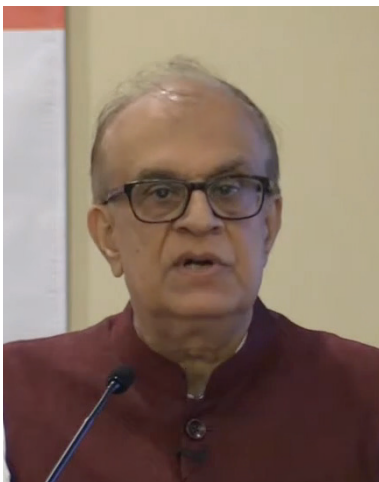
Chairperson:

Prof Arvind Sharma

Professor of Religion, McGill University, Canada

Introductory Remarks – Does the Western framework of understanding Hindus structurally promote our misportrayal?

Prof Arvind Sharma talked about the Western academic challenges that Hindu Dharma faced. Hindu civilization is the only example of a major civilization in the modern world. The reconstruction of its past and culture in modern times is not the purpose of our scholars but of Western scholars. He shared the ideas of Macaulay about the liberal vision of Bharat and said that everything is acceptable except conversion to Christianity. He then invited the speakers to the dais and asked them to talk about their respective topics.



Shri Rajiv Malhotra

Founder, Infinity Foundation, USA

Misportrayal of Hindus in academia: A historical perspective

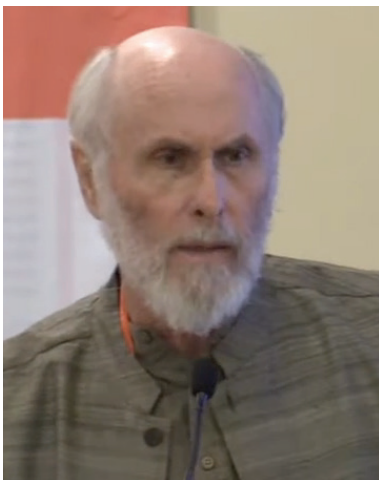
Talking about education and Hindu Dharma, Shri Rajiv Malhotra said that either it can be education about Hindu Dharma or use Hindu Dharma as a lens to look at education. He said we should challenge Western universalism with Vedic universalism. While discussing research and education, he said wherever the research is done, it's based on a certain view and agenda. He believes our researchers on Hindu Dharma are not doing it with the professionalism and depth that the West does. We are limiting ourselves to the pedagogy and methodology established by the West. While discussing the colonization of Hindu education, he said there is a clash of metaphysical assumptions and because of this, the Western worldview takes the advantage and claims that they are universal. Western society studies us and they adopt and reject things according to their liking. He said that one has to be a warrior in such a Kurukshetra and fight against all these negative narratives and impositions of views by other civilizations.

Dr Koenraad Elst

Indologist and Writer, Belgium

Implications of misportrayal of Hindus on Bharat's policies and destiny

Dr Koenraad Elst said that because of colonization we Hindus have adopted ideas from other civilizations. Westernization has spread far and wide, for example, the assumption that reservation for minorities presupposes majority guilt. With some pointed examples, Dr. Elst argued that Bharat is under attack and is becoming a puppet in the hands of other civilizations. He also said that there has been a conspiracy against the Hindu Dharma involving both Western and Bharatiya forces. Missionaries, Mullahs, and Marxists attack Hindu Dharma in all fronts. The attacks on Bharatiya unity mostly emanate from Bharat or diaspora Bharatiyas. They plant false stories and even call Bharat a 'rape country'. Through facts and figures, Dr Elst said South Africa, Sweden and US consistently have high rates of rape and also the Muslim world, where rape is highly underreported. He said Yoga is claimed to be non-Hindu in the USA. He said the yoga teachers should follow traditional methods of teaching yoga in Bharat. He said he feared that Bharat is losing its essence but fortunately, there are organisations such as WHC that keep everyone together.



Shri Vamadeva Shastri (David Frawley) (Padma Bhushan)

American Institute of Vedic Studies, USA

Exposing Academic biases against Hindus through well-researched popular literature

Shri David Frawley said Bharat is the biggest Vedic Dharmic civilization and is the essential civilization for all humanity. The West still ignores it and considers it to be just Indology. In reality, Bharat has been the dominant civilization in the world spiritually and culturally. The West owes a lot to Bharat. Dr. Frawley drew similarities between the European culture and Bharatiya civilization. He said Hindus are the only community united even today. Even after 5000 years, the risshi-yogi tradition has been preserved and in fact, the tradition is awakening. He said that one can't claim to be a Bharatiya intellectual if one doesn't know even the basics of Vedanta. We need a transformation in the mind of Bharatiyas to awaken ancient traditions. Bharat has developed and preserved the ultimate science of consciousness that nobody can deny. It is now necessary to preserve the essence of the Bharatiya social systems, educational knowledge, gurukulam, and both the hard and soft power. We all need to spread the vision of Bharat, eternal Hindu Dharma, the universality of this civilization, and its value to the entire world.

SESSION 6: PERSPECTIVES FROM ACROSS THE WORLD

Chairperson:

Dr Sachin Nandha

Coordinator, Vichaar Manthan, UK

Introductory Remarks

Dr Sachin Nandha shared that this session would give a perspective on what is happening across the world in relation to education and the institutions that deliver this education. He then introduced the speakers to the audience.



Dr R Nagaswamy (Padma Bhushan)

Historian and Archaeologist, Bharat

The consequences of ignoring Bharatiya jurisprudence - principles and practices

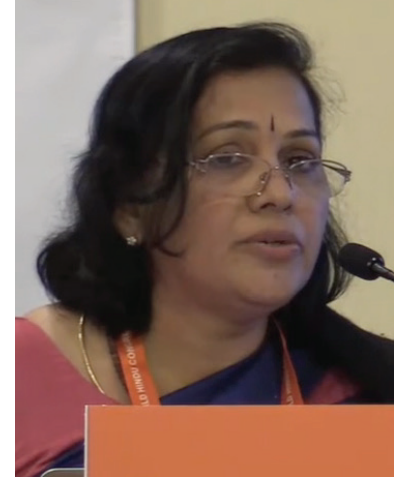
Dr R Nagaswamy said that the Bharatiya jurisprudence realized power from the Hindu Scripture. In spite of the best man drafting the Constitution, many things in the Constitution need to be rectified. Our Constitution is mostly based on the Western idea with very little of Bharatiyata in it. A true Bharatiya's lifestyle can be defined in two words, Dharma and Samadarshana. These words are found in all the scriptures and the literature of Bharat but not in our Constitution. He said that 'Manu' was the first one to form his Dharmashastra which was adopted and used by almost all kings. It spread not just in Bharat but in almost the entire southeast Asia. Manu mentioned that Dharma is about equality. Shri Nagaswamy said only good people should be elected to Parliament, and they should give a chance to the young educated generation after a maximum of three terms. He said that secularism today is being used as 'anti-Hindu Dharma'. He suggested that it is necessary that we have a separate Bharatiya judiciary and a new Constitution to make a new law of the land and not an imported one.

Dr Rupa Saminathan

Educationist, Malaysia

Portrayal of Hindu Dharma and culture in Malaysian schools

Dr Rupa Saminathan started with the history of Hindu Dharma in Malaysia. After colonization by Islam in the 13th century and then British in the 19th century, the struggles of Hindus in Malaysia began. Now, Hindu Dharma is a minority religion in the country. The children are taught about the Hindu culture and traditions to make them aware of the richness it carries. Sadly, forced religious conversions are rampant in Malaysia. To prevent this, Hindu Dharma classes have started in schools and temples throughout the country. Children participate in competitions, religious teachers' training, and camps. Hindu Dharmic education is given through an informal system because Malaysian policy does not allow it as a compulsory subject in the schools unlike Islamic studies. She shared the challenges in teaching Hindu culture education in schools: government policies, limited funding, lack of virtual learning option, etc. She invited participation of global Hindu organisations to collaborate and provide their support in spreading Hindu Dharma and its culture in Malaysia.



Prof Venkat Dhulipala

University of North Carolina

Wilmington, USA

Understanding the Partition: Pakistan as a new Medina

Prof Venkat Dhulipala said Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan's statement that he wanted to turn Pakistan into a Medina has been lamented by some critics. Since Partition, there has been an enormous amount of discussion at how negotiation between the top leadership of Congress, Muslim League and the British Government collapsed leading to Partition. Mr Jinnah was used as a bargaining counter to gain parity for Muslims in undivided Bharat and the Congress forced formation of Pakistan which he never wanted. It is argued that Pakistan

didn't make a sense on the ground and people's lives were uprooted as a result of hasty decisions taken at the top which led to this catastrophe. He said that in his book he has argued that the idea of Pakistan was popularly imagined, and well-thought of. The idea was to make a state that would be the protector of the global community of Muslims. Prof Dhulipala said that when the talks of Partition were underway, nationalist Muslims were questioning it and the Muslim League was sanctioning them.





MISSION STATEMENT

The aim of the Hindu Media Forum is to keep the world informed through honest reporting as well as unbiased analysis of the events taking place around the globe. To accomplish this goal, Hindu Media Forum will mobilize elements in the traditional as well as the emerging forms of media to come together on one platform.

INTRODUCTION

A satirical quote from the James Bond movie 'Tomorrow Never Dies' sets the tone of the new world order. In the movie, the power hungry villain Elliot Carver, who is a media mogul bent upon world domination, says "Caesar had his legions, Napoleon had his armies, I have my divisions: TV, news, magazines. And by midnight tonight, I'll have reached and influenced more people than anybody in the history of this planet, save God himself." Carver goes on to add, "Words are the new weapons, satellites are the new artillery." While meant as a satire, these lines have increasingly proven to be true since the power of the media is rapidly replacing military power as the most potent force on the global stage.

It is imperative that Hindu society understands this changing dynamic, and adapts itself accordingly to this new reality. It is already common wisdom that "He who controls the media, controls the mind of the people". An increasing number of people now believe that "He who controls information controls the world". This is supported by a careful analysis of the most powerful countries which reveals that in addition to their existing strengths, these countries have an almost unchallenged hold of the global media as well as the flow of information around the world.

While the Hindu community has established itself in many parts of the media, media institutions remain out of reach of many Hindus. In particular, important developments and issues concerning the Hindu society get neither proper coverage nor a just representation. This lack of coverage combined with the very small presence of voices advocating the interests of the Hindu community has led to the entrenchment of attitudes and mindsets that are at very least unsympathetic to Hindu interests, if not downright hostile. The active propagation of this adversarial mindset continues to have a detrimental impact on the Hindu society in several ways. The first way is that Hindus themselves act adverse to their own interests based upon the information presented by a compromised media. The second aspect is that forces hostile to Hindu society will gain in strength and credibility even within Hindu society, which will allow for the subversion of the Hindu community, leading to its decay and downfall.

In view of these alarming developments, the Hindu Media Forum will devise strategies to encourage those advocating the interests of Hindu society to establish them in the existing media framework besides penetrating the entrenched media institutions. The Hindu Media Forum will provide an avenue for established media personalities and others experienced in the dissemination of information to share their expertise and experience with aspiring journalists, reporters, filmmakers, and people who desire to work in all aspects of the media.

Shri Sushil Pandit

Coordinator

Hindu Media Conference, WHC 2018, Chicago

Introductory Remarks

Shri Sushil Pandit provided an overview of the conference sessions. He outlined that the first session would cover the challenges faced in presenting the Hindu point of view in news media. Other sessions would talk about entertainment media, which impacts our perception of the world and the values we cherish, and social media which is today challenging mainstream media, even dictating the agenda. Changing media consumption habits due to changing technology, and the commerce of media which determines success or failure of media initiatives would have dedicated sessions as well.



SESSION 1 - NEWS MEDIA AND THE HINDU PERSPECTIVE

Chairperson:

Shri R Jagannathan

Editorial Director, Swarajya, Bharat

Introductory Remarks

Shri Jagannathan said that social media has democratized communication in Bharat and there has been a profusion of new distinct voices, especially Dharmic ones, in the last five years. Hindu voices that were earlier banned in mainstream media (MSM) have found prominence on social media. The Lutyens' ecosystem and its narrative have been challenged and now MSM is also investing in social and digital media. He said that in journalism if stories are told in the wrong way, they become dangerous – the problem is not just fake news but also fake narratives being built up. Most Dharmic media publishers are smaller in scale and size; the MSM stronghold has been broken but Dharmic media faces challenges on two fronts: the government and Lutyens' media. As this polarization will continue for a while, counter-narratives are required, he added. Social media platforms owned by global players will try to crush Dharmic voices. Dharmic media must go digital in regional languages as it is English language media that forms misleading narratives. Future is in regional language media, he concluded.



Shri Hitesh Shankar

Editor, Panchjanya Weekly, Bharat

Competing with regional media and readership

Shri Hitesh Shankar said that regional language media extends beyond Hindi media. The 'Breaking India' brigade, which is still powerful in mainstream media (MSM), uses the term 'regional' to run their narrative and keep the nation divided. They pitch Hindi versus other regional languages and Hindu versus other identities of Bharat. In Bharat, newspaper readership and a number of TV news channels have both risen. The regional language media is way ahead of English language media. However, this regional language media lacks proper infrastructure and its revenue is not at par with English language media, so employees are poorly paid. English language media is mostly biased and paints a crime story as against a particular caste, community, or minority. It guides readers to frame a wrong view. The Hindutva perspective of news is based on inclusion instead of exclusion as Hindutva treats each religion with the same degree of respect, he said. It not only treats all humans as equal but promotes the protection of our natural environment as well.

Shri M Iyer

Founder PGurus online platform, USA

Serving NRI community with independent thoughts and knowledge

Shri Iyer described the journey behind PGurus.com. As he noticed events unfolding before the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, he realized how Narendra Modi was prevented from addressing meetings at certain places. He firmly believes that everybody should be given a chance to represent themselves, whether we agree with them or not. Then in 2015, using his technical acumen and talent of knowing multiple Bharatiya languages, he started PGurus. Through PGurus, he mainly focuses on two areas: corruption and Hindutva. PGurus was one of the first websites that started highlighting the asymmetric and biased coverage in Bharatiya MSM.



Shri Francois Gautier

Editor-in-chief of Paris based La Nouvelle Revue de l'Inde, Bharat

Role of journalists to defend/promote Hindu thoughts in MSM

Being in Bharat and among those few western journalists who love Hindu culture, Francois Gautier said that the biggest enemies of Hindus are not people from other faiths, but Hindus themselves. Especially when Modi Ji has been in power, the western media has managed to spread hatred against Hindus because Hindus don't stand up for their own people. As a Hindu one should figure out what can one do to defend Hindus, to fight for them. Hindus today excel everywhere but lack unity. Muslims run their propaganda in media through platforms like Al-Jazeera, but why do Hindus fall behind when they have so much money and brains? Hindus should come up with a channel that propagates the Hindu point of view, he advocated. Despite having such power, money, education, and numbers, why do Hindus succumb to the pressure of a few 100 people from other communities? They should take control of MSM, as social media is not enough.

Shri Prafulla Ketkar

Editor, Organiser weekly, Bharat

Making a case with a broader audience**- What is fake and what is reality?**

Shri Prafulla Ketkar said the real challenge is that the moment a Hindu gets educated in Bharat, he gets more de-Hinduized. We call ourselves Hindu but we actually fail to see things from a Hindu point of view and this is the reason we get carried away by wrong narratives like 'intolerance rising'. The narratives are built in English language media and they spread globally. Despite regional language media thriving, it has little impact on generating narratives. We easily get carried away in name of caste, regionalism, etc. But have we ever worked on understanding how missionaries and Maoists are working together in Bastar, and what are the fault lines they are trying to create and widen? Wrong narratives like 'Being Hindu means being regressive' need to be broken. Hindu means being cool, being open to everything, and still believing in something fundamental. This needs to be re-narrativized and re-built and all media tools need to be used for the same. This is the only way we can change fake narratives against Hindus.



SESSION 2 - TECHNOLOGY AND FUTURE TRENDS

Chairperson:

Shri Amit Khanna

Former President of Reliance Entertainment Network, Bharat

Introductory Remarks

Shri Amit Khanna said that we are living in a networked society and are interconnected with each other across the world. In the last decade, there has been exponential progress in technology. He believes technology moves in geometric progression. The use of technology, be it in form of mobile connections, internet, etc. has increased exponentially in Bharat. Unlike in other countries, in Bharat, people accessing data which includes information, news, and other forms of media on mobile phones has increased exponentially in the last 3-4 years, and that has altered the entire mindscape.



Shri Akshay Dileep Javadekar

Filmmaker, USA

Film and movie-making opportunities in the streaming world

Shri Akshay Javadekar began by sharing the use of newer technology and media markets in the exhibition and distribution of his latest feature film via an online streaming platform. As a small-time filmmaker, he considers the number of views his movie got as astonishing. Decentralization of services and their commodification has made it possible; technology and social media facilitate such decentralization. He said that the revolution in the internet industry has already begun. As a filmmaker, he believes that streaming technology gave him control of his own destiny, similar to the 'Aham Brahmasmi' principle of Hindu Dharma. Another aspect is 'Tat Tvam Asi', that is, nothing stands between him and the filmmaking. If we make better use of this available technology, we can reach way ahead.

Smt Prerna Lau Sian

CEO, Vaahan Political Magazine, UK

Current status and future trends in the Print media

Smt Prerna said that UK mainstream media's hateful bias in reporting about Hindu Dharma and PM Modi made her quit her job and start her own political magazine, where she tries to fight against such narratives.

She showed screenshots of various international newspaper reports that spread hatred towards Hindu Dharma and people like PM Modi, CM Yogi Adityanath, and Baba Ramdev. However, print media does not hold as much power as before, ever since the advent of digital media. Even the ad revenue for print media has declined tremendously as digital media has far more reach.

With social media, that reach has become even wider and quicker. Sadly, sometimes fake news also gets spread through social media. Print media can be considered a safer and more reliable medium of news as once a story has been printed it cannot be removed, unlike a social media post that can be deleted anytime.

**Shri Aadit Kapadia**

Co-Founder, MyIndMakers, USA

Community outreach via online media and podcasting

Shri Aadit Kapadia said that the advent of online media has spearheaded the changing of narratives and addressing of core issues. Amidst the Bharatiya community spread across the globe, there is a new group of people that have risen together to provide a platform for their side of the narrative to be presented. It started with social media busting a few myths about Bharat but has galvanized after online media took center stage. This has resulted in more portals and outlets that present Bharat positively and differently from the narratives presented earlier. More people have access to online content and online portals help to bridge

the gap between countries. Even if print media doesn't cover such voices, online portals amplify them. He added that podcast is another medium that has revolutionized digital media. The podcast platform has facilitated a large number of people to discuss their views without being constrained by the frameworks imposed by news channels that run TV debates. Podcasts are not driven by TRPs or ratings, but by beliefs and ideals.

Smt Dhanashree Ramchandran

Founder and CEO

Nous Labs, USA, and Adriaan Van Swieten

Developing a community-focused media outlet

Smt. Dhanashree Ramchandran said that media, to her, appears as an invisible demon that cannot be touched as it is funded so well. Even if we know their lies, we cannot do much about it. With media narratives going against Hindus and affecting the mindsets of Hindus and non-Hindus across the world, a solution needs to be found to address this problem. One solution can be, be the first and loudest to report, so as to be heard. We need to generate authentic content. She and Adriaan Van Swieten have created an online 'Hindu Media Bureau' at hindumediabureau.org as a pooling platform for Hindus who want to fight the negative narratives. Through this portal, they will also be looking out for bad online translations of Hindu literature and help authors correct them, and if they don't, they will take legal action against such people.



SESSION 3: SOCIAL MEDIA - RIDING THIS WAVE WITH A HINDU AGENDA

Chairperson:

Shri Avatans Kumar

PR & IT Consultant, USA

Introductory Remarks

Shri Avatans Kumar remembered and acknowledged the professors and teachers from whom he learned in life. He said that it is important to protect Dharma on social media with both, 'Shastra' (weapon) and 'Shaastra' (knowledge). Our 'Shastra' is countering fake narratives that have been built up against Hindu Dharma, and 'Shaastra' is spreading our Dharmic knowledge and educating people about our perspective.



Smt Sunanda Vashisht

Writer and columnist, USA

Hindu Dharma, Bharat, Geo-Politics and social media

Smt Sunanda Vashisht compared WHC 2018 to Kumbh Mela, as one of the largest gatherings of Hindus that she has attended. Having grown up in J&K, where Hindus are in minority, she remembered how she hid her Hindu identity to save herself from troublemakers. She once narrated her personal childhood experience about the Kashmiri Hindu exodus, during a small prayer meeting held for Amarnath Yatra pilgrims killed in J&K. Due to social media, that personal story was recorded and heard by Hindu audiences around the world. She said that mainstream media is not mainstream, but a corrupt/big/Lutyens'

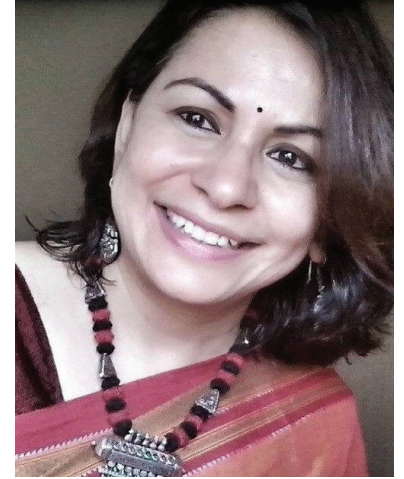
media, as it does not carry any mainstream opinion. It is social media that is democratic media. She realized the power of social media when the 2012 scandal of a political leader went viral. Social media is also used to create awareness; its success can be seen in the "India Pride Project" which aims to bring stolen murtis back to Bharat. It is because of social media that Kashmiri Pandits' plight is still discussed, and credit also goes to those who created articles and internet pages even before the popularity of social media.

Smt Shefali Vaidya

Author and blogger, Bharat

Dealing with trolls and fake news while standing out for the cause

Smt Shefali Vaidya said that the plight of Kashmiri Hindus is similar to what Hindus in Goa suffered in the 16th century during the Goa inquisition when they too were faced with the options: to leave, convert, or get killed. She noted how her talk on the Goa inquisition went viral due to the power of social media, and the reactions she got from people who were unaware of that incident. Social media is the voice of the dispossessed, which MSM fails to be. She spoke about her journey from being a housewife to 'troll', to right-wing 'troll', to right-wing columnist, to the independent writer - the adjectives and labels used by big media when they refer to her. Social media is so quick that if someone posts a lie within minutes it can be caught and countered with facts. On the other hand, MSM hides the story that doesn't suit their narrative.



Shri Vinay Kumar Singhal

Co-Founder and CEO, WittyFeed, Bharat

Changing the narrative of Hindus in the media: the role of media ownership

Shri Vinay Singhal talked about his journey as an IT student-turned-SM enthusiast to starting his global media company from Bharat, WittyFeed. He said that due to centuries of suppression, we Bharatiyas have undermined ourselves and our capabilities. He said Hindu Dharma is like an open-source platform from where other religions have created their own products. We just need to tell the world about this open-source platform, and ownership of Hindus in media should increase to show more Hindu stories.

Smt Neha Srivastava

Founder, Shaktitva Project

Tweeting for a cause

Smt Neha Srivastava said that she comes from a typical Bharatiya middle-class family where parents are strict with their children because they want them to achieve something and live a better life than they did. Anti-Hindu narratives run by media and some feminists after the Nirbhaya incident did not match with her beliefs, due to which she left her mildly left-liberal feminist outlook. These things happened because we Hindus did not take up control of the narrative and left loopholes for leftists to run their agenda. Social media played a major role in spreading the Hindu point of view like in the Sabarimala issue, thus it is a must for Hindus to make good use of social media.



SESSION 4 - COMMERCE OF MEDIA - OPPRTUNITIES FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Chairperson:

Shri Suresh Chavhanke

Editor-in-Chief, Sudarshan News, Bharat

Introductory Remarks

Shri Suresh Chavhanke said he doesn't consider media a business but a mission on a war footing, as the 'Breaking Bharat' forces are spending millions to run their propaganda on media. But it is difficult for a pro-Hindutva media organisation to earn a profit. He gave the example of his own news channel, in which he invests the profits of his other business ventures. Sharing his personal experiences of running Sudarshan News, he said it is not easy to do such media work as one has to be ready to report against the wrongdoings of any institution, including the judiciary.



Shri Kartikeya Sharma

Founder & Promoter of iTV Network, Bharat

Opportunities in television media

Shri Kartikeya Sharmas said that the role of media in connecting Bharat and Bharatiya diaspora in foreign countries has changed over time. Earlier it was print media, and in recent times it is electronic media that has played a far better role in maintaining this connection. Digital space/social media is soon going to replace electronic media as the link between Bharat and Bharatiya diaspora, to exchange information and express views. It is important for Bharatiyas to have certain control over global media to create a good international image of Bharat, just like Bharatiya professionals are creating a good image

of Bharat overseas. It is the only way to showcase the idea of Bharat on a global level, and Bharatiya media entrepreneurs must come forward for the same, he added.

Shri Rahul Kumar Tewary

Director, Swastik Productions, Bharat

Social awareness by bringing history to life

Shri Rahul Kumar Tewary began by showing a short video about the various TV shows created by Swastik Productions based on Hindu history such as Mahabharat, Mahakali, Suryaputra Karna, Porus, etc. He shared the success story of the TV show 'Mahabharat' – the hard work that went into it, and how it was appreciated with high ratings and viewership. With each TV show produced by his production house, they try to spread awareness and messages central to Hindu civilization. As distributors, they also take these shows to other countries by dubbing them in local languages.



Shri Prashant Shah

Founder Editor, India Tribune, USA

Challenges and opportunities for ethnic media in the US

Shri Prashant Shah came to USA to study engineering but ended up running a media outlet. When he decided to run a newspaper, there were only two Bharatiya newspapers in USA, and this inspired him to open up his own venture. He said that at that time, he didn't even have fluency in writing English. With the advent of electronic media, newspapers suffered a loss and thus most media houses changed their focus from print to electronic media. The advent of social media again changed the media scenario. The current generation doesn't care about print media, so for it to survive, print media needs to focus on better editorial content and creating an attractive online version.



SESSION 5 - ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA AND REPRESENTATION OF HINDU VALUES

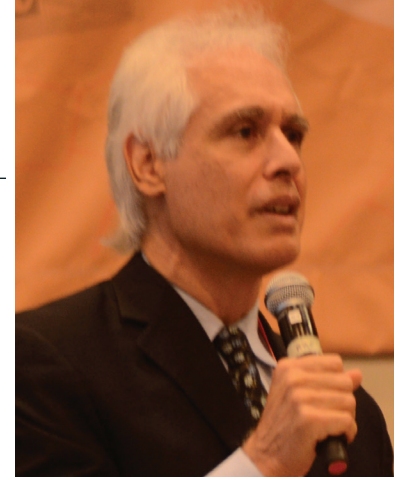
Chairperson:

Shri David B. Cohen

Attorney and columnist, USA

Introductory Remarks

Shri David Cohen started by acknowledging his wife, Radha Bhardwaj, an award-winning filmmaker, and because of his influence he became a strong supporter of Bharat and Hindus. Being proud of her culture, she was tired of the negative portrayal of Hindus in Western popular culture and, sadly, also in Bharatiya popular culture. He raised a valid question of who makes the rules of political correctness and why are they never used to protect Hindus? Bharat's popular culture is also affected by this, as it is mostly controlled by non-Bharatiyas and Bharatiya elites whose minds are still colonized. He shed light on the upcoming movie 'Space MOMs' made by Radha based on the life of women scientists of ISRO who were engaged in Bharat's Mars Orbiter Mission.



Shri Madhur Bhandarkar (Padma Shri)

Film director and scriptwriter, Bharat

Media represents the society or vice versa?

Director of films like 'Chandni Bar', 'Satta', 'Page 3', 'Corporate', 'Fashion', 'Heroine', and 'Indu Sarkar', Shri Madhur Bhandarkar said he tries to portray the plight of women in different walks of life and also shows the valour of women in today's times. Cinema is a popular medium in Bharat. With Bharatiya movies like 'Dangal' and 'Baahubali' doing good business in China, it now offers a great opportunity for non-Bharatiyas to get a glimpse of Bharatiya culture. Stories of Mahabharat and Ramayana have largely influenced cinema in Bharat, he opined. In fact, TV serials based on Mahabharat and

Ramayana were very popular in Bharat as well as across the world. He said that awareness about Hindu Dharma has risen on the global stage in recent times.

Shri Amit Khanna

Film Maker

Former President of Reliance Entertainment Network, Bharat

Presentation of Hindu values in movies and TV serials

Shri Amit Khanna said that the very structure of Bharatiya cinema is based on Hindu culture, its symbols, and norms. The first Bharatiya movie which was directed by Dadasaheb Phalke was 'Raja Harishchandra', and most movies made in the first 20 years of Bharatiya cinema were based on Hindu epics and texts. After these epics came in the form of TV serials, the number of movies made on them reduced. The reason why popular cinema in recent times often does not reflect these core values is that film makers did not customize and adapt to the changing demography of cinema goers. Since the narrative is now controlled by a certain section of people, to counter that, we need to create an alternative story that is compelling enough. He said the concept of 'right and 'left is outdated. It is now the concept of 'right' and 'wrong', and we are 'right', he asserted. We just need an attitudinal change loaded with self-confidence of being a Hindu.



Shri Vivek Agnihotri

Film Director and Producer, Bharat

Role of entertainment media while searching for social realities

Shri Vivek Agnihotri said he considers himself a storyteller instead of a filmmaker, one who makes what he sees. Today, Hindu civilization is standing at such a point from where we can either show the light to the world or we can get lost in mediocrity. He explained his theory of evaluating the socio-political evolution of modern society by observing the villains of their films, using the examples of popular Hindi movies, right from the pre-independence era to the present one. The movies of current years have systematically taken the common man out of the stories, unlike the movies from earlier decades. They no

longer represent Bharat or the common Bharatiya society. He said the time has come to correct the three most popular misrepresentations about Hindu society, which are intolerance, casteism, and disempowered women. We have to fight for our narratives and take pride in our great civilization, he stated. We come with great values which the world needs. He also shared his idea about spending the next few years educating people about the 'History of Hindu Civilization' through popular social mediums.

SESSION 6: HINDU IDENTITY IN THE ERA OF MULTICULTURALISM AND GLOBALISATION

Chairperson:

Prof Makarand Paranjape

Director, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla, Bharat

Introductory Remarks

Prof Makarand Paranjape began the session by lauding the organizers of WHC 2018 for their untiring enthusiasm and unprecedented arrangements throughout the event. He said the question of Hindu identity in the era of multiculturalism and globalization is of profound importance. We are a philosophical civilization that is looking for an answer to the perennial question of 'who am I?' Prof Paranjape said we need to address the questions like what it means to be a Hindu, and what are the threats to our identity.



Shri Parag Tope

Author, USA

Decapitalizing history: An alternative look back at a living civilization

Shri Parag Tope said that there is a difference between how Hindus look at history, and the way history is taught. Unlike other civilizations of the world, what is unique about Bharatiya civilization is the continuity of the tales of our history - of the places, people, and the stories that are told across generations. Everywhere else in the world, when a new civilization came, it erased the memories of the previous one. Western history is monochromatic history while Hindu history is prismatic as Hindu civilization is a living civilization, it has not perished. In our history, learning lessons is more important than remembering names.

Shri Hari Kiran Vadlamani

Founder, Advaita Academy

Indic Academy, Creative India

Integrating Hindu ethos in the Global economy

Shri Hari Kiran Vadlamani said that the West only recently discovered the impact and benefits of Yoga, Pranayama, mantra, and meditation. Everybody consumes this but what is lacking is the acknowledgment of its source i.e., Hindu Dharma, and devotion i.e., Bhakti. Bhakti is an integral part of all the benefits that yoga and meditation give. Millennials are looking for authentic experiences and not superficial ones; the trend among them is that they need cultural experiences. This globe wants spiritual gurus and life coaches. Perhaps in our lifetime, we can make 1 billion people realize their Hindu DNA and that they are already consuming Hindu knowledge and tradition, even if unknowingly. The popular concepts across the globe such as authenticity, non-dualism, yoga, meditation, mindfulness, sustainable living, etc., are already a part of our Hindu Dharma, but the issue is that the link has been broken. This has led to a distortion of our identity. We need to have a NASSCOM-like structure where all global cultural entrepreneurs can come on one platform. We need to come up with such plans and solutions to integrate the Hindu thoughts with the global economy, he added.

**Shri Amish Tripathi**

Author, Bharat

Modern style for ancient stories and youth awareness

Shri Amish Tripathi said that present-day Bharatiyas have been fed the lie that we were a bunch of monkeys without any education system until the British came and 'civilized us. Whereas the truth is that we already had a sound education system before it was destroyed by the British. He said there is a class of Bharatiyas who do not believe in any fact until it has a British stamp. We had standard texts for all subjects - Ramayana and Mahabharata were common standard texts and they were not taught just as religious texts. Every part and region of the Bharatiya subcontinent has been woven in these two epics, as one way to look at our culture is through shared stories that bind the country together. That is why they were the foundational texts. Another reason could be that learning philosophy is easier through fun, interesting stories than these epic texts already are. To keep a culture alive, it is important that the youth carry it forward, and our culture has done that very well for ages. It is now incumbent upon us to keep our culture alive with certain moderation on the outer covering but keeping the soul alive so that the coming generations can carry it forward.

Shri Francois Gautier

Editor-in-Chief, Paris-based La Nouvelle Revue de l'Inde, Bharat

**Standing out as an independent voice
documenting the historical facts**

Shri Francois Gautier began by sharing his story of how, as a young boy, he came to Bharat on a group road trip from Paris to Pondicherry. In Pondicherry, he stayed at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram full of Hindus, where he interacted with them and got very impressed with Hindu culture and ethos. As a journalist, he covered various stories across Bharat; one of them was of the Kashmiri Pandit exodus that touched him very much. Despite suffering so much, Hindus kept true to their Dharma and culture, which impressed him. But he also expressed his disappointment with present-day Hindus that they do not fight for themselves and their great culture. Shri Gautier considers Nehru as the greatest tragedy for Hindus, as he copied all systems of governance and education from the British and clumped them onto Bharat without adapting them to Bharatiya society which is different from the West. Nehru created a generation of historians who distorted Hindu history, intellectuals who looked down upon Hindus, and ordinary Hindus who forgot that they are Hindus. Shri Gautier said that Hindus today are under attack from all sides and yet they are not aware of it. If the Hindu culture dies, the world dies. He also expressed his fear about the radicalization of Islam and the increase in conversion activities by Christians in Bharat.







WORLD HINDU DEMOCRATIC FORUM

Responsible Democracy For All



MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to support democratic trends and institutions that will lead to the practice of responsible democracy. The World Hindu Democratic Forum builds support for democratic practices by tapping into the democratic propensities of the world's billion strong Hindu population and by encouraging Hindu populations around the world to assume a greater role in the political process.

INTRODUCTION

Hindu society has a long and glorious tradition of engaging in democratic institutions and traditions, particularly when the Hindu community was free of foreign domination. Hindu society is inherently an egalitarian society, and thus it has an inherent democratic disposition. Wherever Hindus are in a majority, democracy practices are on the whole thriving. The country of Bharat, where Hindus comprise a large majority of the population, has consistently held (with one notable interruption) the title of the "World's Largest Democracy" since gaining its Independence in 1947. Another shining example of a Hindu majority country where democracy has been firmly established and flourishing is the country of Mauritius. Wherever Hindus comprise a large part of the population, democratic tendencies are strengthened due to the support from the local Hindu population. In addition, Hindu populations have been at the forefront of strengthening democracy by encouraging pluralism as well as safeguarding

human rights of all citizens. Additional examples of democracies being strengthened by the efforts of Hindus are the countries of Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago and Guyana. Outside Bharat, wherever Hindus comprise a significant section of the population, they have always fought for the values of freedom, liberty and democracy unitedly with the non-Hindu population of the country. Hindus have had a long history of fighting against totalitarian and dictatorial regimes. From the various corners of the globe ranging from Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Fiji, Mauritius, South Africa, Trinidad & Tobago,

Guyana, Suriname, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, Hindus have worked in tandem with the local non-Hindu population to break the chains of dictatorship and colonialism, and replaced it with a democratic and pluralistic polity.

In many countries, however, where Hindus comprise a significant section of the population and also have a rich history of active contribution to societal welfare as well as living in peaceful co-existence with non-Hindu neighbours, their representation in the political arena is frequently far too small. Now, the Hindu society has established itself firmly in over 40 countries. In many countries, Hindus have produced Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers, Governors and Premiers, Parliamentarians, Diplomats, important government officials, etc. The participation of Hindus in the political process is slowly growing, but so far there has been no proper forum to bring Hindus from different parts of the world together to share their knowledge, expertise, and experience in politics. The World Hindu Democratic Forum has been especially established for the purpose of providing a global platform for Hindus presently involved in the political process. It aims to bring them under one roof and deliberate on political issues of importance to the global Hindu society as well as to the local Hindu populations. In addition, the World Hindu Democratic Forum aims to harness established and experienced members of the political profession to encourage aspiring young Hindus to become part of the political process, as well as share with them their experience and expertise.

Shri Ashwin Adhin

Coordinator, Hindu Political Conference
WHC 2018, Chicago

Introductory Remarks

Shri Ashwin Adhin gave introductory remarks on the theme of 'Responsible Democracy for All'. He said that while the majority desires a democratic regime over other forms, some people feel that democracy is not working satisfactorily mainly due to differences in history, culture, and economic development. He raised three facts for the betterment of democracy: First, history and research tell us that democracy can have resilience, and it has the ability to renew itself to maintain the core values of freedom; Second, even in a democracy, the acknowledgment of constraint or force stays; and Third, that democracy by itself is a social construct. It ultimately depends on our conscience and principles of Dharma, not just limited to religious principles but to the entire world to elevate it to its godliness. He emphasized that by giving pre-dominance to Dharma above any other construct of governance, we will be able to achieve happiness, protection, and welfare for all. The fusion of governance and guiding principles of Dharma, and leaders acting accordingly can help in making democracy a responsible one for all.



SESSION 1: REASSERTING A STRONG HINDU POLITICAL VOICE IN GIRMIT COUNTRIES

Chairperson:

Shri Jagdishwar Goburdhun

Mauritius High Commissioner to Bharat

Introductory Remarks

Shri Goburdhun took pride in delivering the speech in Hindi, being a Bhartiya and a Hindu. He requested everyone to be proud of their identity. He said that Bharat and Hindu Dharma are not just for Bharat but for the entire world. He pointed out that modernization is rapidly growing, but in the words of Shri Rabindranath Tagore 'True modernization is the freedom of mind, thought, and action'. Lastly, he talked about one simple word, one relationship that everyone forgets: 'mother'. He says that we Bhartiya and Hindus are blessed to have six mothers. First, who gives us birth and introduces us to this world. Second, the Goddess of earth. Unfortunately, we have disrespected this mother by growing cancerous food in it. Third, Cow. Fourth, our mother tongue. It is our duty to preserve and protect our mother tongue. Fifth is Bharat Mata and the Sixth is our river, Ganga. It is our responsibility to protect and preserve it.

**Shri Ravindra Dev**

Former MP and Columnist

Guyana Challenges faced in building a united political front between Caribbean Hindus and the Hindu Diaspora at large

Shri Ravindra Dev mentioned that challenges can be sought as opportunities to grow and bring change. He said that the first thing we need to confront is the mixing of politics with religion, which shouldn't happen. We follow Hindu Dharma which is not a religion. He specifically mentioned Caribbean Bhartiyas (Hindus) who are against their own men and believe that all of us are universal beings. He mentioned Pandit Deendyal Upadhyay's words that 'Dharma, Artha, Kaama, and Moksha are to be given due emphasis at every level of society but with the eternal guidelines of Dharma'. He also pointed out that though we talk big about 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam', unfortunately, we are still divided. Lastly, he talked about the Hindu diaspora. Every generation living and migrating to different countries of the world is a wave from Bharat.

Smt Santosh Kalyan

Member National Assembly, South Africa

Challenges faced by Hindu politicians in post-apartheid South Africa

Smt Santosh Kalyan said that South Africa has the largest Bhartiya population outside Bharat when compared to other countries, but this population is small enough to be ignored and not acknowledged but big enough to feel the pain. Being one of the Bhartiya delegates in a Parliament of 54 African countries is sometimes battling for identity, but she proudly continues doing that. In the past, people from Bharat who migrated to Africa collectively struggled to attain respect and identity in the country. Today too, they are struggling but in a lesser quantum. The challenge that we Hindus face is that we don't get enough funding from the government for our new projects. The greater initiative needs to come from the Hindu community and dependency on the Bhartiya high commissioner's office has to be reduced.



Shri Chandresh Sharma

Former MP/Cabinet Minister, Trinidad & Tobago

Complexities of religious dynamics in Caribbean politics

The first thing Shri Chandresh Sharma mentioned was the responsibility of self. Hindu Dharma at its very best says 'Develop Self to Develop Nations'. He shared how in 1990 he formalized a group called 'Hindu Institution of Trinidad and Tobago', went into different communities, and shared Dharma. He said that policymakers around the world refer to Hindu texts because they contain answers to all the questions. He shared how he won elections in Trinidad and Tobago by following Dharma. He said, "Dharma is engaging - an exchange of ideas sharing and listening". Complexities are opportunities to re-

visit and re-examine and extract golden values from them. He pointed out that every Caribbean community has a Hindu presence. Dharma that we are following worships the flowers, water, and earth and all these resources are major concerns of the policymakers around the world. He said that we already know the value of these resources because our Dharma teaches us this. Dharma helps reduce challenges and complexities.

SESSION 2: EXPANDING AND CULTIVATING POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN WESTERN DEMOCRACIES

Chairperson:

Smt Swati Dandekar

Former Iowa State Legislator; USA

Introductory Remarks

Smt Swati Dandekar shared her experience with her great grandfather who had once advised her to respect others and their religion and ask for the same in the return. When she came to the USA, she never left her karma of 'Seva' that led to her entry into politics. She was a Hindu minority, representing a Christian majority in the Iowa House. She was one of those who made it possible for the Iowa Senate to open with Hindu prayers. She is of the view that we must be proud of our heritage and not to run away from it. At the same time, we don't have to be snobs about our heritage.



Shri Adi Sathi

Director of Asian Pacific American Engagement, Republican National Committee.

Participating in the political process to safeguard Hindu interests

Shri Adi Sathi shared his political journey. He had started his career during his university days by contesting elections at the University of Michigan. His first breakthrough came in politics when he was elected as the Vice-Chair of the Republican Party of Michigan, right after his grad school. It was really exciting for him to campaign and to approach people, and explain that we are all aligned with the same interests. He understood that whatever he said, people would think the same about the entire Hindu Community. He was lucky to get this chance

of serving the Hindu community for whom he cares deeply.

Shri Niraj Antani

Ohio State Representative, USA

Navigating race and religion in American politics

Shri Niraj Antani is the first and youngest Hindu American Republican in Ohio history. He recalled that when campaigning door-to-door he would receive some offensive questions, but he took them as an educational opportunity and made the white Christians aware of our tradition and culture. For him, being in politics has been a positive experience. He felt sad that within our own community there are people who sympathize with those against us. He emphasised that if there is ever a time for us to be politically active it is now. In 2013, a poll was conducted about the familiarity and favourability of different religions and the results showed that Hindu Dharma had the least familiarity and a neutral favourability. He urged people to open temples, conduct events and celebrations, and talk to the media because a huge part of politics is in this external focus.



Shri Rahul Kumar

State Councillor Frankfurt Kelsterbach, Germany

Impactful participation of Hindus in the political process

Shri Rahul Kumar began his talk by commemorating Swami Vivekananda who had given a historic speech in Chicago. He said that Hindu culture teaches us to respect and learn from other cultures and there is a lot to learn from Germany. It helps in a successful integration in the host community. Hindus living in Frankfurt or Germany require help from the Government. We need places and assistance to do business in Bharat as well as in Germany. Germans believe that Hindus are very peaceful and spiritual. They have a positive image of us. We must work today for tomorrow's future. All the Hindus must come together, celebrate festivals together, form more organisations and build this community stronger.

Shri Himanshu Gulati

Member of Parliament, Norway

How to make an impact in politics

Shri Himanshu Gulati spoke about his political career and said he joined politics at a very young age. In 2017, he became the first Bhartiya Hindu Member of Parliament. He said that politics is not about strategy, it is about integrity and what you stand for. Everyone should stand for something worth fighting for. Otherwise, you will fall for anything. At times, we will be tested for what we stand. He himself believes in the idea of liberty for which he has been tested several times. There is a lot of internal politics within families, communities, or organisations but we should be happy about each other's success. Politics is an operative model. It should never be mixed with religion. People should be themselves and be different because the problem we have in politics is that politicians are more and more similar. People are respected in politics if they have integrity and if they dare to be different.



SESSION 3: COLLECTIVE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS ADVERSE AND COMPLEX POLITICAL ENVIRONMENTS

Chairperson:

Shri Gautam Bhattacharya

Minister Counsellor

Swedish Embassy, New Delhi

Introductory Remarks

Shri Gautam Bhattacharya said that Hindus do not face any oppression in Sweden, but the challenges are totally different in Nepal, Myanmar and Pakistan. The issue that needs to be addressed is that our Hindu community at the global level has not been good at mobilizing politically. He said that this conference could help in giving an impetus to build networks and methods to work together and put pressure on people, impact politically, work together and reinforce each other.



Shri Ngodup Tsering

Representative

Central Tibetan Administration

Importance of Free Tibet for religious freedom in the Himalayan Region

Shri Ngodup Tsering is the foreign representative of Dalai Lama in North America and to Central Tibetan administration in Dharamshala. He showed his gratitude towards Bharat for accepting Tibetans into its land for so many years. He also talked about the reasons behind invasion of Tibet by China. The first reason being population transfer, the second strategic military area provided by Tibet to China and lastly environmental resources, including water due to which China wants to occupy Tibet. He explicitly mentioned about the rivers flowing from Tibet and helping nations and people around them but unfortunately these are getting dirtier because of the dams being built upstream near China. He said that it's time that we all come together and fight against the foreign invaders and expansion of the colonies.

Shri Prem Kaidi

Politician and Journalist, Nepal

Protecting Hindu political interest in Nepal

Shri Prem Kaidi quoted the words of Saint Narahari Nath of Nepal, "Hindu is not a religion; it is a Dharma that we practice in our life". He lamented that although 82% of the population in Nepal is Hindu, the communists and socialists are dominating and destroying the socio-cultural system in Nepal. He spoke briefly on Hindu Dharma's history and its influence all over the globe. While the Western writers had distorted the real history of Hindus, Muslims had destroyed the Manu Smriti. Because of poverty and illiteracy, people in Nepal are falling prey to conversion-politics. The conversion rate is the highest in Nepal. In Nepal, there's no harmonization of Hindus. To defend our Dharma and for the rise of Hindus, there is a need to educate the young generations, beautify history and prepare people to be free from distorted history. To complete this task, we need strong global leadership and solidarity. He said that the platform of WHC can unite us and we all can fight against it.



Smt Santosh Kalyan

Member National Assembly, South Africa

Hindu unwillingness in political affairs

Smt Santosh Kalyan said that it was a shocking indictment that Bhartiyas abroad are not willing to take up public offices. Very few Bhartiyas are in politics in South Africa mainly because of the apartheid system. After 1948, blacks were excluded from the main city and Bhartiyas had to go through the same. The only benefit that it gave us was that people came together and lived together. After apartheid, the younger generation started moving out for earnings. Its major disadvantage was the disconnect. Smt Kalyan said that after apartheid, a new dimension has come up which is called racism in reverse. The conversion of religion prevails in her country too, mainly because of poverty. There is a fragmented approach in dealing with the challenges faced by the Hindu community. The solution to these challenges should first be for the short term and then we should look at the longer term.

SESSION 4: STRATEGY FOR PROTECTING HINDU HUMAN RIGHTS

Chairperson:

Shri Sradhanand Sital

Chairman

Global Human Rights Defense, Netherlands

Introductory Remarks

Shri Sradhanand Sital gave the introduction to the session about human rights issues. He said that Hindus have failed in human rights because we let go of our rights and just continued doing 'Dharmic' things. We have never represented our community at any international organisation. We Hindus have always felt that it's not our responsibility. There is no global support from Hindus themselves. He pointed out that we Hindus are good speakers but don't have good leaders. The other religions, irrespective of any nation, come together when needed, unlike Hindus. He showed a video about the terrible condition of Hindus in Pakistan, especially girls who are kidnapped, abducted, and forced to change their religion. We should soon get up and fight against all this.



Shri Sanjay Kaul

KOA, USA

Kashmiri Hindu community seeks to survive

Shri Sanjay Kaul was sad to share that the Hindus in Kashmir were kicked out of their own land and he was one of them. This paradise had turned into a hotbed of terrorism. He shared his own story that started in the 1990s. People were forced out of their homes based on religion. The reason for leaving was fear, rape and killing. Hindus had to live in inhuman conditions. Government did nothing to safeguard their interests, instead just helped Muslims and terrorists by throwing money at them. The only good thing was that all the Kashmiri Hindus were able to stand on their own. People fought hard to send their children outside. Now, government is helping Kashmir economically. He said that Kashmiri Hindus should be recognized as internally displaced people and each displaced family should be awarded compensation. He hoped that he would be able to go back to Kashmir as conditions improve.

Shri Gautam Bhattacharya

Minister Counsellor

Swedish Embassy, New Delhi

**Safeguarding Hindu minorities in
Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan**

Shri Gautam Bhattacharya talked about safeguarding Hindu minorities in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. He shared that Afghanistan (eastern) was a Hindu country before Jayapala Shahi lost the throne in 997 C.E. There is still a lot of Hindu architecture left in countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. He said that there is a need to care for fellow Hindus because they have nowhere else to turn. He showed how the Hindu population in these three countries has come down over the years. There is widespread discrimination, an indifferent official environment, and no Hindu media outlets or schools, or basic network of community volunteers in these countries. According to him, the need of the hour is to engage and empower them. All the pillars of the WHC should coordinate among all these countries and make a change.

**Shri Sanjesh**

Hindu Activist Pakistan

Ensuring the welfare and safety of Hindus in Pakistan

Shri Sanjesh spoke about the condition of Hindus in Pakistan. The Hindu population is just 1.96 million in Pakistan. Major problem is faced by the Scheduled Caste Hindus. The other problem in Pakistan is forced religious conversions. There are a lot of attacks in Pakistan against Hindus. After Partition in 1947, there was the mass genocide of Hindus living in Pakistan. The condition of Hindus in Pakistan is politically worse. They are treated as anti-state and anti-Islam elements. He requested WHC and other Hindus across the globe to come together and help his fellow Hindus in Pakistan.

SESSION 5: EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF POLITICAL LEADERS - TRAINING, MENTORING, AND DEVELOPING SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Chairperson:

Smt Swati Dandekar

Former Iowa State Legislator, USA

Introductory Remarks

Smt Swati Dandekar introduced the session. She said that it is important to have passion for something. She shared her life story. She had a passion for education and 'sewa' and she would tutor kids in science who could not afford it. Seeing this, the State sent her to different leadership programs. Her passion for this gave her different opportunities and this way she built a support system for herself. She requested everyone to help people who are passionate about something by becoming their support systems.



Dr Vindhya Vasini Persaud

Member of Parliament and President of the Guyana Hindu Dharmic Sabha, Guyana

Political eco-system for young women

Dr. Vindhya Persaud shared that before coming to deliver a speech here, she read through the historic speech of Swami Vivekananda which she found liberating. She said that she believes in mutual respect and understanding. She said that being a future leader, one needs spiritual upliftment along with passion and other elements. Young leaders face problems as they must fight against age-old traditions and perspectives, but they can succeed with patience, explanations, perseverance, and humility. It is important to make space for next-generation to voice their views and speak the truth. As a woman politician herself, she believes that there should be space for women, as every voice matters in the political world. For being a good political leader, one needs to be balanced, calm, mature in thinking, reasonable, and rational.

Shri Pranav Bhanot

Young Politician, UK

Challenges faced by young Hindu politicians in post-colonial UK

Shri Pranav Bhanot shared how in his childhood, he used to go for Ramayana lectures every weekend in the UK. Shri Rama had all the core qualities of a politician, yet Hindus do not want to involve themselves in politics. The Hindus want themselves to be represented by Hindus in politics but don't want to hold public positions themselves. There is a need for a paradigm shift in the definition of success. It should be valued in terms of the changes you make in people's lives and not in the money you own. A challenge faced in politics by Hindus is that they are not united. The other challenge is the Hindu inferiority complex. Politicians are not confident in declaring themselves as Hindus. The next generation should be trained in the principles of Hindu Dharma and they should be given political mentoring.



Shri Jitendra Diganvker

Republican Congressional Candidate, USA

Establishing a balance between a strong Hindu voice and viability as a political candidate

Shri Jitendra Diganvker said that it does not matter who you are, but it matters on what grounds you stand and how you protect it. One's passion is his asset. That is why he followed and entered politics in his college days. He shared that in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, nobody is there to help Hindus who suffer from ethnic cleansing but in the USA, we have the chance and we should grab the opportunity of entering politics and do something for the Hindu community. Global Hindu existence is needed. We need to stand up for our own community. We must think collectively and work individually to increase the political presence.

SESSION 6: WAY FORWARD

Chairperson:

Ambassador Pradeep Kapur

School of Public Policy,
University of Maryland, USA

Introductory Remarks

Ambassador Pradeep Kapur introduced the last session of the conference. He outlined how significant Bharat had been for the world – spiritually, politically, philosophically, administratively, and financially. South East Asia is completely influenced by Bharat. The places, culture, traditions are all Bharat oriented. The report by IMF said that Bharat has contributed the most to the world economy in terms of purchasing power parity. He claimed that Bharat is the second largest diaspora in the world that we should be proud of. What is to be done is implementation of all the discussed solutions for the problems, that can help make the Hindu community stronger, globally.



Shri Himanshu Gulati

Member of Parliament, Norway

Establishing political priorities for Hindus across the globe

Shri Himanshu Gulati talked about establishing political priorities for Hindus across the globe. He was of the viewpoint that people should not vote for him just because he is a Hindu but for the good service of his community. Politics is not about right or wrong, but it is about governing and taking care of interests. He said the best politician is the one who can get things done even when he is not in power. He said that politics and religion are two separate models. Politics is for nation-building and religion for character building, however, a politician should bring good principles and policies from the religion

to politics. All Hindus in political positions have the responsibility to safeguard the interest of the community globally.

Shri Mahesh Bindra

Former MP, New Zealand

Strategic political placement of Hindus for high impact

Shri Mahesh Bindra said he has taken up the responsibility of inspiring a youngster every month to come out of his comfort zone and enter politics and serve the community because not many people see politics as an opportunity in New Zealand. He discussed how and why he entered the politics of New Zealand. The Deputy Prime Minister of New Zealand made efforts to make the conditions better for the Hindu community. It was all possible when the Deputy Prime Minister saw him stand up for his own people. After being elected to Parliament, he took the oath from Shrimad Bhagwat Gita. He made sure that every upcoming Hindu MP can do the same.

**Smt Niermala Badrisingh**

Ambassador of Suriname to Washington DC

Establishing a task force to realize future priorities

Smt Niermala Badrisingh started by defining a task force, which is a temporary group of people formed to carry out a specific mission or a project. She suggested that the composition of the task force for strengthening the Hindu community should be geographical and based on the population of Hindus in different continents and countries. It should comprise long-term thinkers who serve the purpose of furthering the advancement of Hindus. The task force members should be from different disciplines including academia, parliamentarians, etc. It should be time-bound and outcome-oriented. It is important

to engage a stronger transnational networking endeavors to attain sustainable development and prosperity for Hindus globally. Regular follow-ups by the task force should be done by midterm reporting. All this can help impact the common good of the Hindus.



HINDU WOMEN FORUM

**Highest Respect
for Women**



MISSION STATEMENT

The aim of the Hindu Women Forum is to provide encouragement, support and training for the development of leadership qualities in Hindu women so that they can assume leadership positions in the Hindu resurgence and renaissance.

INTRODUCTION

Hindu women have displayed their brilliance in different spheres of life, from the Vedic ages to the present times. They have been respected in many ways in our culture. Hindu women comprise approximately 50% of the global Hindu population, and are playing an increasingly important role around the globe in many important fields ranging from business and science to politics and culture. Although not heavily mentioned in history textbooks or the popular discourse, Hindu women have played a pivotal role in sustaining Hindu Dharma.

A number of Hindu women ranging from sovereigns and warriors like Rani Durgawati, Rani Ahilyabai Holkar, Rani Chinamma, Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi and Rani Avantibai, to teachers such as Madalsa and Mata Jijabai to devotees like Andal Devi, Mira Bai, Laleshwari and Kannagi, and revolutionaries like Sister Nivedita, Durga Bhabhi and Preetilata, have courageously stepped forward to provide critical and vital support to Hindu society. Unfortunately, the role of Hindu women in the Hindu resurgence has largely gone unnoticed and unacknowledged. Furthermore, the number of women participating in leadership positions in the recent Hindu resurgence has declined to an unacceptable level. The Hindu Women Forum has been created to mobilise Hindu women and to reverse this trend. The Hindu Women Forum strongly believes in the power and potential of Hindu women. HWF seeks to bring Hindu women from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and professions who can support each other in all aspects of human endeavour as well as advocate the Hindu perspective from neighbourhoods to college campuses to the wider society.

The primary focal point of the Forum is to develop numerous strategies and initiatives for Hindu women to gain critical experience on their campuses, at their workplaces, in the social and political fabric of society, and in their communities and homes, so that they are prepared to take on leadership responsibilities of the Hindu resurgence which would play a vital role in the overall progress of the Hindu society.

Today, the Hindu woman's divinity, her identity, her Dharma and her society, for the growth of which she bears pain as joy, are in danger. She has issues to be addressed, she has responsibilities to take and she, for one, has to take forth the Dharma. To do so in present times, it is very essential to provide her with a platform, where she can identify, introduce, address and solve larger issues. Thus Hindu Women Forum was created.

SESSION 1: WOMEN AND ECONOMY: RECOGNITION OF HINDU WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION

Chairperson:

Dr Somdutta Singh

Co-Chair

NASSCOM Product Council, Bharat

Introductory Remarks

Quoting verses from Yajurveda, Dr Somdutta Singh shared the importance given to women in her family. She explained the role played by women. She spoke about Chanakya's six principles that make him the father of economics. Chanakya focused on the value of relationships and had said only with great relationships can a great kingdom be built. He had emphasised the importance of all senses. He also focused on the need for humility and gratitude. She then introduced the speakers of the first session.



Dr Toni Dasgupta

CEO, Veda Financial, USA

Wearing multiple hats and redefining success

By quoting Swami Vivekananda, Dr Toni Dasgupta emphasised the importance of improving the condition of women to bring welfare to the world. Financial literacy for women is needed to end the cycle of violence and poverty. While 80% of individuals own bank accounts in Bharat, only 16% actually use their accounts for savings. This needs improvement in the management of income and the investment of money. The speaker emphasised the importance of making a list of all financial assets, and each makes their own investment plan for retirement and the future. Women need less energy to multi-task and can take this as an opportunity to lead across various areas. The speaker informed about her organisation – Women's Initiative Network (WIN) which helps women to identify opportunities and get to the next level. She wishes for a Hindu Global Women's Business Directory for women to mentor and connects with each other in the future.

Smt Meena Patel

Vice-President, Digital Business Services, USA

Breaking the glass ceiling

Smt Meena Patel spoke of women who inspired her, including Indra Nooyi, Oprah Winfrey, and several family members. She shared her personal experience of learning Dharma from her parents and the community. She shared how her mother was a living example of the same for her. Women are forces of change from the household to the company. She spoke of the glass ceiling or prevention of progress in a company or unequal pay. She discussed the situation in various countries suggesting that in Bharat the monetary discrepancy based on gender is not that significant. She provided statistics in terms of women's progress in various industries such as healthcare and manufacturing. She said that women are challenged by multiple jobs that can play a role in preventing progress at certain points in their career. She ended her speech by emphasising the importance of networking for growth.

**Dr Nandini Tandon**

Entrepreneur and Venture Capitalist, USA

Women in finance sharing learned lessons with women entrepreneurs

Dr Nandini Tandon shared her experience of visiting Ramakrishna Mission, Srila Prabhupada ji, and Swami Chinmayananda ji as a child. She quoted Swami Vivekananda who had said it is only Hindu Dharma that emphasised fearlessness, as God is within. She shared how her mother acted as her mentor from an early age. She shared that if not born a Hindu she would have become one for its rational, analytical and free nature, linking it to science and innovation. She explained the importance of having a support system and emphasised choosing the right business partner. She spoke of the unicorn phenomenon and the zebra concept. Women have the ability to be profitable and provide social returns. She informed that the number of women angel investors has doubled in recent times, and emphasised the importance of going to a venture capitalist who understands the specific area of investment. She also shared information on various grants available and alternative financing options for small businesses.

SESSION 2: HINDU WOMEN IN EDUCATION

Chairperson:

Prof Anuradha Gokhale

Professor, Illinois State University, USA

Introductory Remarks

Prof Anuradha Gokhale gave two definitions of education: a systematic instruction to earn a living that is tangible, and an enlightening experience that is felt within and is intangible. The latter focuses on Hindu culture, values, and spirituality. She emphasised that women have an influence on culture and the next generation. They need both types of education. She reminded the recent applications of ancient cultures such as the Sanskrit language in artificial intelligence and by NASA. She also focused on Hindu Dharma, a righteous way of living with the goal of self-realization highlighting its tenets. So, a committee needs to be formed to create an action plan for education in Hindu Dharma and oversee all processes from goal setting to training to evaluation, which can be supported by the government or CSR grants.



Dr Nivedita Bhide (Padma Shri)

Vice President, Vivekananda Kendra, Bharat

Responsibility of women as Hindu ambassadors

Dr Nivedita Bhide explained that she expresses herself as a Hindu through her actions and practices everywhere and suggested that all should be Hindu ambassadors irrespective of gender. This responsibility then coexists with one's life. "Dharma is not in believing. It is in being and becoming." The vision of Hindu Dharma is a vision of oneness and unity. She explained that each soul is potentially divine with a purpose to manifest divinity. She spoke of the unity that exists in diversity, that is cherished in Hindu Dharma. She explained life of restraint. She spoke of a three-pronged approach in order to be a woman Hindu ambassador, Gnana, Bhakti, and Karma. She emphasised the importance of practice. In order to transmit the vision and values of Hindu Dharma from one generation to the next, regular cultural practices are needed. She also explained Dharma, Artha, Kāma, and Moksha. She emphasised the need to further evolve the consciousness of human beings.

Dr Meena Chandawarkar

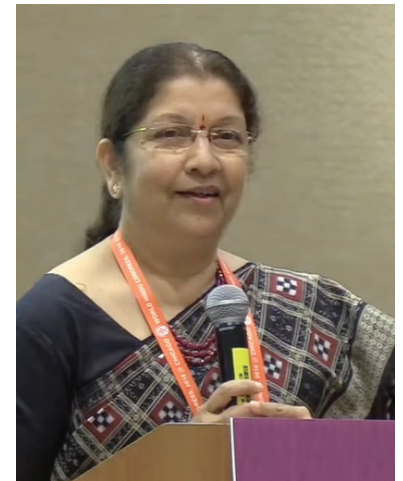
Former Vice-Chancellor

Karnataka State Women's University, Bharat

Role of Hindu women in the past, present, and future, in guiding society through value-based education and policymaking

Dr. Meena Chandawarkar spoke on the importance given to women in the Hindu Dharma. She spoke about the various goddesses and the energies they represent. She traced the path of women in education through the centuries since the Vedic period. She spoke of women sages, warriors, philanthropists, freedom fighters, scholars, priests, and social reformers. The education scenario in the country has enhanced with more enrolment and positive outcomes. One in four graduates in the world is from the Bharatiya Education system. She focused on the role of youth in creating a better and more productive Bharat. Prayer, meditation, and yoga are universal values that need to be inculcated in education. The power of prayer, the spirit of commitment, and sincerity will reduce the evils of mankind – corruption, violence against women, and improper care of elders.

She also spoke of the Centre for Ideal Womanhood which focuses on meditation, spirituality, civic sense, and concern for elders.



Dr Vindhya Vasini Persaud

Member of Parliament and President of the Guyana Hindu Dharmic Sabha, Guyana

Preserving Hindu identity in a multi-cultural society

Dr. Vindhya Vasini Persaud spoke about the inclusivity of the Hindu way of life. She shared the experience of Bharatiya who had come to work in sugar plantations in Guyana. They could have lost their identity due to the hardships they faced from lost lives to poverty but they still managed to keep going by reciting the Ramayana which they carried with them. The speaker encouraged the audience to include their children in the Hindu practices. As they grow up, their Hindu identity should be expressed in all forms – from their attire to the

way they carry themselves. She emphasised the need to educate and explain one's way of life. She emphasised the importance of Hindus speaking with one voice and standing united for mutual respect. She quoted Swami Vivekananda saying that educating a woman is educating the family. She also emphasised the need to teach the younger generation in ways that they understand so that they state their identity proudly in a multicultural world.

SESSION 3: HINDU WOMEN - MEDIA AND ART

Chairperson:

Smt Anupama Hoskere

Director, Dhaatu Puppet Theatre, Bharat

Introductory Remarks

Smt Anupama Hoskere explained how the Ramayana and Mahabharata are a part of life in Bharat and how media, art, and culture extend to every street, gully, and corner, across all states. Expression through performing arts, sculpture, and storytelling is a part of everyday life. She described this as the trickle-down of culture. She also explained the role of the Vedas in art. She describes cultural attire as an adorning of the Aatma and a celebration of life itself. She explained the role of a Grihini who takes care of the household primarily. She questioned if the woman is always a Grihini. The beauty of Hindu women is inside out, the glow is from within, she emphasised and shared the story of a princess bringing to light the power of women. She highlighted the need to change the yardstick of measurement in society. She also spoke about happiness being unrelated to material possessions.



Dr Rasita Vishnu

Public Affairs & Indic Researcher, USA

From social networks to collaborative networks

Dr. Rasita Vishnu shared three instances with the audience. The first instance was the 2014 elections. She shared how women of different backgrounds would urge others to vote. The commonality between them is that they wanted to bring about a change in the country through social media. The second instance was the Sabarimala Temple and the entry of women. There are women who report that they will respect the traditions and will not visit the temple before the stipulated age. The #ReadyToWait campaign on social media helped women across the globe voice their stand on the issue. The third instance was

the Indic Academy, a collaborative platform, that was created through social media. Women are actively involved in various projects to create a Dharmic ecosystem. The three instances have social media as the common factor. Be it building awareness about voting, voicing opinions, organizing programmes, or networking, social media can be used as a very powerful tool.

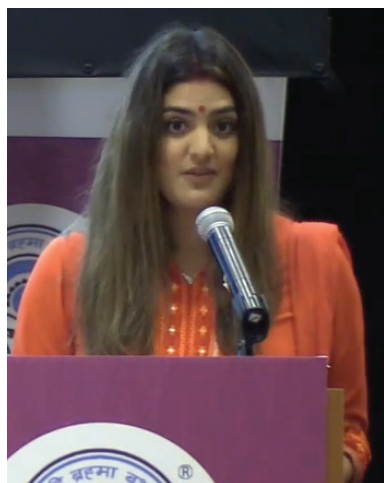
Sushri Yashika Singh

Head of Genre

Religion: SABC, South Africa

Social media – Opportunities and challenges

Sushri Yashika Singh explained that the media landscape has changed greatly and anyone can broadcast content on social media these days. She initially spoke about unity and oneness; starting with indentured labours in South Africa, Mahatma Gandhi's role in South Africa, and Thillaiyadi Valliammai and Nelson Mandela. The Hindu Dharma encourages finding the meaning of life. It fosters the moral development and well-being of society. She spoke about the importance of spirituality which gives us motivation and ideals. Religion and spiritual ideas answer several questions. She spoke of how prejudice was so deeply embedded in South Africa and only slowly was it possible to build hope. The purpose of arts and communication media is to share stories that matter. The media has challenged the assumption that technology cannot be independent of religion. Social media helps devotees to connect to prayers and spiritual matters. She also explained how NGOs can play a pivotal role in gathering support through social media in issues of injustice and rape.



Sushri Prerna Lau Sian

Founder, CEO of Vaahan Magazine

The portrayal of Bharat in global media

Sushri Prerna Lau Sian explained how she started Vaahan to show that Bharat and its politics are not as bad as portrayed in popular media worldwide. She spoke about how Bharat was labelled as unsafe after the Delhi rape incident following the media portrayal. She spoke of how BBC had linked the Hindu religion to the rape documentary. She pointed out the value of women in the Hindu culture and religion citing how women are allowed to perform pujas without men but not vice versa. She spoke of strong women political leaders such as Smriti Irani, journalists, and actors. She mentioned films such as 'Dangal,' and 'Padman' which portray women in strong roles and speak of important issues relating to women. She also spoke about the importance of inner strength and determination to follow dreams.

Smt Sneha Mehta

Accounts Professional, US Federal Treasury

The portrayal of Bharat in global media

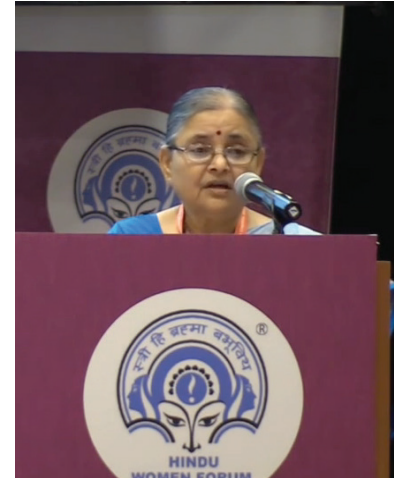
Smt. Sneha Mehta spoke about the power of current entertainment media and its ability to degrade and destroy. She explained that consumers have a responsibility and role to play in stopping this. She suggested that consumers should make their opinions clear on negative messages by taking charge and boycotting such a cinema. She explained that every Hindu woman in a family has a lot of power and control, but should decide to use it. From decisions about the household to children, they have huge responsibilities. She shared the importance of not blindly taking things at face value but doing one's own research. She said that unless the consumers use this power it's not going to change. She also spoke of the importance of educating children at a young age and teaching them the right things. She also explained the importance of a woman and the purpose she has which a man cannot fulfill.



SESSION 4: THE ROLE OF HINDU WOMEN IN SHAPING THE SOCIETY

Chairperson:**Smt Alka Inamdar**National Joint Secretary
Rashtra Sevika Samiti, Bharat**Introductory Remarks**

Smt Alka Inamdar said in Bharat, that moral ethos exists for the wellbeing and sustenance of society or Dharma. A holistic worldview in Hindu Dharma is that there is no discrimination between men and women, and the society can only flourish when there is unity between both. Women have played a significant role in shaping history. In the Vedic period, female Rishis were in the pursuit of absolute truth and understanding of the relation between humans and the universe. In the Puranic period, our sanskriti flourished from dance to architecture. Several women held positions of administrators, warriors, and artists. In the medieval period, the invaders considered women as commodities, and hence arose the need to protect women. Hindu traditions were kept alive by women who acted as cultural torchbearers. In recent history, women across the country mobilized people against the British. Women, therefore, helped protect and enrich the sanskriti in different aspects and retained moral values through motherhood and social duties.

**Yogini Shambhavi**

Co-Director

American Institute of Vedic Studies, USA

Awakening the Yoga Shakti in Hindu Dharma

Yogini Shambhavi explained Yoga Shakti, and described Tantra as a weaving of personal energy with the cosmic universe. When we are connected to the reality of Shakti we will be able to share the wisdom with the Universe. She emphasised that women play an important role in teaching children about our Dharma. Shakti is the courage that flows like a river. But women are flowing upstream against the river in anger, this doesn't help. Women need to stand in strength and support each other. Every woman holds the Shakti to make a change but this

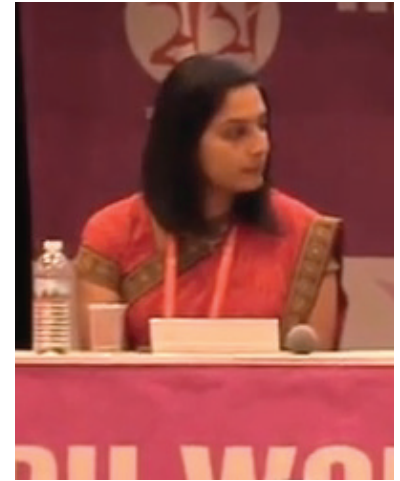
should be happy and nurturing, not angry. Dharmic views should be taught to every girl. Not being allowed into Sabarimala doesn't lower a woman's Shakti. She differentiated between angry young women and powerful women with integrity. She gave the example of mother nature never stopping giving flowers and fruits despite the harmful actions of humans and described it as Shakti. It is graciousness, harmony, nurturing, and auspiciousness.

Smt Amrita Tailor

Health Scientist, Centre for Disease Control, USA

Positive parenting

Smt Amrita Tailor defined parenting as being a mother or father to someone and taking care of them. Family, society, nation, and the world influence the upbringing of the child. Positive parenting involves caring, teaching, leading, communicating, and providing for the child's needs consistently and unconditionally. In the Hindu context, positive parenting also involves the incorporation of Hindu values and cultural beliefs. These include tolerance, ahimsa, respect for all, Dharma, and humility. Positive parenting requires one to identify the values to impart and the mechanisms to deliver. Understanding needs is relative to age and different stages of life. The values include the Hindu mindset and it is important to be a role model, share positive messages and reinforce ideas. The delivery mechanisms also include teachers, learning environments, and the temple, not just the parents. Ghar Sabha or quality family time is also crucial. The impact of positive parenting is ultimately being a good citizen and being environmentally conscious.



Prof Madhu Purnima Kishwar

Indian Council for Social Science Research, Bharat

Socio-cultural issues and contemporary challenges

Prof Madhu Kishwar said that in the last three decades, policy and law making has been monopolized by foreign-funded NGOs, feminists, Islamists, and evangelicals. They claim to represent civil society and have forced poorly framed harsh laws. They claim to strengthen women's rights but the real purpose was to tear the social fabric of Hindu society. She mentioned the issues in feminist legislation ranging from the definition of crime, the difficulty of bail, mere allegation being sufficient for jailing, and false entrapment before trial. It is time to take courageous action. Although Bharat is actually placed 85th for

reported rapes in 121 countries, there was a concerted campaign to declare Bharat the world's rape capital following the Delhi rape case. She shared those amendments made to the criminal law in 2012-2013, that were backed by foreign-funded NGOs. She pointed out that women who need help are still not receiving it. She ended by saying no self-respecting society allows hostile outsiders to determine laws.

SESSION 5: INSPIRING HINDU WOMEN

Chairperson:

Smt Chayaa Nanjappa

Founder & Managing Partner

Nectar Fresh, Bharat

Introductory Remarks

Smt Chayaa Nanjappa shared her experience of becoming an entrepreneur after her education was stopped early. She spoke of how she went to Central Bee Research & Training Institute (CBRTI) to learn about the manufacturing and processing of honey. She then became a part of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission. She focused on the quality of the product and also wanted to help the underprivileged through her venture. She aimed to compete with foreign brands. She spoke of how her enterprise Nectar Fresh attained success. The speaker explained how she involved the local farmers in the venture as well in making jams without preservatives and other products. She also spoke of her associations with other big companies.

**Smt Shital Mahajan (Padma Shri)**

Extreme Sportsperson

Bharat

Overcoming the Fear - Be Fearless

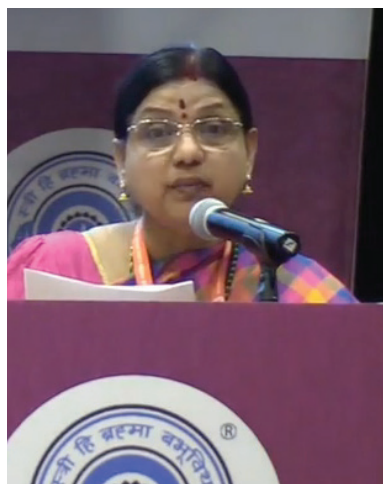
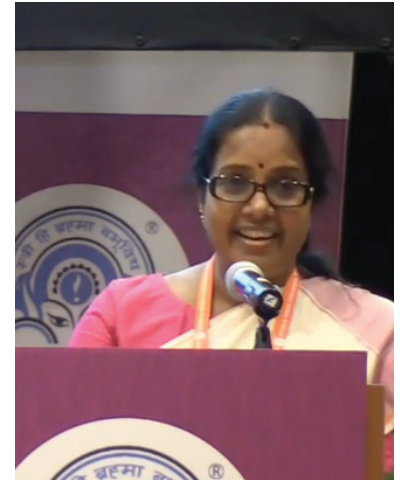
Smt Shital Mahajan shared her experience of becoming a skydiver. She wanted to represent and bring pride to her nation from a young age. She was thinking of joining the military. She tried seven different sports but did not feel that she was born for them. She met the first Bharatiya man who had done skydiving at the North Pole and the South Pole. She came to know that no Bharatiya woman was involved in skydiving. She wanted to prove that Bharatiya women can do what they set their minds to. She was the first woman in the world to skydive on the North Pole without any training. Her next jump was in Antarctica. She is the first woman in the world to skydive on all continents. She did the jump in a saree to represent the country. She holds 19 national awards, six world records, and has done 750 skydives. She gave importance to the country over her family to encourage more women to represent their nation.

Smt Vanathi Srinivasan

General Secretary, BJP Tamil Nadu, Bharat
Politics

Smt Vanathi Srinivasan shared her childhood struggle to get an education. She is the first graduate in her family and the first leader in politics from her village. She spoke of her interest in the poetry of Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi during her youth. She then became associated with Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad. She spoke of Swami Vivekananda's influence in building her into a nation-loving value-based individual. His teaching and work empowered her to face any challenge that came her way. She also organized a function in the memory of Sister Nivedita reaching lakhs of college students.

Working with BJP and RSS gave her an identity, responsibility, and vision. She got support from her friends, family, and party members. She mentioned how she brought various important government schemes to the state. She has also been involved in the development of sanitation facilities and a library in her village. Youth employment and women empowerment is her focus.



Smt Akila Ramarathinam

National General Secretary
Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia
Social work for Hindu cause

Smt Akila Ramarathinam said Hindu women have excelled in all aspects of life but the need for strong Hindu women leaders still persists. Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia is engaged in several programmes for the youth and women. She has been involved in teaching Hindu scriptures, approved by the Department of Education, in over 70 public schools covering 25,000 children. This Hindu dharma programme includes teachings from Ramayana, Mahabharata, shlokas, and dharma. This is mainly to develop cultural connections and instill sanskara in the

next generation and the project has created mass awareness. It is run by over 350 women including young parents, new migrants, and senior citizens, who are given regular curriculum training. She was inspired by Swami Vigyananand, Ravikumar Ji and Guna Magesan ji. She discussed not only the challenges in training new teachers, administrative work, and monetary resources but also the impact and recognition the group had received. She encouraged other countries including the US to adopt a similar programme.

Dr Somdutta Singh

Co-Chair

NASSCOM Product Council, Bharat

An entrepreneur

Dr Somdutta Singh spoke about her journey of leaving her family to become an entrepreneur. She shared her experience of earning money through various skills that she learned from her roommates for her survival. She said, "When you have nothing to lose, you only gain". She believes that detachment comes from the position of having nothing. It is important not to create great companies but great minds to run those companies. She learned the Vedas and realised that it is important to know where you come from. It was her open mind and the readiness to accept all forms of knowledge that helped her to form four companies and get patents in her name. Empowerment comes through inter-communication and collaboration. Her third company 'Digital Leadership Institute' is the only educational company in Bharat that works with universities to create a skill-based curriculum to ensure that students can identify their talents and earn a livelihood from a young age.



Smt Lakshmi Kanta Chawla

Former Minister

Punjab Govt, Bharat

Politician, Mentor

Smt Lakshmi Kanta Chawla said she was discriminated against even at birth as she was a girl. It was her father who stood up for her. She shared an experience of not being allowed to touch the temple deity because she was a woman and the temple was cleansed with milk and Ganga Jal. She challenged Pundits and emphasised that women are mothers, daughters, and sisters. She shared various struggles in Punjab with respect to the Emergency period. The current two struggles in Punjab are female foeticide and the use of alcohol and drugs. She encouraged

women to enter the legal profession to help the community. She shared Swami Vivekananda's saying that one is a true Hindu only when one helps another Hindu in suffering. She spoke of Westernization: for example, blowing the candle during birthdays is against what lighting of the lamp signifies. The British could not break our tradition and culture but we have made it weak. She said we have to persist till the aim is fulfilled.

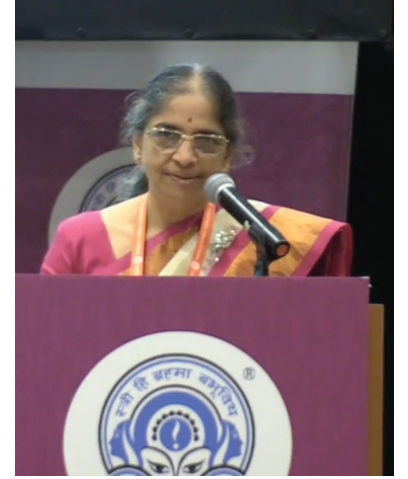
Chairperson:

Prof Uma Vaidya

Former VC, Kavikulguru Kalidas Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya, Bharat

Introductory Remarks

Prof Uma Vaidya described the earlier sessions as the five Upanishads. Economic prosperity is the source of strength for the nation, so the financial literacy of women is important. A Hindu woman not only invests in coins but also in values and culture. She explained the importance of parental attitude towards society and value-based education from childhood to facilitate positive thinking. Media and art need to be used to empower women and showcase Hindu Dharma. She recapped the topics of the role of Hindu women in shaping society and on inspiring women in sports, politics, and social work. While concluding, Prof Uma Vaidya said a generation of citizens who are academically sound, financially strong, socially conscious, spiritually well-trained, and morally upright need to be created. For this, in every city and village, a group of five to six literate women should learn the core ideas of Hindu Dharma and conduct lectures for children. Bharat should be the richest nation in morality. She suggested that a directory for resourceful Hindu women across the globe should be prepared to start a movement.



Dr Sai Patil

Director, Mylan Pharma, USA

Group Workshop Instructions

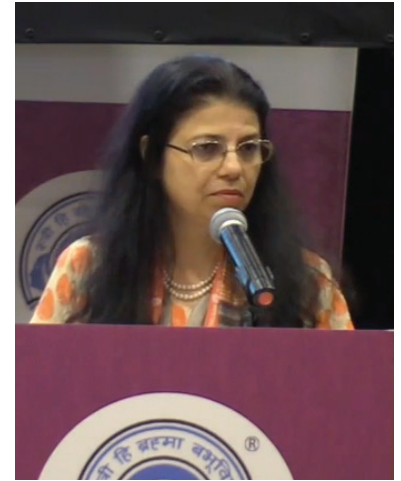
Four groups were made and each group was to discuss a particular topic - economy, education, the role of women in social issues, and art and media. Speakers were assigned to those groups. Moderators had the responsibility of sharing any action plans arrived at. The sessions were moderated by Smt Yashaswini Desai, Smt Manga Anantamula, Sushri Shilpa Chheda, and Smt Jaya Asthana.

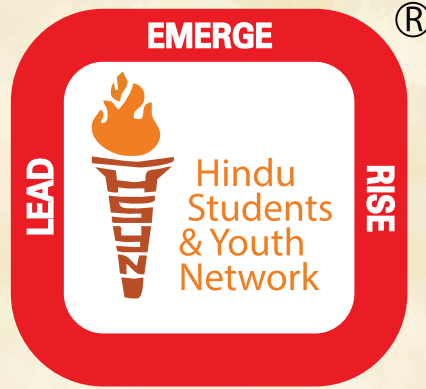
Sushri Priya Tandon

Plan of Action

An Entrepreneur

Sushri Priya Tandon summarized the various action plans arrived at by the various groups. With respect to shaping the society, she pointed out the inequality in the workplace, domestic abuse and raising families in western societies with Bharatiya values. The media and arts group had spoken about raising awareness about the Aranmula village, developing the village, and using social media to shift mindsets. The education group suggested free weekly tuition classes on Bharatiya Sanskar and a Hindu values online discussion forum. The economy group suggested Hindu women's business directory, networking, and support for financial education, planning, and management for Hindu women as short-term plans of action. The long-term goals are a women's finance forum, newsletter, celebration of success stories, and sharing of knowledge and financial resources.





HINDU STUDENTS & YOUTH NETWORK

Rise, Organise, Lead, Emerge



MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to actively involve Hindu Youth into playing a vital role in the Hindu Resurgence and Renaissance. Hindu Students & Youth Network will tap the boundless energy, creativity, and ideas of Hindu Youth and fully harness their potential to work for the resurgence of Hindu society on a global basis.

INTRODUCTION

The future generation of Hindu society in the form of young professionals, college students and teenagers has been endowed with wisdom and vast empirical talent and knowledge. This generation has been attempting to work for the Hindu resurgence in their own individual capacities around the world, but not in an organised manner. Indeed, there is a severe shortage of Hindu youth in established Hindu organisations worldwide, especially in responsible positions and leadership roles. It is vital to reverse this alarming trend as this is already harming Hindu society's ability to progress. The rejuvenation and revitalization of Hindu Dharma throughout the world rests predominantly on the shoulders of the next generation of Hindus, who will assume the leadership of the Hindu resurgence. The youth is the most motivated to challenge the status quo as well as to change it. One question that may arise is why this emphasis on the youth of Hindu society? It is the young who first stand against tyranny, injustice, suppression and exploitation, and declare that they will change the situation. A careful analysis of the major movements that have led to rejuvenation of Hindu society point to the fact that the bulk of the activity in such movements was done by Hindu youth. Therefore, there is a genuine need for a global platform to bring all Hindu students and youth organisations together.

Hindu Students & Youth Network aims to provide a proper platform and effective network for all Hindu students and youth organisations that are currently active in their countries to share their experiences and provide encouragement to each other. In addition, HSYN will rope in experienced individuals to share their experiences in these endeavours with current as well as aspiring individuals who desire to mobilize Hindu youth into the movement. This will help and encourage Hindu youth to work for the Hindu resurgence in the future.

SESSION 1: STRENGTHENING HINDU IDENTITY

Chairperson:

Shri Ravi Jaishankar

Board of Trustees, Hindu Student Council, USA

Introductory Remarks

Shri Ravi, a volunteer with the Hindu Student Council since 2010, shared his observation that today, a majority of Hindu youth are disconnected from their heritage, referring to themselves as spiritual but not religious. We need a new way of reconnecting with the roots and realising who we are now and who we used to be. There are many layers to strengthen the Hindu identity and ultimately, we must take it head on, learn and conceive Bharat's true nature and history and use that to build ourselves. We should feel proud to accept that we are Hindus.



Sushri Drishti Mai

President

National Hindu Students Forum, UK

Changing the narrative of Hindu identity

Sushri Drishti began by acknowledging the ancestors who shaped Hindu history, the elders who carried the flame of the Hindu Dharma and nurtured youth. He wondered what it really means to be a Hindu today: Is being a Hindu just a religious identity? The inability of Hindus across the world to express the rich inner reality experienced daily is a cause of concern. He said that without the ability to articulate what Hindu Dharma is for one personally, we are unable to articulate these universal sacred values to the world, and we will fail the 'Hindu

Samaaj' and humanity. For Hindus, particularly youth, the ability to own and articulate their identity confidently enables a step up to own the narrative of our Hindu identity. Let us build a new framework where the term 'Hindu' is seen as it is - positive, aspirational and something we can all be proud of.

Shri Murali Magesan

Product Development Engineer

Fisher and Paykel Appliances, New Zealand

Commanding respect with Hindu identity

Shri Murali commenced with a varied look at identities that people associate with being Hindu - for some, it's the practices they follow, for others, it's how they perceive life and God, for some, it's the base from which they generate wealth, for others, it's about having a beautiful relationship. Hindu identity is the understanding we carry and practice in our lives that originated from Hindu Dharma. For the past millennium, there has been a systematic attack on the spiritual infrastructure and traditions and it made us fit to be the servants of the British. Hindu Dharma is the backbone of Bharat, and if that is taken away, the essence of Bharat is taken away. Sharing statistics that showed that Hindus are the biggest contributors to the society as entrepreneurs, lawyers, doctors, etc, he questioned why is there so much self-doubt and self-denial within the Hindu community? This might happen because we are uninformed and have an inferiority complex. We need to realign ourselves with the original Dharmic cognitions to become an identity that contributes and automatically commands respect.

**Sushri Prashaanta Singh**

Student, Dental Surgery

Trinidad and Tobago

Firm Hindu identity- an inclusive approach

Sushri Prashaanta shared the observation that the number of Hindus in the community is dwindling because of a lack of interest in what Dharma has to offer over the blind attraction toward the western lifestyle. As a young Hindu, she witnessed how media negatively influences Hindu Dharma and Society, and how Hindus are discriminated against by non-Hindus and pressured into non-developmental activities. Reflecting on her personal journey, Prashaanta shared that she wouldn't have achieved so much in life without the guidance of Hindu Dharma.

SESSION 2: ENGAGED HINDU ACTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

Chairperson:

Sushri Sai Khisty

KPMG, LLP, USA

Introductory Remarks

Sushri Sai highlighted that in today's digital age of mass communication, education and dissemination of accurate information are crucial for positioning our society and determining its narrative. She described that this session would discuss how we can prepare the current generation to reclaim and represent what is Hindu in the public space, identify how to procure a seat at the table through professional fields in which Hindus are underrepresented, and learn about the perspective of Hindu Dharma in terms of protecting our interests and traditions.



Shri Nihar Shashittal

Independent Researcher and columnist, USA

Knowledge-based representation of Hindu Dharma

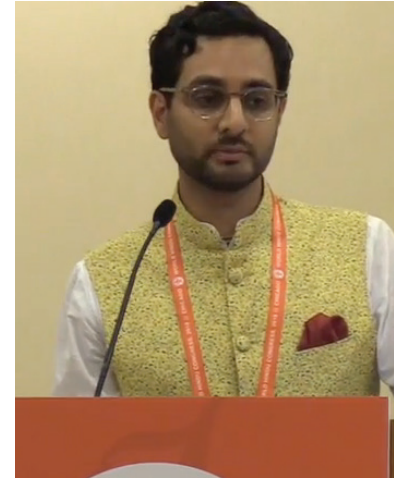
To talk about his topic, Shri Nihar took the example of the California Textbook Movement that brought together youth, parents, and educators of the Bharatiya American community to fight against the perceptions or stereotypes about Hindu Dharma through academics. Through a concerted and continued effort from the Hindu community, California Department of Education realised that some textbooks actually showed Hindu Dharma in a negative way. Hence, few changes were initiated. This is just the beginning and further work is needed in such areas.

Shri Gopal Patel

Director, Bhumi Project, UK

Connecting ancient to modern: The impact of Hindu perspective

The Bhumi Project was launched in 2009 as a joint initiative of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies and Green Faith. Bhumi has developed environmental plans for temples across Bharat and trained young Hindu climate leaders. In 2015, they issued the Hindu Declaration on Climate Change, the largest declaration issued by any community. The UN asked them to give a Hindu perspective on Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. In 2017, the UN asked them to develop investment guidelines for the Hindu community. He shared that the three guiding forces of this project are respect, compassion, and service. They believe that the Hindu voice needs to be heard and respected and the Hindu perspective about global concerns has to be brought forward. Bhumi project's five principles of investment have been adopted from Bhagawad Gita.



Sushri Pritika Sharma

Health Promoter

Public Health Services, New Zealand

The Hindu perspective on Global Defense and strategy: protecting our interests and traditions

This content was developed by Nikki Avlokestvari from Indonesia. The presentation shared the challenges that the Hindu community is facing in Bali. The Hindu community has a lack of information and awareness, underrepresentation and dichotomy between Indonesia's traditional Hindus and Bhartiya Hindus. External challenges are radicalism and threat to the conversion of religion. Therefore, it is necessary that the members of the Hindu community unite and eradicate the dichotomy by spreading awareness. Just like a strong country should have strong defence diplomacy, so does a community. Negotiation and communication are important tools of diplomacy. It is necessary to network with Hindu-minded people around the world to build defences for the global Hindu population.

SESSION 3: HINDU YOUTH AS DRIVERS AND LEADERS OF THE ECONOMY

Chairperson:

Shri Siddarth Pai

Founding Partner and CFO

3one4 Capital, Bharat

Introductory Remarks

Shri Siddarth began his introductory remarks by stating that Bharat used to account for 22-33% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP). After British colonization, enormous quantities of wealth were taken from Bharat, resulting in a "poor" country. There is a need to provide a new way to come up with the compassion of socialism and the principles of capitalism - which is the Hindu way of economics.

In 1991, Bharat opened the economy and ever since has been growing at a steady rate, is the second-fastest growing in the world. By the year 2020, Bharat will be the fastest and youngest growing nation in the world. There was a call for Hindu youth to focus on becoming innovators themselves as start-ups are the primary engine for this change/growth.



Shri Aditya Mishra

Founder

ZPX, Singapore

Dharma and the opportunities of a decentralized economy

Shri Aditya began his presentation by indicating the rate of adoption in a global context has increased drastically. For example, the car took 100 years for adoption globally whereas the washing machine only took 60 years. The adoption curve is increasingly becoming steeper as time goes on. Only a couple of decades ago the internet seemed very complicated and confusing. Whereas now it is commonplace. This indicates people did not have the correct framework to access it. The framework has an important role to play. In our current day society

works in a very centralized framework which is an abstraction of Western philosophies.

In blockchain technology, every single node is an operating system. Dharma is an open-source open architecture library, which allows anyone to create their own political, social, and spiritual lifestyle. This allows for everyone to believe and follow a thesis they subscribe to. You believe in a Devata but respect everyone else's God. Allows for the assertion of individual beliefs and the ability to coexist with mutual respect.

Bharat in its history has been invaded by Mughals and British. As a result, there have been parts of society moving from Dharma to foreign ideologies. Despite this, the reason Dharma has survived is due to the distributed pattern it follows. Architecture for Dharma and blockchain look very similar to each other. What this means is any single point can be reproduced if it is attacked, therefore preventing the entire system from failing.

Shri Shobit Mathur

Executive Director

Vision India Foundation, Bharat

A Hindu model for comprehensive economic growth

Shri Shobit said that Bharat has thrived for so long and in the process has managed to communicate its achievements in various fields from science, to arts, language, mathematics, etc. However, there has not been extensive collective thought about the importance of economic growth in recent history. Till 1820, Bharat and China held 50% of the world's economy. It was one of the reasons so many came searching for Bharat. Bharat is not an emerging economy, but a re-emerging economy. A book called "The Beautiful Tree" talks about how there was one school for every 100 children that were funded by the community. The lowering in the education system shows the impact of British colonisation.

Bharat focuses on being a high saving economy with approximately 33% saved. Most of the savings are in gold – decentralized. More than half of the population is self-employed and nearly a fifth are entrepreneurial. Numerous business ventures are community-funded. Misunderstanding of varnashrama dharma has led to social challenges, but it has played a key role in the running of businesses and specialized knowledge transfer in Bharat. The clustered business model is based on trust and not contracts. There is no state dependency and women play a critical role. The importance of Artha was well understood in a spiritual context as well as it played a key role in society's aspiration for liberation (moksha).



Shri Aryan Meswani

Student, Bharat

Hindu Pride and Identity

Shri Aryan started his presentation by asserting that Hindus should feel a sense of self-respect, and honor. He said that Yoga is an integral part of our culture and has gone global. However, Sanskrit had less than 25,000 speakers all over the world and a small percentage are under the age of 20.

One of the potential catalysts for reinstalling pride includes shastras. It is a part of Bharat's history, and the essence of these scriptures are life lessons that can be derived and applied in everyone's daily lives. Vedic chants are recognized as therapeutic and played at 40% of hospitals

worldwide. Younger generations are attracted to the latest technologies. By using this technology, it is possible to engage kids at an early age in Bhagavad Gita. In addition to this, classical music and art play a critical role in keeping Hindu culture and heritage alive. It is also important that textbooks that inaccurately present content on Hindu Dharma and its civilization's history should be rectified.

Smt Nisha Holla

Co-Founder

Biomoneta Research, Bharat

Hindu Youth as Drivers of Economy



Smt Nisha began by making the statement that Hindu Dharma provides a powerful platform to innovate. In the last 200 years, innovation has come in the form of the industrial revolution. At the start of the 19th century, with the steam engine, the United Kingdom rose to power and started its prolific colonization. The World War put the US in a very high technological development stand. Today, China has semiconductor fabrication that is currently impractical for manufacturing elsewhere.

Therefore, innovation is crucial to economic leadership and to a country's status on the world stage. It results in the proliferation of new ideas and guides deep investment strategies. The world view of Hindu Dharma is that it is open architecture. This allows freedom to explore new ideas and go to many depths. Strong cognitive capacity originates from traditional Hindu systems. The inherent non-separation from nature leads to sustainable development. Hindu society has a vast database of knowledge in countless fields - from metallurgy, agriculture, and Ayurveda, to mathematics, language, and grammar, among many more sciences and disciplines.

This scientific knowledge has become lesser known because of Islamic conquest. Recently, the Bharatiya government has been doing a great job by putting up startup challenges. Globalized market access helps give access to the economy. Bharat may have problems, but these problems are opportunities. Hindu Youth can use these opportunities to solve problems by designing indigenous technology to face them. Bharat has a large internal market for good solutions. Hindu Youth has unparalleled competitive advantages today to take these opportunities and make it into growth and drive Bharat brand globally.



SESSION 4: PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN MEDIA

Chairperson:

Shri Sumit Sharma

Coordinator

Web and Social Media, HSS, UK

Introductory Remarks

The Hindu population in the UK is of second and third-generation migrants. The sole motive of the first-generation Hindus in the UK was just to survive, adapt and settle into the unknown land yet still manage to instill values, and virtues in their children. Now it is the duty of the youth duty to amplify, claim back and bear the torch of Hindu Dharma. He invoked Vivekananda who had paved the way for most the Hindus and Bharatiyas abroad and said that proactive actions like that of Vivekananda are needed today.



Shri Vinay Kumar Singhal

Co-Founder

CEO, Wittyfeed, Bharat

Changing the narrative of Hindus in media: The role of media ownership

Hindus today live in fear. We don't want to be identified as Hindus because of the negative narrative attached to this identity. The narrative of Hindu Dharma in media is quite negative resulting in the lost pride. An emphasis on rational and scientific ways of explaining Hindu Dharma to youth will connect and engage the next generation.



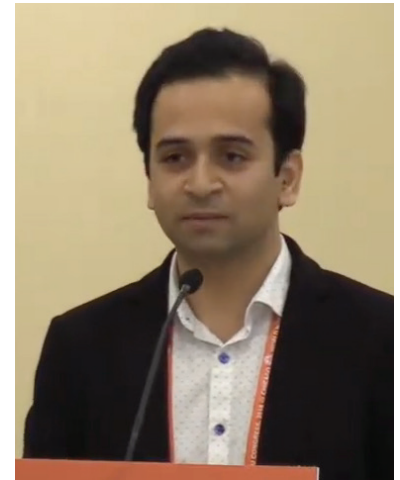
SESSION 5: POLITICS AND HUMAN RIGHTS - IMPORTANCE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Shri Aditya Patwardhan

Hollywood Filmmaker, USA

Redefining the word Hindu in media

Social media and film and television have been key influencers of the human mind for many years. For the representation of Hindu Dharma in media, we have to make sure that we don't follow the same path as other religions/ ideologies do because if we do that, we end up doing propaganda for the Hindu religion, and Hindu Dharma isn't a religion. For the portrayal of Hindu Dharma in media, filmmakers must make sure that they are in touch with the scientific core of Hindu value system. Shree Aditya gave examples of his few projects. The documentary 'Eastern shores of the Western world' is a study of similarities between Vedic Dharma and the ideologies of Baltic countries. The primary purpose here was to highlight inclusiveness. Today, we don't have time to research Hindu history, so media plays an important role in explaining the concepts of Hindu Dharma to people so that they can orient themselves.



Smt Karolina Goswami

Founder and Editor in Chief, India in Details, Bharat

The impact of being proactive on Social Media

Media in the Western countries has a narrative that is still driven by a sense of white elitism and because of this most of the important Hindus stories aren't covered. Bharat's ancient wisdom and traditional knowledge of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", "Sarve Bhawantu Sukhinaha" need to be brought to the forefront. Talking about her venture 'India in Details' Smt Karolina said it uses social media to reach out to the world. Through various platforms, they try to neutralize biased negative narratives and bring out lesser-known facts. The organisation is data-driven and its focus is on accuracy in presenting facts. She urged everyone to come forward and help in spreading the work.

Chairperson: Shri Sushyanth Subramanian

Hindu Youth Australia, Australia

Introductory Remarks

Shri Sushyanth intended to give a snapshot of the Hindu conditions in different countries of the world. In Bharat, secularism is Anti-Hindu. Temples are controlled by the state, Hindu funds are used by others, and there is a general under-reporting of attacks on Hindus in Bharat. In the West, the situation is relatively better. The California Textbook Movement really made a mark and helped to show Hindu Dharma and society in good light. In Pakistan, the condition is worse. The Hindu population there has witnessed a systematic annihilation since 1947. Temples are destroyed and degraded. Pakistani education curriculum teaches children to hate Bharat and Hindus. In Bangladesh, the conditions for Hindus are miserable. The East Bengal Evacuee Act stripped rich Hindus of property rights in Bangladesh. In Sri Lanka, the Hindu population has also declined massively. Sushyanth also mentioned that Hindus in Indonesia and Malaysia are not better off. Being aware is a start but without some action, we will not see a change.



Smt Mayuri Parmar Amin

Founder, Parmar Advisory, UK

Politics as a career option for Hindu youth in serving and positioning Hindu society

Smt Mayuri argued that through greater leverage in politics, Hindus will be able to strengthen their position in society. Highlighting how politics and political decision-making have changed over the years, she said, "Even if we don't take interest in politics. Politics takes interest in us." Politics affects every aspect of our lives. She said that making politics a vocation or career will help us bring positive changes. The world needs decisive and strong leadership for the good of people and some of it is led by strong Dharmic values and Dharmic solutions.

For Hindus, to have an impact on politics as a community, we need to be proactive in short-term political situations. By participating in it, we will know where the actual power lies. We can use it to get the Hindu-related issues on the desk of the right people. Not just this, by participating in politics we will shape the future policies of the society as a whole. She encouraged people to network, write to Government officials, and most importantly, find their voice.

Shri Himanshu Gulati

Member of Parliament, Norway

Young Hindu Politician: success story

Shri Himanshu shared his experiences and encouraged people to join politics and make a difference in the world by being a part of it. He said that politics is not just about strategies but also about integrity and what you stand for to make a difference. One should believe in something strong enough, worth fighting for. Emphasising that one has to remember that in getting justice for yourself, one should be careful that he/she isn't doing injustice to others. Encouraging more youth participation in politics, he said, "Unless you take the step and dare to do something, you will not achieve it".



Sushri Devika Sital

Global Human Rights Defense, Netherlands

Abuse of the human rights of Hindus and how to raise our voice against it

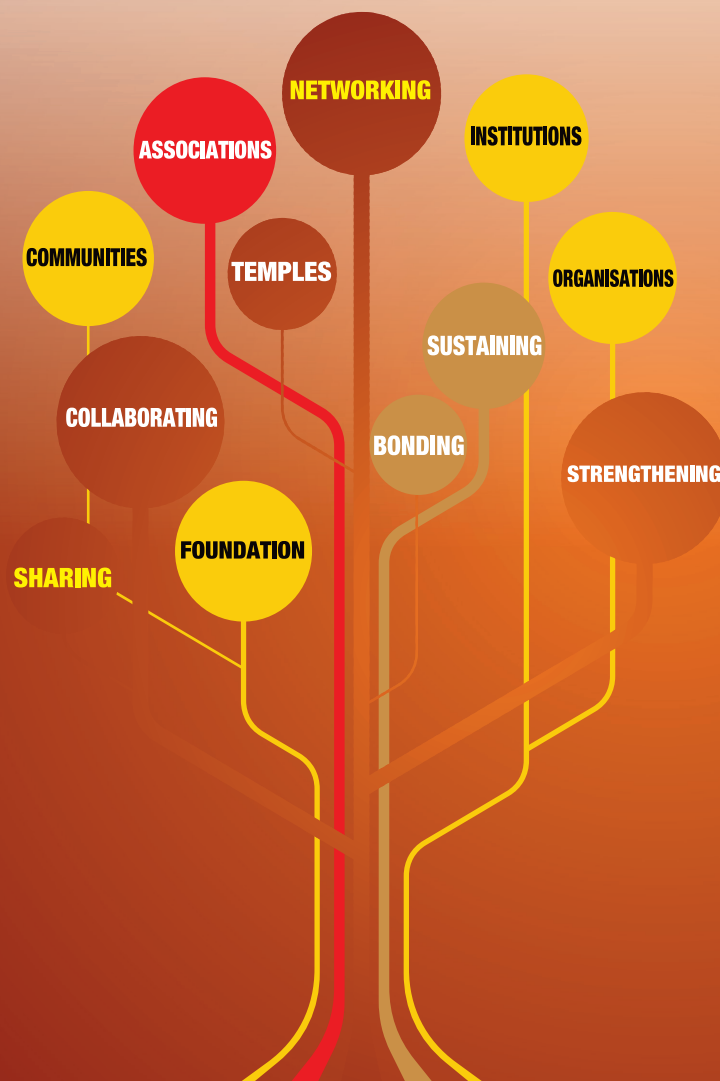
Sushri Devika said that GHRD is an International NGO that focuses specifically on promoting and protecting human rights in South Asia. It is guided by three pillars: human rights monitoring and advocacy, human rights empowerment, and human rights education. Human rights violation of Hindus is real, specifically, in areas of abduction, rape, and forced conversion of young Hindu girls in Pakistan. Approximately a hundred girls every year go through this. He said that without efforts to address this, we fail other Hindus and humanity.

Media coverage and pressure through global networks to address such violations will help us get positive outcomes for everyone. We need to be brave and stand together with a bold voice.





HINDU ORGANIZATIONS, TEMPLES AND ASSOCIATIONS (HOTA) FORUM **SANGHE SHAKTI KALIYUGE**



MISSION STATEMENT

The aim of the Hindu Organisations, Temples and Associations Forum (HOTA Forum) is to bring together all Hindu organisations, temples, associations, institutions and sampradayas, who are working for the Hindu resurgence, on one common platform. Additionally, HOTA Forum will empower Hindu organisations by providing necessary resources, encouraging networking and sharing of resources, and instilling a sense of pride.

INTRODUCTION

There are many different forces within the Hindu society working actively for the Hindu resurgence and renaissance. While the numerous groups working for the Hindu resurgence have been generally accepted among the Hindu society and even celebrated in some quarters as a sign of the strength of Hindu Dharma, there has also been a historical downside to this development mainly due to the chronic disorganisation of the Hindu society. One reason for this has been the disjointed efforts by Hindus leading to lack of assistance in the hour of need and inability to pool resources. Additionally, disparate Hindu organisations, while doing vital work for the Hindu cause, have rarely shared news of their activities with their fellow Hindus or their counterparts who are also attempting to make Hindu society stronger. This failure to disseminate information combined with the lack of coordination between various Hindu groups has hurt the Hindu resurgence more than helping it.

These numerous groups are striving to make Hindu society better as well as stronger, but are working for the Hindu community in their own individual capacities and usually work separately from each other. This has led indirectly to a lack of unity and organisation in the Hindu community, which ultimately has been detrimental to the overall interests of Hindu society. While various Hindu groups may wish to work separately due to various reasons, it is important that at the very least all these groups are kept informed about the activities of their fellow Hindus. This will allow for a more efficient division of labour and more efficient use of resources. If Hindu groups could learn to work together, or at the very least work in a more coordinated manner, the Hindu resurgence would greatly benefit from the efficient division of labour and the judicious use of resources that arise from this effort.

Prof Guna Magesan

Coordinator

Hindu Organisations Conference, WHC 2018, Chicago

Introductory Remarks

Prof Guna Magesan stated that the aim of HOTA is to bring Hindu organisations, temples, associations and institutions that are nobly working to serve Hindu society in their individual capacities on one common platform. The guiding theme of the conference is “Sanghe Shakti Kaliyuge (Organisation is Strength)”. The objectives of HOTA are to have effective networking, and encouragement, and to instill a sense of pride. This is done through positioning and branding; strengthening; defending; and promoting Hindu society. HOTA was started in New Zealand in 2010 as an outcome of the third New Zealand National Hindu Conference. Now, over 70 organisations, temples, and associations are part of HOTA. Prof Magesan also said that Hindu Society is viewed as non-united but it is the most united but unorganized society. Unity is visible in daily life. Hindu society is one. At present, it is like a soft laddoo, but we need it to be a kadak laddoo. This is the mission and vision of HOTA.



SESSION 1: MANDIR & CULTURE - SERVING THE NEEDS OF HINDU COMMUNITY

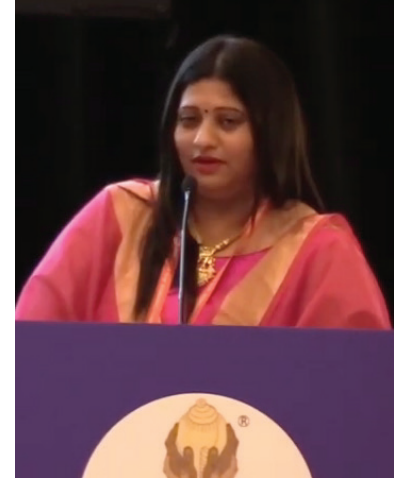
Chairperson:

Dr Srilekha Reddy Palle

Representative, Durga Temple of Virginia, USA

Introductory Remarks

Temple should be a place of worship along with youth, senior citizens and community services activities. One area of service that is lacking is marriage counseling.



Swami Parmatmananda Saraswati

Secretary-General

Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha, Bharat

Freeing temples from government clutches

Swami Paramatmananda mentioned that Hindus are completely ignorant about the Vidharmis who ruled our country, destroying our culture and plundering our wealth. Hindu Dharma is a vision that propounds everything that exists is not separated from Ishwara. Every practice/ tradition/ event in Hindu Dharma is a religious culture and is centered around a temple. From ancient times, temples have been centers of learning and for the preservation of art and culture. Later, the British government controlled the temples when there was an internal feud. After Independence, the government tried all means and ways to protect geopolitical boundaries but did not give attention to protecting cultural and religious boundaries. Hindu dharma teaches us tyaga – to be a contributor rather than a consumer. As temples were receiving donations, they became a soft target for state governments, and are used for political reasons. After taking over temples and their wealth, temple administration is managed by government officials, including non-Hindus. Swami Ji said if the government wants to manage the temples, then it should declare the state as Hindu State.

Shri Chanchalapathi Dasa

Akshaya Patra Foundation, Bharat

How a temple initiated the largest mid-day meal program in the world

Shri Chanchalapathi Dasa explained how ISKCON Temple initiated the largest mid-day meal in government schools in Bharat. The concept of Akshaya Patra started in the year 2000. Shri Prabhupada had mandated that no one should go hungry in a 10-mile radius of a temple. Akshaya Patra is the largest program with a mission that no child in Bharat is deprived of education due to hunger. Initially, 1500 children in five government schools were enrolled as part of the program. Now, mainly due to this program, many more children are enrolling in schools, which is a very positive sign. This program also encouraged teachers to teach better. The request for a mid-day meal has been growing. Today, Akshaya Patra feeds 1.7 million children every day in 12 states in 36 locations. Food safety is high. Reduces classroom hunger, increases teachers' focus, and attendance and decreases the dropout rate in schools. Sadhu Chanchalapathi Dasa concluded that the best Dana is Annadana.



Dr Siva Subramanian

Shiva Vishnu Temple, USA

Temple conceptualization and functions

Dr Siva Subramanian explained that the concept of temple construction is not new and it goes back to the Harappan civilization. Temple is a space with vibration for the overall well-being of an individual. It is the 'House of God' and the image inside is the 'Soul'. Its three features are Nagara, Dravida, and Sthapathya Veda – a science of energy, matter, space, rhythm, and form. The first Hindu Temple in America was established in 1906 in San Francisco by the Vedanta Society. Then a number of temples were established: Hollywood Temple in 1938, Santa Barbara in 1956, and Pittsburgh in 1976. Now, Hindu temples are everywhere in America wherever the Hindu population is living. The Hindu temple functions as four pillars – religious, cultural, educational, and service. In Shiva Vishnu Temple, as an example, there are many activities such as Youth involvement through education, SAT classes, Robotics training for local schoolchildren, and online/direct guest lectures. Seva program is a monthly sandwich program for the local community with volunteering from Hindu youth.

Shri Joseph Emmett

Vedanta Institute

Houston, USA

Spiritual but Not Religious (SBNR)

Shri Joseph Emmett claimed that our original nature is infinite. Unaware of this, we try to collect infinity externally. This never works and so we end up being pressured for pleasures. Hindu Dharma is a path, a means to liberate us from that pressure and reconnect us with our original nature. He quoted Adi Shankaracharya saying, "Knowledge is as important for liberation as fire is for cooking". We need to stop being over-occupied with the external world, which will happen only with knowledge so we can turn it into our real selves.

Religion is a beautiful container that holds knowledge. Today people carry the container and leave their belongings (knowledge). Without Dharma, pure philosophy will not sustain, both are needed. The religion is empty without the reasons and symbolism of all the rituals that are performed.



SESSION 2: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION AROUND THE WORLD

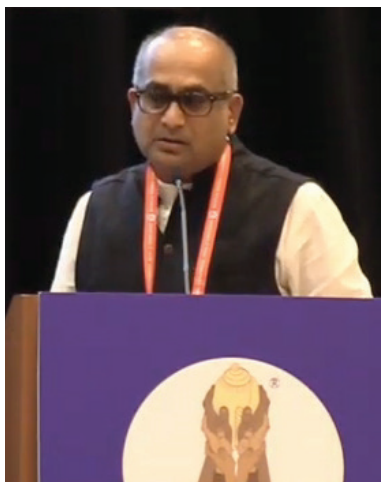
Chairperson:

Prof Ved Prakash Nanda
(Padma Bhushan)

Pro Vost, University of Denver, USA

Introductory Remarks

Prof Ved Prakash Nanda said that human rights violation anywhere is human rights violation everywhere. It has a global legal dimension. He mentioned several countries wherein people have been facing violations of human rights like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Roma, African countries, etc. Prof Nanda briefed about Romas / Gypsy who left Rajasthan in Bharat 1400 years ago. Their population is 12 million and still, today they face persecution across Europe in matters of housing, employment, and education. Yezidi communities who are facing genocide are hardly spoken of. They share beliefs like reincarnation with Hindus. He said that Hindu organisations abroad have petitioned different governments and international bodies to fight for the rights of persecuted communities. In the Netherlands, there is Global Human Rights Defense that selflessly works for the protection of human rights.



Shri Sradhanand Sital

Chairman, Global Human Rights Defense
Netherlands

Defending Human Rights

Shri Sradhanand spoke about Global Human Rights Defense (GHRD). The pillars of GHRD are human rights empowerment, education, awareness, and monitoring. To get justice, you need proof of human rights violations. So, formal and informal education programs are given to train people to build capacity and improve knowledge. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Fiji, and Sri Lanka are the main countries where the human rights of Hindus are violated. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, the main violations include abduction and forced conversion of Hindu girls, land grabbing, target killings, and attacks on Hindu religious places and minority houses, and the Hindu population has decreased drastically over the years. He lamented that in spite of the big Hindu presence on social media, no one comes forward to protest against Hindu human rights violations. Global support is needed to help fight this violation. Sital shared that several campaigns were organised to support religious minorities in Pakistan. According to him, Muslims and Christians aren't to be blamed, it's the Hindus that are to be blamed for not taking any action.

Shri Sitanghu Guha

Leader, BHBCUC USA, USA

Fighting for Hindus in Bangladesh

Shri Sitanghu Guha said that over the past few decades, Bangladeshi Hindu population has declined rapidly, the major cause being human rights violations against Hindus. Atrocities like rapes, forced religious conversion, abduction, target killing, etc, are being faced by the Hindus in Bangladesh. There is no justice being given to the Hindus. Influential members of all political parties, either of the ruling or opposition, are dislodging the Hindus to minimize the Hindu population. There is a rise in the destruction of Hindu places of worship, and Hindu villagers are forced to leave their ancestral homes finding themselves destitute. He questioned if it is possible to destroy the deities without religious vandalism. The misdirected government policies are turning Bangladesh into a haven for Islamic terrorists. Shri Guha Ji said that the Bangladeshi Hindus need Bharat's help to sustain and grow economically, socially, and politically. Hindu politicians and associations around the world need to raise their voices and come to the rescue of Bangladeshi Hindus.

**Dr Ajay Tejasvi Narsimhan**

Expert, International Politics and Leadership

Human Rights violation against Yazidi Community

Dr. Ajay Tejasvi, a volunteer of the Art of Living Foundation, spoke on the Yazidi Community. The current Yazidi population is less than a million and their religion is the oldest in the Middle East. They worship the Sun God, similar to Hindus or Vedic society. Yazidi community has endured 74 genocides and they have been facing the same problems like forced conversion, rapes, their places of worship, and houses being destroyed. More than 50% of the population is displaced. Dr. Ajay Tejasvi mentioned that Art of Living has been active in Iraq since 2003 supporting war widows, providing immediate relief to people in

Iraq, and ensuring that they have a way to stand up for themselves. The organisation also provides training to youngsters in Pranayama and meditation. Dr. Ajay Ji said that we need to make people aware of their issues so that they can stand against what is not right. Art of Living continues working for the Yazidi community through volunteers and youth leaders.

Dr Omendra Ratnu

Nimmitekam, Bharat

Pakistani Hindus: A genocide forgotten

Dr Omendra Ratnu said that the genocide of Hindus in Pakistan has escaped the world's attention and we have ourselves to blame for this. The Hindu leadership has failed to raise awareness of these around the world. Pakistani Hindus are in the need of help from other Hindus and Hindu leaders globally. He appreciated Prime Minister of Bharat Shri Narendra Modi for granting the district collectors of Jaipur, Jodhpur, and Jaisalmer the power to process citizenship for Hindu refugees. He has also given Pakistani Hindu refugees the right to have a bank account, driving license, and private property. Hindus are the most compassionate people on the globe and their suffering is undue.



SESSION 3: COLLABORATION BETWEEN AND WITHIN LINGUISTIC/ CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS

Chairperson:

Dr Harinath Policherla

President

Telangana American Telugu Association, USA

Introductory Remarks

Dr Harinath Policherla described the organisational structure of the Telangana American Telugu Association. There are 30 different organisations with regional coordinators. Its main goal is to promote language, culture, and festivals and to do social service or sewa. Unless we understand language, we cannot communicate and understand the culture. The culture, Hindutva can be imbibed by going to temples, listening to our elders, and reading poems in the mother tongue. He recited several poems in Telugu through which the essence of living can be learned and he said that these should be taught to the coming generation. He said we need to do social services by providing help to people coming from Bharat. He also said that linguistic organisations must meet and help promote culture.



Shri Balaji Rajgopalan

Entrepreneur and BATS Board of Director

Pro- Bharat and Hindu Dharma Cultural

challenges for Tamil Community in USA

Shri Balaji said Dravidian politics has been divisive, anti-Hindu and anti-Bharat over the last 80 years in Tamil Nadu. Shri Balaji and his friends started a Tamil organisation in the US that promoted not only Tamil language but also Hindu Dharma, after observing that the existing Tamil organisation did not celebrate all Hindu festivals. Changing the anti-Bharat perception of Tamil community is an accomplishment. His organisation speaks against any kind of injustice that happens to Hindus in US. He emphasized that youth and children

should become confident and proud Hindus while respecting the Tamil language. He lamented that the Tamil scripts and other literature are being plagiarized. He urged all organisations to come together to promote our culture. He said that it is our duty to protect, practice, and sustain Hindu Dharma.

Shri Anil Deshpande

Former Member

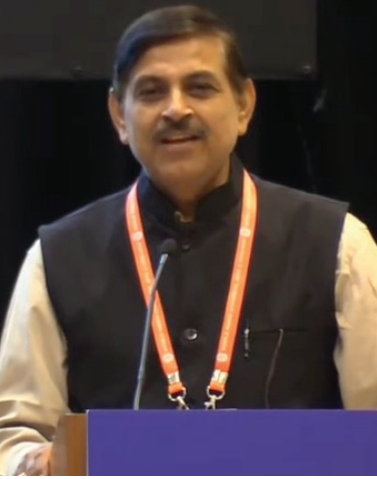
Board of Trustees, Association of Kannada Kootas of America, USA

Shri Anil Deshpande spoke of the cultural, architectural, and linguistic richness of Karnataka, the birthplace of Hanuman Jee. He emphasized that if language is lost, culture would be lost. So, Kannada language is promoted all over the USA. He said there are around 40 Kannada Kootas in the US that celebrate all Hindu festivals, promote Kannada culture and pass it on to the younger generation. The associations also do charity activities including education, women empowerment, health, and disaster relief. They also organize conferences to discuss problems and solutions. He suggested that an Olympics-style gathering should be organised to connect different linguistic organisations and to bring cultures together to achieve goals.



Dr Vasudev Patel

Medical Doctor and Community Volunteer, USA



Dr Vasudev Patel said Gujaratis are all around the world and are well established. There are 57 Gujarati associations in the USA but there is no single organisation that connects all associations. He has been working on this and has been successful in bringing together 39 associations. The future is to connect them to Bharat. Shri Vasudev Patel emphasised that the younger generation has to be connected and associated with the organisation. The organisation he belongs to does not just serve the Gujarati community but all Hindus and Bharatiyas. He informed that in Atlanta, they run a free medical clinic, legal aid, and youth camps in collaboration with other groups like Mexicans. He

suggested that all communities and associations should come together to prove to the world the power of a Hindu and Bharatiya.

Shri Avinash Padhye

President

Bruhan Maharashtra Mandal, USA

Shri Avinash Padhye said Bruhan Maharashtra Mandal is an umbrella organisation consisting of 65 Maharashtra Mandals with the aim to preserve and propagate Maharashtrian culture throughout North America. The organisation holds biannual conventions. All Mandals and associations are growing exponentially, and they organise programs to celebrate Hindu festivals and Hindutva. This organisation has a tie-up with Bharatiya Vidyapeeth and has designed a curriculum for the next generation. Language can help cross barriers and achieve the goal of uniting. Shri Avinash said he is very proud of all the linguistic organisations that have gathered with the passion of uniting as Hindus.

**Shri Judhajit Senmazumdar**

Naba Banga, USA

Shri Judhajit Senmazumdar said his organisation represents Naba Banga and believes in bringing the passion, beauty, and culture of Bengal to America. Bengal being the epicenter of Hindu spirituality had to go through the pain of partition. Communism grew and people's ideologies changed. Naba Banga believes in saving Bengal and its culture from Jihadis and helping Hindu Bengalis and Bangladeshis from oppression. In the USA, this organisation organizes Durga Puja and does regular fundraising to help Hindu human rights causes. It got appreciation from the Legislation Assembly of California for its work for the community. Shri Judhajit said it is the right time to bring back Bharatiyata and to raise the consciousness of being a Hindu and bring the non-resident Hindus to nationalistic Dharmic ideology.

Shri Sukhi Chahal

Founder and Chairman
Punjab Foundation, USA

Shri Sukhi Chahal shared that Sikhs and Hindus are related for ages. Guru Teg Bahadur Ji was martyred while protecting the interests of Kashmiri Hindus. Perception of Sikhs as anti-Bharat is propaganda to dissociate them from Hindus. Even if we have differences, at the end of the day we all should think collectively and become one. He said that all communities should understand each other and come together to work for humanity. He appreciated RSS Swayamsevak had come to the rescue of Sikhs during Delhi riots. He thanked the Hindu community for the same.



SESSION 4: OPERATIONAL MECHANISM FOR HINDUS TO REACH THE UNREACHED AREAS

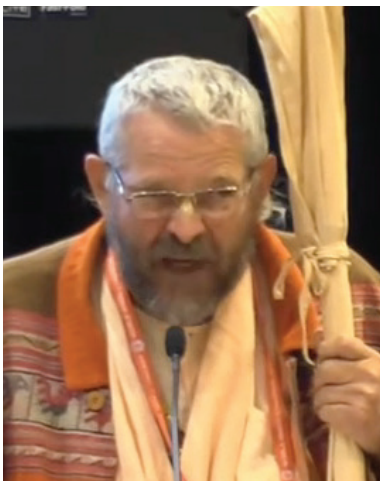
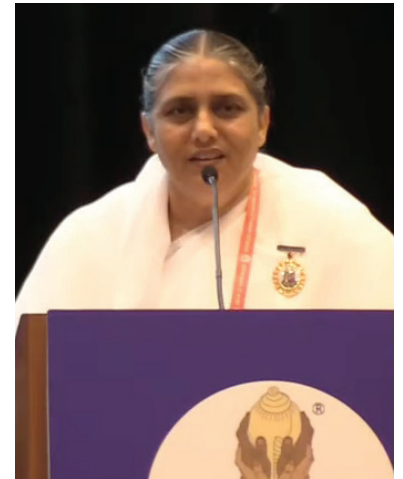
Chairperson:

BK Ushaben

Brahma Kumari World Spiritual University, Bharat

Introductory Remarks

Brahma Kumari Ushaben said all Hindus need to join hands so that diversified energy can be united. Hindu civilization is deep-rooted. The Hindu civilization originated from Dharma which means eternal truth. It also refers to Swadharma i.e., Dharma of our soul. The eternal Dharma of the soul is love, purity, happiness, bliss, and wisdom. BK Ushaben referred to the Bhagwat Gita, which says one should separate all bodily religions and realize that we are all eternal beings. She said Hindus are yet to come together under the canopy of spirituality which is universally accepted.



Swami BA Param Advaiti

Founder and Spiritual Master, VRINDA, Colombia

Reaching to the South American Community

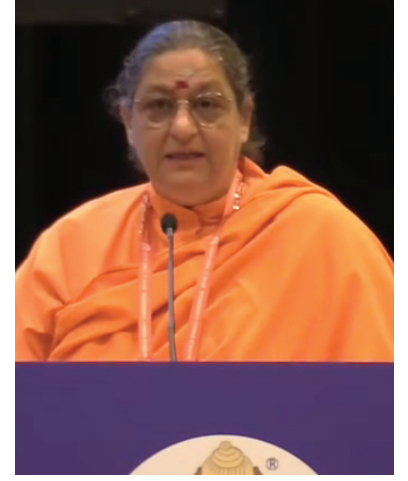
Swami Param Advaiti said that the idea of reaching out to the world with Hindu Dharma is in the heart of empathy, compassion and love. He came in contact with the beautiful world of Hindu Dharma in 1976. He established Eco Yoga Farms in South America to create awareness about Hindu Dharma, and to quench the thirst of people who wanted to know the truth and understanding of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. Swami Param Advaiti said the tribal people of South America have a similar lifestyle to that of practicing Hindus. They identify with yoga and simple, Vedic living. They believe in spirituality and the male and female divine. The philosophy of ancient tribes is based on Vaishnava philosophy. These ancient tribes were interested to be a part of the Kumbh Mela in 2019. These are ways of uniting people all around the world and bringing to them a sense of appreciation. He quoted Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, "Go and chant around the world and share whatever good thing you have from your race". He said that Hindu Dharma helps us get spiritual enlightenment.

Swamini Hamsananda Giri

Gitananda Ashram, Italy

Getting legal recognition of Hindu Dharma in Italian Government System

Swamini Hamsananda described the Italian Hindu Union (Sanatan Dharam Sangha of Italy) and how the first Hindu temple was built in Italy. In 1984, Italy became secular and other religions were recognized. Hindu Dharma was officially recognized in 2012. The Sangha promoted universal values of Hindu Dharma, and Hindu festivals from households to the Parliament. Now, Diwali has been recognized as an official Hindu festival as per the Constitution of Italy. The Sangha empowers Hindus in Italy by using various strategies like cultural camps, yoga, awareness about Ayurveda, etc. In Italy, people from Mauritius, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh shaped the true heart of the Hindu Community. The union represents all Hindu traditions and not a specific country. Support, sharing, and strength are the concepts of the Union and Dharma. Collaboration with businessmen and investment in social welfare helped in empowerment. She said that unity leads to empowerment and dharma itself means holding society together.



Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Hindu Monastery of Africa, Ghana

African community and Hindu thoughts

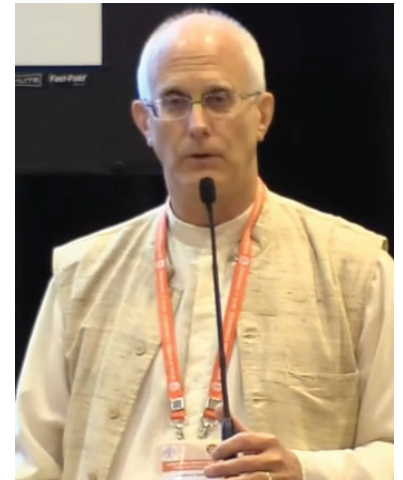
Hindu Monastery of Africa was formerly called Divine Life Society. In 1975, Swami Ghanananda became the first black Hindu in Ghana. He promoted Hindu Dharma and taught the Vedas to people in Ghana. Students of the University are offered a six-week-long Hindu Dharma class where they are taught Hindu practices and Vedas. There are five branches of the Hindu Monastery of Africa in Ghana with five different temples where aarti is performed every morning. Bhagavad Gita discourse is held in the local language so that people can understand the teachings. The current program of the organisation is to establish a school to spread education.

Shri Anuttama Dasa

ISKCON, USA

Reaching to unreachable areas – Focusing on Central Asia

Shri Anuttama Dasa said the founding principle of ISKCON is based on Bhagwat Gita. ISKCON is focused on promoting Vaishnavism and Hindu culture around the world. He discussed how ISKCON was started by Shri Prabhupada in Russia in 1971. In 1998, it was registered and now around 120 Hare Krishna Centers are present in Russia. Hindus celebrate various festivals and Rath Yatra also takes place in Moscow. Shri Anuttama Dasa said that Bharat and Russia share a very close relationship. The Russian language has many words that originated from Sanskrit. People do not face much trouble in practicing Hindu rites and rituals. Yoga, meditation, and vegetarianism have become common in Russia. He concluded by saying that if we want to enable the growth of Hindu traditions anywhere, we must be prepared to fight for the religious freedom of others.



SESSION 5: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES BEFORE THE HINDU SOCIETY

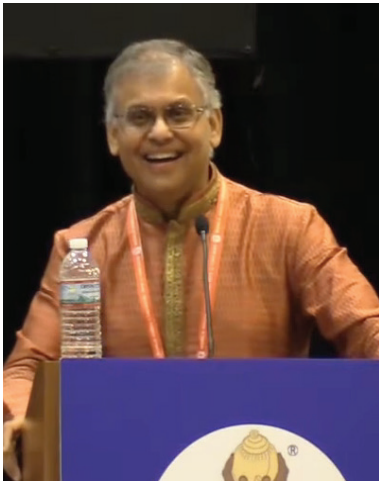
Chairperson:

Pandit Ram Hardowar

Shri Surya Narayan Mandir, USA

Introductory Remarks

Beginning with prayer, Pandit Ram Hardowar explained the challenges they had to face when the family came to Guyana and later shifted to North America. He said that in the West we act desirous of results but our tradition states otherwise. One should follow Dharma and leave results in the hands of God. Presenting this difference in philosophies to the Hindu young generation and to the West is itself a challenge. Concepts like “everything is God, karma is destiny, and untouchability and caste system does not exist in Hindu Dharma” have to be presented well. The temples should work as the Centers for knowledge transfer.



Dr Ajay Shah

Convener

American Hindus against Defamation, USA

Shaping Global Hindu Identity

Dr Ajay Shah explained the role of Vishva Hindu Parishad, America (VHPA) in shaping Hindu identity and elevating the life of a Hindu in America. Yoga, Ayurveda, and vegetarianism are gaining popularity all over America. The VHPA started many successful projects in America, such as Bal Vihars to teach Hindu ethics to children; the Hindu Student Council, the first Hindu Student organisation outside Bharat; and the Coalition of Hindu Youth for Young Hindu Professionals. VHPA celebrates Hindu Heritage Day to inculcate Hindu culture. Similarly, Hindu Mandir Executives Conference offers priests, leaders, and scholars to learn from one another and grow as one. The American Hindus against Defamation is a movement against the demolition of Hindu icons, cultures, and traditions. Dr. Shah said that VHPA inspires the vision of bringing the community together.

Prof I Ketut Widnya

Director General

Hindu Dept., Ministry of Religious Affairs, Republic of Indonesia

Challenge and opportunity before Hindu society in Indonesia and support from the global Hindu movement

Prof Ketut Widnya talked about the demographics of Indonesia. Muslims are 87%, while Hindus are just 1.2%. Indonesia is a group of 17 islands and Hindus are spread all around the country. It is a great challenge for religious leaders to ensure that all the Hindus around the country get the same service. They have established the Parishada Hindu Dharma, Indonesia in every province. He shared that the Indonesian Government has a Hindu Minister who can help cater to the needs of the Hindu community. There has been an increase in the Hindu population recently in Indonesia. He asked for help and support from the Hindu organisations globally so it can be made better by coming together.

**Acharya Shri Gaurang Nanavaty**

Chinmaya Mission, USA

Family: Incubator for Hindu Dharma

Acharya Gaurang Nanavaty said that Knowledge is the most important aspect of the Hindu Dharma. Many Hindu children born in Western countries attend pujas and celebrate festivals, but they lack awareness about the reason and logic behind such celebrations. Such important knowledge needs to be inculcated in the children. With many gods and deities, imparting knowledge of oneness is challenging. All Hindu organisations working for the community should come together, and work together to become the incubator of Hindu Dharma. Acharya Nanavaty said that do not just keep all Upanishads and Hindu religious books at home, invest time in them, study them, and spread that knowledge to increase its value.

SESSION 6: GLOBAL HINDUS MAKING A GLOBAL IMPACT

Chairperson:

Brahmchari Vrajvihari Sharan

Director

Hindu Life in Campus Ministry at Georgetown University, USA

Introductory Remarks

Brahmchari Vrajvihari quoted Chanakya, “Knowledge is poisonous when one is not adequately informed”. We need to be informed about how to perceive and achieve equality for Dharma. When Hindus rely on non-Dharmic methods to achieve parity for Hindu Dharma, it destroys the credibility of Hindu Dharma. A person who disregards the methodology of the Vedas and follows his/her own ways cannot attain moksha. To achieve global impact all the Hindus should be conscious of the effect that our methods have on every part of creation. Quoting from the Upanishads, he said that one achieves merit by serving. Hindus need to make sure that their self-identification as Hindu is well respected, and remember that everything is a part of Parambrahm Parmatma.

**Shri Gaurang Dasa**

Director, Govardhan Ecovillage, Bharat

Govardhan Ecovillage:**Rural development of Vedic smart villages**

Shri Gaurang Dasa informed that people are migrating from villages to cities. To reverse this trend, he shared his organisation's idea of SMART village which stands for stability, morality, ability, respectability, and credibility. He described that one achieves stability if one is satisfied. To arrest the rural population, has to be satisfied. Morality is a core value or attitude, and internal and external attitudes are the foundations of moral values. The internal attitude talks about a clean heart and the external attitude talks about a clean environment.

Govardhan Ecovillage taught moral values to villagers around the premises. The principle of ability talks about the empowerment of farmers and women in villages. They are taught organic farming and provided with healthcare. Govardhan Ecovillage has created opportunities for farmers to share their knowledge and they are given dignity and respect for what they are doing. Tradability makes sure that the farmers' produce is sold in the market under the brand HariBol. Gaurang Dasa requested everyone to come together and start a smart village revolution.

Shri Sanjay Tripathi

Executive Director for Pacific Region, HSS, USA

California Textbook Movement by Hindu community – A case Study

Shri Sanjay Tripathi discussed the California Textbook Movement in detail. He displayed various pictures that showed how different religions are depicted in the History and Social Sciences textbooks of California. While other religions are depicted in a positive way, Hindu Dharma was portrayed very negatively. He revealed that the content about Hindu Dharma in textbooks was mostly written by anti-Hindu scholars. Many Hindu communities, students, and parents came forward against these publications and protested. The movement grew stronger and had many dimensions including building an academic coalition and uniting various Hindu groups. The impact of the movement effectively countered Hinduphobia. Grass root movements are going on in each district school to choose accurate material. He said that movement is just the beginning.



Shri Satyanarayan Dosapati

Hindu Activist, USA

Hindu activism in America and the model to be replicated across the world

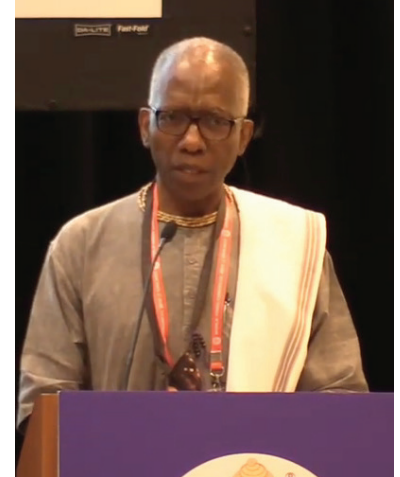
Shri Satyanarayan Dosapati showed a video on Hindu activism in the USA from 2007 to 2017. He shared how in 2007 he with other Hindus protested against the then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh who was allowing religious conversion in the state. They also campaigned against Sonia Gandhi being sent as the representative to UN on the International Gandhi Day. There was also a conference to discuss the issues regarding the scams because by electronic voting machines. The resolution of this conference was the introduction of voting through paper trails. Shri Satyanarayan Dosapati said that the main ingredient for activism is passion and deep love. It requires skill, patience, and commitment to drive everyone's energy towards the goal. He complained that NRIs organized mostly Bollywood and Tollywood and other activities, but not towards their Dharma.

Shri Balabhadra Dasa

President, Vedic Friends Association

Unifying our efforts for maximum social, cultural, and spiritual impact

Shri Balabhadra Dasa quoted the two great statements of Shri Prabhupada. Great sages are always anxious to do good for the people and are always anxious to perform acts that would bring peace to the world. He shared his journey of getting into ISKCON when within two years he lost his parents and his oldest brother. This was when his journey on the path of Vedic Dharma began. The biggest task in spreading the philosophies of Vedic Dharma is to take up the vast knowledge and make it accessible to people. He quoted the words of Shri Ravi Shankar that only unity is the power in this yuga. The prerequisites of growth are patience, perseverance, clarity of purpose, and flexibility to accommodate errors. Steven Knapp and Jeffrey Armstrong are the founding fathers of the Vedic Friends Association. Shri Balabhadra Dasa told that its unique selling proposition is that it is non-Bharatiya Hindu people. The team helps support each other and helps disseminate this information. This organisation promotes the Vedic culture among the people and youngsters of America.





PLENARY SESSION:
CONFLUENCE

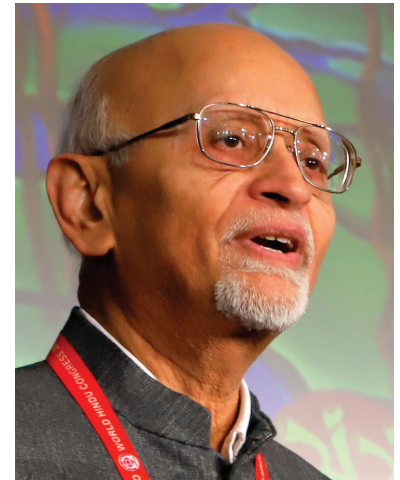


PLENARY SESSION CONFLUENCE

Dr Abhaya Asthana

Coordinator, WHC 2018

Dr Abhaya Asthana reaffirmed the value of togetherness among Hindus. Drawing on the example of Canadian Geese, he said they fly in a certain formation to conserve energy, provide lift to each other and reduce the air resistance. By being together and flying together, the Hindu community can uplift everyone. He said that this message can be adopted by the community and that by working together anything can be achieved.



Dr Mukesh Aghi

Coordinator, World Hindu Economic Forum

Dr Mukesh Aghi shared that the purpose of the economic conference was to discuss economic opportunities for global Hindus with a specific emphasis on US-Bharat relations. Some key areas that emerged through the discussions were: the trade frictions between the USA and Bharat, the importance of mentorship in creating expertise, the impact of the Make in Bharat program, and the pathway for Bharat to be one of the top five economies of the world by 2030.

The outcomes of the conference as shared by Dr Mukesh Aghi were the development of value-based leadership in trade and economic sectors; support and encouragement for emerging entrepreneurs and how to mentor young entrepreneurs in Bharat and build an ecosystem that provides capital to start-ups and online networking among SMEs for Hindus globally.

PLENARY SESSION CONFLUENCE

Prof Nachiketa Tiwari

Coordinator, Hindu Education Conference

Prof Nachiketa said that all the challenges before Hindus today are fundamentally anchored in the quality and type of education. Addressing education will get everything else aligned in the right direction. With that perspective, the Hindu Education Conference covered themes pertaining to how to provide quality education in growing economies; the development of Hindu scholars; how to network a large number of Hindu intellectuals working in different fields to collectively pool these resources and serve the cause of Dharma; and strategies to strengthen our traditions, knowledge systems and languages. The outcomes of the conference were, to work on developing a robust network of Hindu scholars from different areas of expertise, to put in place scholarships in the area of religious studies, and to develop methods and instruments to be able to preserve our language.



Shri Sushil Pandit

Coordinator, Hindu Media Conference

Shri Sushil began by saying that media is all-pervasive and we have to deal with it. He shared that the first session was on news. Some key areas for Hindus to address emerged through the discussions: “Fake news” including fake narratives being a big problem requiring strategies to counter with facts, responding to narratives developed with information shown out of context, and the role of technology on content delivery including the fragmentation of audiences as never seen before.

Further themes and highlights of the conference were: the contribution of media entrepreneurs, thus the need for more activist entrepreneurs, and the importance of all forms of media, especially written to connect with the next generation of Hindus.

The outcomes of the conference as shared by Shri Susheel were the need to develop and create Hindu journalists who can counter the development of alternate narratives and a need to connect with the next generation of authors.

PLENARY SESSION CONFLUENCE

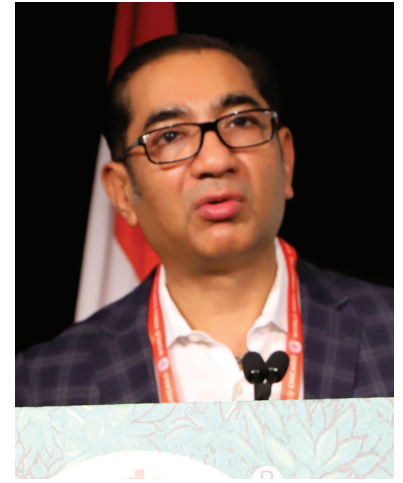
Shri Sanjay Puri

Coordinator, Hindu Political Conference

Shri Sanjay Puri appreciated and congratulated the panelists for bringing quality information and solutions to several problems faced by the Hindu community politically. Emphasising that political empowerment is very important for getting recognised, he reflected on the discussions that panelists had over the three days. Some key areas for Hindus to address emerged through the discussions: how to expand political leadership in Western democracies, the importance of collective strategies to address adverse and complex political environments, how to build a network of Hindus in the field of politics, and ways to empower the next generation of political leaders by training, mentoring and developing support systems.

Further themes and highlights of the conference were: the conditions faced by Hindus in hostile political environments globally, global missed opportunities due to the lack of local Hindus engaging in the political discourse, the lack of observed cohesion in engaging with the local democratic processes where Hindus are based.

Shri Sanjay shared that the outcomes of the conference included: the need to establish a transcontinental task force that can respond to adverse situations, there is a need for a group of mentors who can support the next generation with political aspirations.



Smt BL Ramarathna

Coordinator, Hindu Women Conference

Smt BL Ramarathna shared that the theme of the conference was the highest respect for women with the objective to aspire, achieve and inspire. During the course of the conference, scholarly analysis was made on topics such as Hindu women and economy, women and education, media and art, the role of Hindu women in shaping society, and inspiring women. Highlighting that for the common man their contribution to the economy would be to revitalize the calculative capabilities of women by improving access to knowledge, information, and finance which contribute to breaking the glass ceiling.

Media and Art are the two great tools to showcase the principles and values of Hindu Dharma. The conference discussed the portrayal of Hindu women and our responsibilities in media to change the narrative. Smt Ramarathna said that a woman with the power of nurturing can shape a child into a civilized citizen of the society. The conference discussed different ways, challenges, and opportunities to make a positive impact on society.



PLENARY SESSION

CONFLUENCE



Shri Parth Parihar
Coordinator, Hindu Youth Conference

Shri Parth opened by re-emphasising the objective of the conference to develop a confident generation of Hindu youth as ambassadors for Hindu Dharma. Themes that emerged from the conference were: the need to share strategies and best practices to create a global Hindu identity for the next generation; the need to speak against the biased portrayal of Hindu Dharma; inclusion of voices of Dharmic traditions in critical areas of public policy and the importance of Dharmic principles in economic growth.

Further areas that were of importance to the youth attending the conference were getting involved in politics in our countries and having an effective voice in responding to the terrible violations of the human rights of Hindus in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and other countries.



Prof Guna Magesan
Coordinator, Hindu Organisations Conference

Prof Guna Magesan re-emphasised that the aim of the HOTA Conference was to bring the Hindu organisations, temples, associations, language and community-based organisations, sampradayas, working for the Hindu resurgence on one common platform to share the best practices, experiences and ideas. The theme of the conference was “Sanghe Shakti Kaliyuge (Organisation is Strength)”.

Key themes discussed at the conference were freeing temples from government clutches; Human rights violations around the world and how to defend Hindu human rights in the countries where the conditions are adverse; operational mechanisms for Hindus to reach previously unreachable areas.

The conference concluded with a discussion about the challenges and opportunities before the Hindu society where shaping global Hindu identity and recognising the global impact that Hindus are making.

PLENARY SESSION CONFLUENCE

Dr Jai Bansal Coordinator, Poster Presentations

Dr Jai Bansal reflected that the poster presentation element was added to create diversity in the medium of communication that was highly interactive, personal, and scalable. With a gathering as diverse in attendees and events, poster presentation added another element to the experience of delegates bringing to the forefront areas that may otherwise have been left out of the WHC.



Concluding Session



PLENARY SESSION

CONCLUDING



Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu
Vice President, Republic of Bharat

Commemorated Swami Vivekananda and the speech he gave in Chicago in 1893 that made a great impact globally. WHC has provided us an opportunity to listen to eminent personalities and how they have dedicated their lives to spreading the message of Hindu Dharma. Global messages of Hindu Dharma that should reach everyone are that the whole world is one family and that dharma propagates pluralism, acceptance, and mutual respect. Hindus are diverse, but there is unity in this diversity.

Concluding with Swami Vivekananda's thoughts Shri Naidu reiterated that the progress of a nation will happen through the way it treats its humans. Respecting women is the culture and philosophy of Hindu Dharma. Everyone should rededicate to the thoughts that Swami Vivekananda had for the greatness of humankind and let us all work towards it.

PLENARY SESSION

CONCLUDING



Shri Bill Foster (Congressman)

Chicago, Illinois

Shri Bill Foster congratulated the organisers and participants of the World Hindu Congress for a successful event. Through interaction at WHC, he learned about the good that the Hindu community does for itself and for everyone around the world. He hoped that this Conference leads to a fruitful discussion of how to best support the principles of Hindu Dharma everywhere.



VOTE OF THANKS

Dr Bharat Barai

Organising Committee, WHC 2018, Chicago

Dr Bharat Barai thanked all the members of the Organising Committee, various sub-committees, Secretariat, Volunteers, and sponsors who had contributed to organising and making the World Hindu Congress 2018 a success.



WHAT IS DHARMA ?

Dharma is NOT a religion, it is NOT a tradition, it is NOT culture, it is NOT ethnicity, it is NOT nationality, it is NOT faith, it is NOT even a way of life. Dharma means "That which sustains". There is NO word in English or any other language that accurately conveys the real meaning of Dharma. Therefore Dharma is Dharma.

WHAT IS HINDU DHARMA ?

"Hindu" is an unbounded word and symbolizes Sanatan (Eternal). Dharma means "That, which sustains". That which ETERNALLY SUSTAINS EVERYTHING (individual, family, community, society, nature, animate and inanimate) is Hindu Dharma.



World Hindu Congress 2014, New Delhi

“Many of us felt that history had been made here. For the first time since the last Hindu empire of Vijayanagar, Hindus proudly gathered to remind the world that every sixth human being on this planet is the inheritor of the most ancient Living Knowledge.

For more than twenty centuries—from Alexander, to the first Arab invasions, then the British, Portuguese, Dutch and French—Hindus have been colonized, persecuted, converted by force and killed, creating in the Hindu community a self-loathing and fear that makes them cringe and retreat at the least hint of danger. Miraculously, Hindu Dharma and Hindu survived and suddenly, Hindus came out of hiding, traveling from Bharat, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mauritius, Fiji, South Africa, US, UK, Canada, Bangladesh and Pakistan. They stood together and shouted: “We are here. We have been on this Earth at least ten thousand years and we have much to give to the world.”

Nor were these the old guard, though they led the charge. These were Hindu youth—and modern Hindu youth—with their smartphones, iPads and social networking apps: software geeks, engineers, writers, advocates, doctors, bankers and businessmen. Bharat is one of the youngest nations, with a median age of 25 compared to Japan’s 48 and America’s 35. The new Hindus have arrived. They are savvy, connected and hungry for change, and for its partner, power. I have attended many such conferences, and seen that they provoke few real changes. But this one was different; it was a tangible symbol, a sign, an occult happening. Swami Vivekananda’s and Sri Aurobindo’s call for a renaissance of Bharat has begun.”





**ONE
INSPIRATION**

www.worldhinducongress.org