



# **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**

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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**

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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**

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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**

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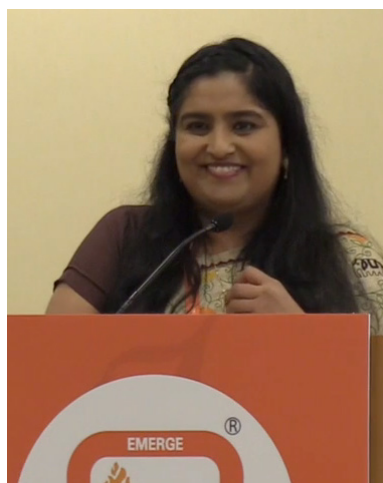
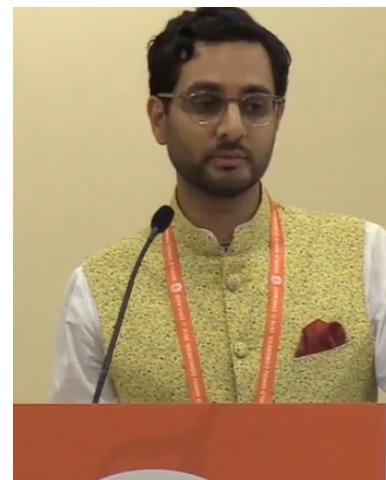
To talk about his topic, Shri Nihar took the example of the California Textbook Movement that brought together youth, parents, and educators of the Bharatiya American community to fight against the perceptions or stereotypes about Hindu Dharma through academics. Through a concerted and continued effort 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**

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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**

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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**

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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**

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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.



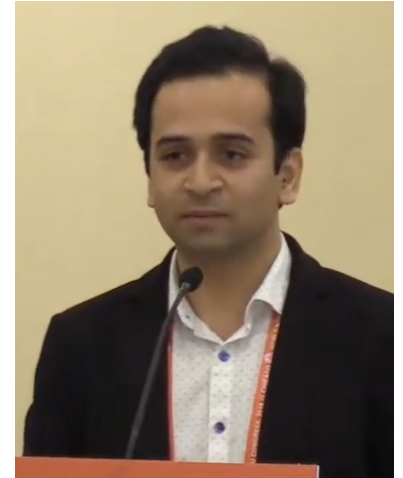
## SESSION 5: POLITICS AND HUMAN RIGHTS - IMPORTANCE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

**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**

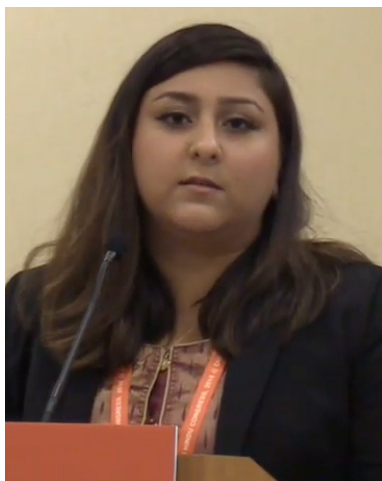
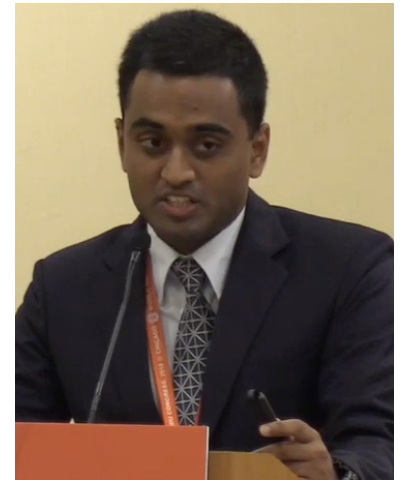
Media in the Western countries has a narrative that is still driven by a sense of white elitism and because of this most of the important Hindus stories aren't covered. Bharat's ancient wisdom and traditional knowledge of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", "Sarve Bhawantu Sukhinaha" need to be brought to the forefront. 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

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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

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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.

