



ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2018-19

Ananta Aspen Centre  
Annual Report  
2018-19



## Message from the Chairman

SATINDER K LAMBAH  
Chairman, Ananta Aspen Centre

2018 showed that pursuit is best fuelled by passion. Ananta Aspen Centre stretched to chase its dream and opportunities followed.

The Centre had been planning a meaningful initiative on women and gender issues. In 2018, its efforts resulted in the GP Birla Fellowship for Women Leaders. This initiative has been designed to help women from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities realize their leadership potential. It is unique in that it shifts the gender narrative from empowerment to power and builds a network of fellows to act as a growth ecosystem for women seeking to shatter glass ceilings. The Kamalnayan Bajaj Fellowship welcomed its 7th cohort; it is heartening to see the tribe of leaders keen to transition from thought to action, growing by the day. The ASEAN Fellowship is also shaping up well. The Centre is running it with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, to help young leaders of the ASEAN countries develop an understanding and appreciation of each other's issues.

This understanding of other countries is an important step to a broader and better worldview. The Centre's Ambassador Series works in this direction. In 2018, it held several sessions under this series to give leaders and influencers an opportunity to interact with emissaries of different countries and get deep insights on issues important to both nations.

The manner in which nations engage with each other, change rapidly. Which is why, it is important to have continuous multi-

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*The world is faced with difficult issues. These challenges should be tackled with the right intent and in the spirit of collaboration.*  
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stakeholder dialogues between countries at the Track 2 level. In 2018 the Centre held bilateral Strategic Dialogues with China, Israel, Korea and Singapore. India-Israel ties have moved beyond traditional areas of cooperation and diversified into technology cooperation, education and academic curriculum, food security and water efficiency. In the case of Korea, both countries recognize that they have complementarities that should be leveraged to serve mutual interests. India and Singapore share a warm relationship. The India-Singapore Strategic Dialogue further builds on this and also explores avenues such as energy security, skill development, aviation, infrastructure and strengthening India-ASEAN relations. The Dialogue with China just after the Wuhan Summit reflected its spirit without any significant change of attitude

on major issues.

The 8th meeting of the India – US Track II Dialogue on Climate Change, convened soon after the release of the Katowice rule-book, was especially important. It contextualized the political atmosphere around climate change policy at the global, national and sub-national levels and set the tone for key discussions on air quality and reduction of short-lived climate pollutants, shared and electric mobility, financing energy transition, and the role of science and technology in climate and energy policy.

Finally, I am happy to report that the Centre took concrete steps to contribute to the socio-economic development of Kashmir by facilitating actionable ideas such as career counselling and leadership programme for the youth and also support for the visually impaired.

We are well into 2019. The world is faced with difficult issues, many of which need our urgent attention. The only way to bring back equilibrium is by tackling challenges with the right intent and in spirit of collaboration. Leadership and Dialogue have never been more critical to a strong society. Ananta Aspen Centre remains committed to building one and looks forward to your continued support and goodwill.

*Satinder Lambah*

# India's World

**Dr Naushad Forbes**, Past President, CII, and Co-Chairman, Forbes Marshall, writes on how an inclusive, open and tolerant India can lead the world

I believe India has a unique opportunity to lead the world. Leading the world starts with economic performance. India has been one of the world's ten best performing economies in the last 25 years. Even more important, every projection says we will be one of the world's ten best performing economies in the next 25 years. By simple dint of population, we are one of the world's top economies. Regardless of what they do, a Singapore or Norway cannot aspire for world leadership.

But can we lead the world? We have serious competition. Britain led the world as the first industrial nation from the mid 18th century to the late 19th century. The US then took its place, a position it held through the 20th century. As the US steps back from global leadership, we know that China aspires to take its place. Starting at much the same level as India in 1980, the Chinese economy is today five times the size of the Indian economy.

We are much better placed for this leadership role in India. We are a noisy Democracy - you just need to watch the nightly entertainment shows that we pass off as The News for confirmation. (Arnab Goswami in a closing interview question with then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley asked what advice he would give him to improve his show. He replied "I'd suggest that no more than two people speak at once"). But this noisy democracy is an unalloyed strength for us as a country.

When President Xi Jinping made his claim for global leadership at his speech in Davos, much was made of the fact that he quoted Charles Dickens and Abraham Lincoln. This would not be remarkable in India. Dickens and Lincoln are a part of our Indian heritage. Every time I watch a new Bollywood song, I am struck at how inclusive our culture is - we take the best that the world has to offer,

*An economy that leads the world has to be inclusive – a larger share of the population has to become more prosperous than in its peers*

and seamlessly integrate it all into something that is distinctly Indian. And, I would add, as a result of this integration - distinctly better than anything else available. Our ability to make sense of various strands, to integrate and include, to thrive on diversity of ethnicity, community, language - this is what makes us unique. We Indians come in all shapes, sizes

and colours - and we are all Indian.

So what must we do to lead the world? We have much to do to achieve this aspiration - in economic policy, in the role of industry, in building and nurturing great institutions. But three underlying principles provide the foundation for leadership.

An economy that leads the world has to be inclusive - a larger share of the population has to become prosperous than in its peers. Economic historians who have studied Britain and the US over the last three centuries differ on why each country moved ahead when it did. But they agree that Britain in the 18th century provided greater equality of opportunity than the much more aristocratic, even feudal, societies across the channel - and that the benefits of growth and progress flowed down through society in however imperfect a manner. The same for the US from the 19th century onwards - giving the world its first definition of the Middle Class Good Life. India must similarly be inclusive in progress. This means a focus on skills and education both by industry and government at a much greater pace. As firms, we need to have in place strong affirmative action policies, with widespread implementation of the CII code. Recruiting from a country of 1.3 billion skilled people will make our firms champions. Selling to a country of 1.3 billion consumers will create wealth for all of Indian industry and for the world.



Second, whoever has led the world in history has tended to be open. Open - to trade and imports. Britain emerged as the world's first industrial power, accounting for an unimaginable share of world manufactured output and trade by an aggressive promotion of free trade. Open, also, to immigration, as the world's talent seeks to make the country its home. Britain in the 19th century saw many continental entrepreneurs and scientists make their home there as immigrants. The US, until Donald Trump, defined itself as a nation of immigrants. And Open, third, to diversity. This diversity shows in different ways, but especially in social status springing from achievement rather than birth. During the British Industrial Revolution, the great pioneers - who made great fortunes - were often from outside the traditional elites: they were Quakers, Scots, and Jews as often as they were Anglicans. Silicon Valley, we are told, is built around the IC - and IC means Indians and Chinese. As we aspire for world leadership, we too must celebrate our diversity as a huge strength - we should be proud of having the world's third largest Muslim population, largest Parsi population (this doesn't take much!), and being the birthplace of Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs. We should delight in having 22 official languages instead of one national language, and a plurality of cuisines that makes any definition of "Indian" food problematic.

The third foundational principle is moral leadership. Britain's policy of free trade from the 1850s, and the US' policy of free trade from the 1950s until Trump, were advanced not just as economically superior but morally superior. Britain in the 18th and 19th century and the US in the 20th century were the key advocates of ideas of openness - to trade, to immigration, to technology. They were also

*Our famous diversity and tolerance enables us to lead the world in a manner which is distinctly liberal and distinctly Indian at the same time*

advocates of individual freedoms - of speech, of the media, of public dissent. These ideas of openness, of generosity, of immigration were never practiced in a manner that was pure or undiluted, but they were powerful and compelling and widespread enough to be part of a national ethos of tolerance. And

this national belief system became more and more an international belief system. All this went with both societies becoming magnets for the best and the brightest as immigrants sought to make the country their new home. A country that seeks leadership should welcome all comers. And note that we have to welcome all comers, not just seek to pick the best and brightest. Today's unimpressive Russian or Iranian or Venezuelan or Rohingya or Bangladeshi student might tomorrow create a Google or win a Nobel or write a best-seller.

I can think of no other country at any point in time better placed than we are to provide the Inclusion, the Openness, and the Liberal Tolerance that would lead to global leadership. A country that leads the world must do so economically. Our famous diversity and tolerance enables us to lead the world in a manner which is distinctly liberal and distinctly Indian at the same time.



**Dr Naushad Forbes** is a Trustee, Ananta Aspen Centre



Ananta Aspen Centre's marquee leadership programme, **KAMALNAYAN BAJAJ FELLOWSHIP** seeks to develop a new generation of values-based, action-oriented leaders to serve India. It focuses on young, entrepreneurial leaders from Business, Government and Civil Society between the ages of 35-45 and encourages them to move from thought to action. In 2018, the Fellowship graduated its 6th class.



2018 also saw the induction of the seventh cohort of the **KAMALNAYAN BAJAJ FELLOWSHIP**. Seen here, snapshots from the KBF seminars held in 2018.





**ASEAN-INDIA LEADERS FELLOWSHIP:** It is a unique values-based leadership programme conceptualized by Ananta Aspen Centre in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN India Partnership. The programme has helped promote ties among successful young leaders from the region and enhanced socio-cultural ties among India and ASEAN member states. The programme has participants from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and India. Seen in this picture, Dr S Jaishankar, then President, Global Corporate Affairs, Tata Sons Private Limited, Government of India and Ms Kiran Pasricha, CEO of Ananta Aspen Centre, interacting with some of the participants.

Snapshots from the **ANANTA ASPEN EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAMME**: This initiative works with bright college students between ages 18–22 years, helping them shape into leaders of tomorrow, develop skills of problem solving, strategy and networking, build knowledge, awareness and appreciation for “diversity” in viewpoints and connect with their inner values.



# Promoting a civil society discourse on the status of women in India

**Pratibha Jain**, *Founding Partner & Head of the New Delhi Office, Nishith Desai Associates*, writes on the need and nature of a societal discourse on the status of women in India

## Current situation

I have now been part of numerous panel discussions on a wide array of issues related to women, including participation of women at workplace, sexual harassment, empowerment of women, violence against women etc. Most of these discussions had only women panellists and majority of the audience were women. While the discussions were important in terms of giving women a platform for discussion and a judgment-free environment to discuss these issues, from each discussion, I came back feeling that we didn't have a meaningful discourse. It was more a forum for us to acknowledge to each other that certain problems existed. However, absence of voice or active participation of the other 50% of the population is an indication that we are far from creating a discourse on these issues, let alone finding workable solutions.

The laws in our country have come a long way in providing equal rights to women—whether in inheritance or marriage or divorce, or providing freedom from violence—whether at birth or during the terms of our lives. We had the benefit of growing in a country where universal adult franchise was included in our constitution since its framing, unlike certain developed countries that had to make constitutional amendments to their Constitutions to provide women the right to vote. Over decades, the Parliament has provided

reservation for women in panchayats and we now have Board seats for women in listed companies. And yet the reality is we are still a far cry from developing an egalitarian society that respects men and women equally. It then begs the question, why is there a huge gap between the provisions of rights to women in India and enforcement of the same? Or alternatively put, what needs to be done to build a society that will treat men and women with equal respect and dignity.

## Why discourse is important

The first step is to recognise the need for a discourse in our society. Before we discuss about the type of dialogue that is required to be created on gender issues, I believe it is important to underscore the need for such a discourse:

### i. Equality and Justice

The two core principles of any democratic society that believes in good governance are equality and justice. The issues relating to women are at the heart of an effort to promote equality and ensure justice. When there are systemic forms of inequalities that are affecting the ability of women to achieve equal progress in the society, it undermines democratic governance. The institutionalised form of inequalities that are affecting women go deeper than what law and institutional

reforms can effectively address. They are at the foundations of our social norms, social attitudes and civic culture. There is an urgent need to address this as a part of our aspiration to build an egalitarian society. The consequences of a society that doesn't treat men and women equally is reflected in the justice delivery system. Unequal treatment of men and women exacerbates the injustices that are already prevailing in our society. The legal system including laws, rules, regulations, courts and other democratic institutions are expected to fulfil their duties and responsibilities to build an equal society. Law is expected to protect all individuals – men and women from social and economic inequalities. But when law becomes weak and at times, even aligns itself with the existing biases and prejudices of discrimination against women, the justice system is undermined. The need for a discourse on rights and justice is central to our aspiration to build a society that will treat men and women equally.

### ii. Democratizing the process of building an inclusive society

The discourse that we need to promote in our society is based upon a firm belief in the idea of democracy. It is about trusting people and their ability to make choices. However, we need to take democracy to the next level of citizens' engagement in India. Electoral democracy, by its very nature may end up



*It needs to be recognised that issues relating to women have not been perceived to be issues of policy priority let alone part of electoral aspirations*

very young nation. There is a need for engaging with the youth across our high schools and higher education institutions.

### ii. Sensitizing workplace and professional organizations

There is an urgent need to develop a greater level of awareness including sensitising all work places including in professional organisations. The numerous instances of sexual harassment including such acts committed by individuals holding positions of power and responsibility have undermined the efforts to create safe spaces for women. We need to build a robust system within organisations that will create a culture of safety and accountability.

### iii. Public interest campaigns in media

There is a lot that can be done in India through campaigns that will involve the public at large. People are keen to participate in such campaigns as they believe that their voice ought to be heard.

### iv. Create awareness of existing laws

The existing laws should be strengthened but more importantly, we need to build greater awareness about existing law so that people are made aware of their rights.

### v. Training and capacity building with law enforcement agencies

There is a tremendous scope for conducting training and capacity building programmes with law enforcement agencies. Sensitization of decision makers in police, judiciary or bureaucracy is key to ensure that laws created to promote equality are enforced in their spirit and letter.

determining certain issues of significance as its core issues of policy priority. For example, consistently elections are contested on issues relating to economic development, rural and urban infrastructure, jobs and livelihood issues, terrorism, national security, and may be, corruption. Rarely do we have a robust discourse during elections on the situation of women in India. In fact, the mainstream political parties have never given more than 10-15% of seats for women representatives in the Parliament. It needs to be recognised that issues relating to women have not been perceived to be issues of policy priority let alone part of electoral aspirations. This needs to change. We need to help in democratising the process of building an inclusive society in which women play an equal and significant role.

### iii. Creating awareness for empowering people and reducing vulnerabilities

There are huge vulnerabilities relating to women that never receive any attention, let alone get addressed. The first step is to focus on creating awareness for empowering women. There is a need for building social consciousness that will enable the development of an ecosystem where we can discuss these issues in a candid manner. The need for empowerment is critical when it comes to creating awareness. The more we focus on the empowerment of women, the more we

will be able to reduce our vulnerabilities.

### iv. Ensuring Responsibility and Accountability

The next step in our effort to develop a discourse is to work towards developing legal and institutional mechanisms that will ensure responsibility and accountability. Both these aspects are critical to instil faith in our commitment. Our effort to recognise the importance of responsibility and accountability will enable women to feel as equal citizens in the society. When violations take place with impunity and there is no form of responsibility or accountability, there are two consequences: first, it emboldens the perpetrators and creates a culture of impunity; second, it weakens the victims and creates more vulnerability for the victims and potential victims creating a culture of fear. This has to change in a significant manner to enable the development of a culture of transparency that will foster accountability, and that will be facilitated through creating forums for discussions on these issues. Public naming and shaming can act as a strong deterrent in addition to penal consequences.

## Nature of discourse needed

### i. Engaging with the youth in educational institutes

850 million people in India are less than 35 years of age. This means that we are indeed a



**Pratibha Jain** is a Bajaj Fellow Class 7

ananta  
aspen centre

*Congratulations!*

GP BIRLA FELLOWSHIP  
FOR WOMEN LEADERS

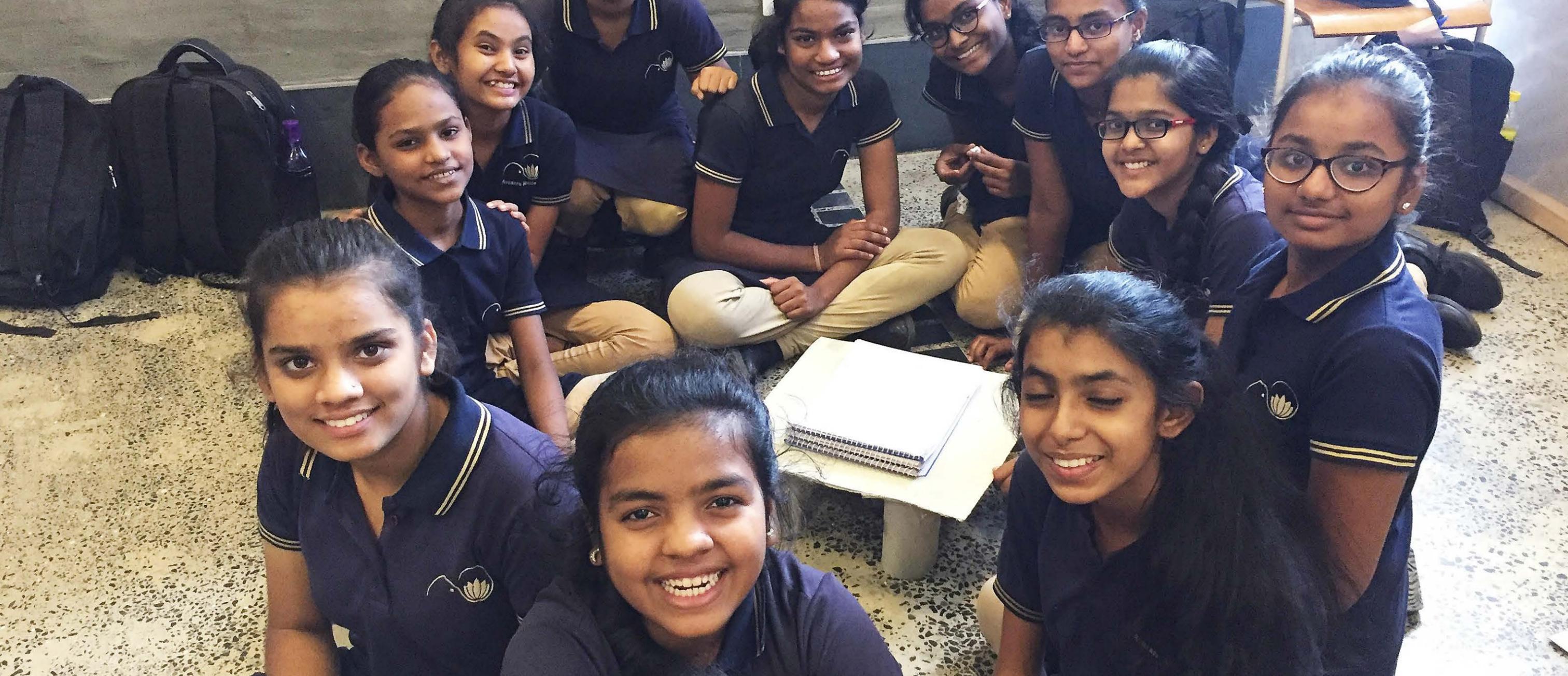
GP Birla  
Fellowship  
for Women  
Leaders

In 2018, The Centre started the **GP BIRLA FELLOWSHIP FOR WOMEN LEADERS**. The programme aims to take a carefully selected group of young women (27-35 years) with leadership potential, through a series of experiences and sessions that catalyze their journey from success to significance, through a strong foundation of self-belief, enlightened introspection and a formidable spirit of collaboration. Seen here is Class 1, which graduated this year.





Snapshots from the **GP BIRLA FELLOWSHIP FOR WOMEN LEADERS**



## LEADERSHIP

# THE POWER OF OPPORTUNITY: HOW A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL FOR GIRLS IS CREATING TRANSFORMATIONAL ROLE MODELS IN A SINGLE GENERATION

*Avasara Academy is the brainchild of **Roopa Purushothaman**, Chief Economist and Head of Policy Advocacy at Tata Sons and a Kamalnayan Bajaj Fellow. Avasara Academy works to develop the leadership potential of India's brightest young women through its unique approach to learning and development. Roopa started this initiative as a part of her social venture for the Bajaj Fellowship.*

**A**VASARA ACADEMY's website speaks of it as a place where talent meets opportunity. But for many of its students, it is the place where inequity is shown the door. Nestled in a picturesque part of Pune, Avasara Academy was started in 2015 by Roopa.

Roopa herself is a fine example of how far one can go on a level playing field. She grew up in New Jersey, graduated from Yale and earned her master's degree from the London School of Economics. By the time she was 38, she had already worked at Goldman Sachs, co-authored the BRIC report, led research at Everstone Capital and been a member of the Prime Minister's advisory committee for Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM).

For many women growing up in India, the journey is different. The country has nearly 120 million women of working age educated to secondary-level and above, who do not participate in the workforce. While 74% of adolescent girls across the country have specific career aspirations, only 23% of working-age women work. Even if a half of the secondary and above educated female population were to join the workforce, it could help add USD 400 billion to India's GDP.

As she progressed in her career, Roopa was convinced that when bright young women work with inspired teachers, mentors, and curricula, there are no limits to what can be achieved. The conviction translated into action with Avasara Academy -- 120000 sq. ft of aesthetically designed development space for girls of exception calibre who continually

challenge themselves academically and stand out for their intellect, energy and relationships with classmates. The objective of the admission process is as much to identify future leaders irrespective of demography. The academy has an equitable mix of students: from daughters of painters, drivers, carpenters and clerks, to those of businessmen and corporate executives.

The school ensures that the girls realise their potential through a unique pedagogy that combines academic excellence with leadership, entrepreneurship and India studies. Curriculum and teaching methods are the school's calling card and designed to create future leaders. The Academy follows a recognized and rigorous Cambridge A-Level curriculum, while the learning experience includes faculty advisors, mentors, independ-

ent study opportunities, small class sizes and a curriculum of extraordinary depth.

The focus on a leadership curriculum is to help students be critical thinkers and develop their leadership skills, including public speaking, negotiation, project execution, and managing group dynamics. Entrepreneurship studies expose students to case studies, experts, and hands-on projects to explore the world of business and social enterprise.

Importantly, the Indian Studies curriculum gives students an opportunity to explore Indian history, geography and the challenges confronting contemporary India. This helps them contextualize their learning and reflect on what it means to be a citizen of a rich and complex country.

Avasara breaks from the traditional lectures to an interactive model based on thinking, writing, discussing and problem-solving. The faculty acts as both guide and facilitator as it interacts with students through course activities, discussions, and one-on-one conferences. Students learn through personalized interaction, team discussions and peer work. All this is within the framework of a highly structured pedagogical plan.

Each student has a faculty advisor. Together, the student and her advisor develop a

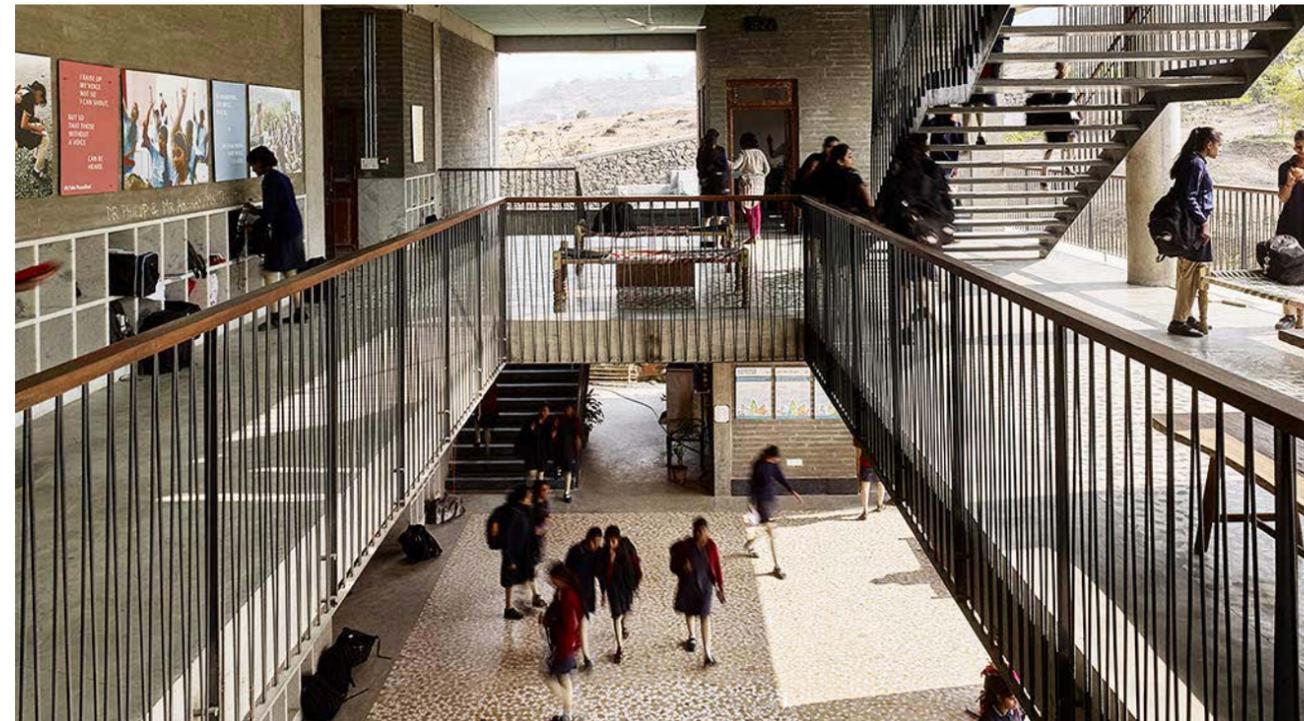
balanced academic program, making full use of the resources available. The advisor is the friend, philosopher and guide who helps the student with multiple things: -- from choosing a course to finding academic and personal resources. Advisors also counsel students on careers options and university shortlisting.

Another crucial thing that the school provides its students with is the opportunity to interact with individuals from diverse fields of work. Avasara guest speakers are leaders and entrepreneurs from a wide range of backgrounds and professions. They come from the public, private and social sectors. The school's speaker series helps students identify role models, demystifies various aspects of leadership for them, allowing them to debate the traits that make each leader effective, equipping them as they begin their own journeys.

Everything that the school offers is cutting edge and has a cost. However, it is not the children who have to pay for it. The school believes that a student's ability to pay fees should not affect their chances to experience this unique and holistic educational opportunity. All it seeks of its girls is that they be exceptional; financial assistance programs and scholarship opportunities ensure that all admitted students can complete school.

As Roopa writes on the school site – “We see Avasara students graduating with strength of character, a creative and entrepreneurial spirit, the ambition to stretch their talents, and above all, the drive to lead.”

Avasara looks all set to facilitate transformational change – in a single generation.



*“We see Avasara students graduating with strength of character, a creative and entrepreneurial spirit, the ambition to stretch their talents, and above all, the drive to lead.”*

— *Roopa Purushothaman*

L-R: **Ms Kiran Pasricha**, CEO Ananta Aspen Centre; **Roopa Purushothaman**, Chief Economist, Tata Group, **Mr Natarajan Chandrasekaran**, Chairman Tata Group at the inauguration of the new wing of the Avasara Academy





Snapshots from **THE SHRI RAM ANANTA ASPEN LEADERSHIP SCHOOL**: This two-week residential programme for students of grades 9-12 aims to build values-based leadership skills and encourage children to become confident and deep thinkers. In 2018, TSAALs graduated its 7th class. 72 students from 21 cities across the country participated.



# The importance of dialogue in a democracy

*Dialogue is intrinsic to a strong and open society; we need to invest in creating a culture of informed exchange and pluralistic views.*



The essence of democracy is that it gives every stakeholder the equal right to participate in the management of public affairs, directly or indirectly. Democracy presupposes that every citizen has both, the right as well as the responsibility to engage in the affairs of the society. However, every society is a heterogeneous entity comprising of people with different worldviews. When different points of view come together, there is bound to be disorder and conflict. The difference between democracy and other political philosophies is that it stresses on dialogue to bring together these multiple points of views and resolve conflict.

There are different levels of dialogues in a democracy. Political forces dialogue inside the parliaments, government and the people interact through consultation processes, there is conversation at the civil society level between different stakeholders. Exchange at the civil society level is especially critical because it strengthens people participation in societal issues. In conjunction with those between governments, dialogue at citizen level between stakeholders of two countries can go a long way in strengthening bilateral relations. In fact, dialogue and the open exchange of ideas among countries and with civil society is held vital to democracy and the promotion of human rights.

Dialogue is the most effective way to reach a resolution that is acceptable to eve-

rybody. However, the process needs to be inclusive in terms of representation. Diversity ensures that multiple facets of an issue get tabled. In the absence of diverse representation, the dialogue will not throw up plurality of views and consequently will not lead to a well-considered solution. Equally important to the process are structure and discipline.

*In conjunction with those between governments, dialogue at citizen level between stakeholders of two countries can go a long way in strengthening bi-lateral relations. In fact, dialogue and the open exchange of ideas among countries and with civil society is held vital to democracy and the promotion of human rights*

The ability to listen and understand is as, if not more, important than the ability to speak. Information needs to be the basis of an opinion, more the reliance on unbiased and scientific information better the line of

thinking. However, people at the table are humans and not robots; they bring with them not just data to support their point of view but also the hopes and wants of those that they represent. A dialogue table must make space for both intellect and sensibility. Those who sit at the table are the most critical to the outcome.

A robust democracy should actively encourage the culture of dialogue and reason not just by providing platforms but by building the power of people to dialogue better. One way to do this could be to build generations of critical thinkers at the level of school itself. Investing at the school level is nurturing the future crop. The pedagogy must encourage creative thinking, questioning and the pursuit of the unknown. Questioning should be seen as a crucial societal value and injected into the system that creates our educators. When teachers appreciate that answers cannot be taught separate from questions, critical thinkers are born. We need to build a cadre of teachers who value the importance of their vocation and believe that their job is to shape a thinking nation.

Equally important is to invest in leaders. Leaders set the intellectual tone of a society. It is important that we build leaders who have the ability to think deep and wide, to scratch below the surface and ask difficult questions and to force those around to deal with the multiple complexities of an issue. Leaders alone do not make a democracy, the inherent culture does. As a society, we must encourage openness and freedom because that is what makes people more resilient in the long run. The best way to do that is to keep talking and walking. Together.

**US-INDIA DIALOGUE ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY :** The Ananta Aspen Centre in collaboration with The Aspen Institute, USA, brings together high-ranking experts from India and the United States to discuss key energy and climate change issues. Seen below is **Ed Markey**, Senator from Massachusetts addressing the 8th India-US Track II Dialogue on climate change and energy, which was held in January 2019 in Boston.



The delegates of the **US-INDIA DIALOGUE ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY**, Boston, January 2019





THE **AMBASSADOR SERIES** is a unique initiative to interact with the Heads of Foreign Missions in India. It contributes towards development of India's foreign relations, facilitates outreach, and helps in the expansion of India's multi-dimensional ties with countries across the world.



ABOVE : H.E. Harinder Sidhu, High Commissioner of Australia to India speaking at 'The Ambassador Series'. The session was chaired by SK Lambah.



TOP : H.E. Farhod Arziev, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to India speaking at the 'Ambassador Series'. The session was chaired by Ambassador Ashok Sajjanhar.

CENTRE : The Ambassador Series with Nordic Countries (Norway, Iceland, Denmark, Finland and Sweden). The session was chaired by Ambassador Ashok Sajjanhar.

BOTTOM : H.E. Saud bin Mohammed Al Sati, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to India speaking at 'The Ambassador Series'. The session was chaired by Ambassador Sanjay Singh.



The **BANYAN TREE DINNER** is designed as an evening of dinner and conversation with a purpose. There is a moderated discussion around a reading to allow the invitees to experience an Aspen-style dialogue. In 2018-19, the Centre held two dinners at Kolkata and Pune respectively. Seen here are attendees at the Pune dinner with **Ms Anu Aga**, Former Chairperson, Thermax Limited and Trustee, Ananta Aspen Centre, **Mr Sameer Walia**, Chief Executive, Ripples of Hope and Kamalnayan Bajaj Fellow (Class 4) and **Ms Kiran Pasricha**, CEO, Ananta Aspen Centre.

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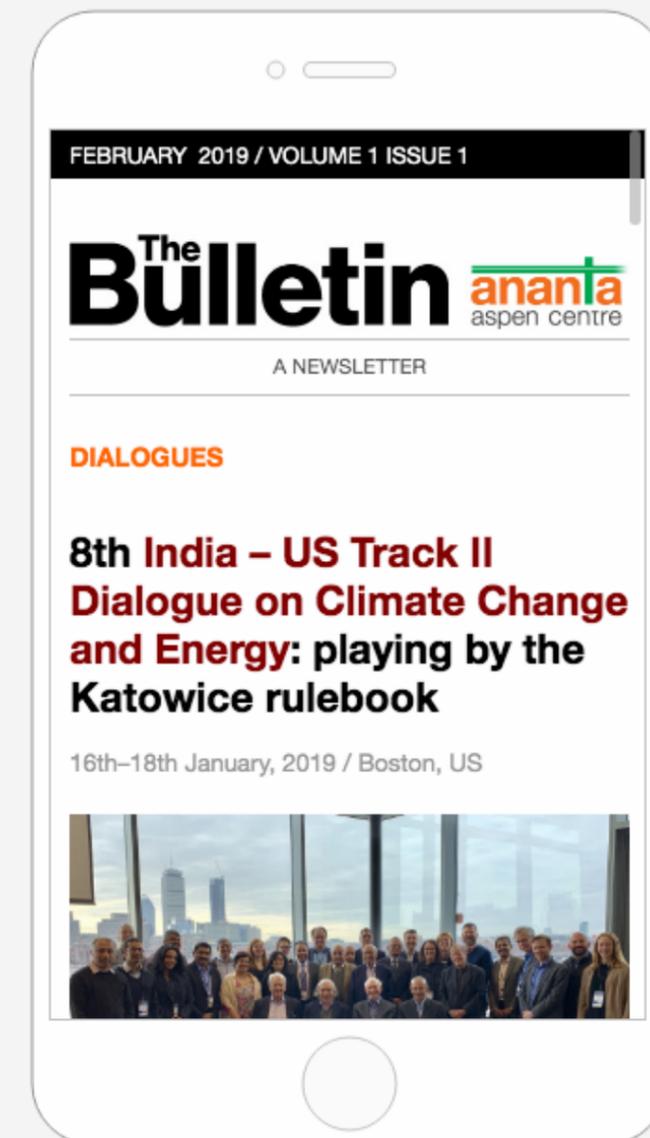
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