

# Shikshantar Annual Intra-School English Debate 2019

A debate is an expression of opinions that maintains a balance between a spirited argment and a mere recital of facts. It is an opportunity for participants to present their intellect in an orderly manner and for an audience to be able to critique the same. Debating is a skill that helps a person flourish in various aspects of their lives, such as logical critical thining, acknowledging others' views, thinking on one's feet, public speaking skills, etc.

The English Intra-School debate of 2019 was an affair to remember with its diversity in topics, and the discussions, interjections, and rebuttal put forward by the students. The debate had the students of classes XI and XII speak on a total of four topics:

### TRUE EQUALITY BETWEEN THE TWO GENDERS IS A MYTH

Gender as a social construct has existed throughout history, sometimes in subtle and sometimes in very blatant forms of defining specific categorical roles. It denotes personal traits and social positions that determine social responsibility and interactions between males and females. The aim of the debate on this topic was to determine whether or not biological factors, namely, the 'sex' of a person, can be discounted from our general view in the search for equality between male and female and subsequently if true equality between the two genders is, in fact, a myth.

#### UNIFORM CIVIL CODE IS A NECESSARY EVIL IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

In diverse societies, one is met with inherent difficulty and resistance in bringing people together when different religions and personal laws govern them. People tend to hold these very dear to them and are extremely sensitive towards any suggestions of change in these personal laws. These s ame beliefs may hence foster inter-group conflict as well. So, the pri-



primary question at hand was whether the state holds any right to impose a common law on these diverse individual communities.

# A GOOD DICTATORSHIP IS BETTER THAN A BAD DEMOCRACY

World-over, there are various forms of government that seem to function and look after their citizens in different manners. An ideal way of governance involves realizing the gap between absolute control and complete inefficiency and meeting somewhere





in the middle. There are no measures to deduce which form of government is doing a better job for the working of their nation except the level of satisfaction of its citizens. To determine how well a state happens to be functioning, we merely have to weigh out the pros and cons offered by the authorities that have been elected by or imposed upon the people. This debate intended to look at freedom at the cost of a poor operative, versus efficiency at the cost of liberty.

### SCHOOLS DO NOT PRIORITISE THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH OF THE CHILDREN

The fact that schools play a major role in a c hild's development from a very tender age to their troubled teens is not unknown. Schools are one of the chief players that cultivate social interaction. They also teach basic, but necessary knowledge of the v arious aspects of the world. In all of this though, at times it may be noticed that an individual's well-being is not looked after. In the notion of teaching objective subjects, authorities forget to look after simple requirements of a child's physical and mental health and in the process of looking at students as a social group, it is forgotten that each child has their own ways of coping. In this topic, it was expected for one to look into whether schools prioritize results over the cost at which these results are often obtained.

This year's debate saw the participants present nuanced arguments on the given topics, addressing the very heart of the issues. It was an impactful event that saw many unique perspectives and left us all with something to ponder upon.

- Srushti Joshi, Hadyn (XII), Moderator

# Intra-School MUN

ShikMUN '19, The summer edition of the most awaited intra-school event in Shikshantar. The Model United Nations is a simulation of actual United Nations committees. It is one of the most fruitful co-curricular activities within school premises and always has a good turnout.

Coming to this year's edition, ShikMUN '19 comprised of a whopping 190 individuals. It was the biggest MUN ever hosted by the school. This year, the event hosted 5 committees. The usual template of two conventional committees - The General Assembly and The Security Council, and two unconventional committees was expanded with the addition of another unconventional committee. For the first time in the Shikshantar, we held an All India Political Parties Meet - AIPPM. The Organising Committee had been brewing this idea for a few years, and we were finally able to materialize this dream.

The General Assembly discussed the Russia-Ukraine crisis. The most notable and surprising thing about the committee this year was its number of delegates. In spite of a huge overall turnout, we had a very few number of delegates opting for the General Assembly. However, this was also advantageous, as it helped the delegates achieve an experience that was completely different from what is usually expected from a General Assembly.

The Security Council discussed the Mexican Drug war. A committee that was full of talented delegates, lived up to its expectations and provided the floor with some top-quality debate. The delegates ran neck and neck to

each other, and ultimately it was inquisitiveness that separated the lot.

The White House Situation Room urgently discussed the 9/11 attacks and the impending operation Cannonball, while the Indian Cabinet talked about the very relevant Pulwama attack in Kashmir and the aftermath. Both of them being Continuous Crisis Committees gave their delegates a lot to ponder upon and ultimately learn. The minuscule strength of the two committees served as the impetus for these committees. All the delegates had to actively analyze and contribute throughout the two days.



Lastly, the most popular committee of this year's edition, the All India Political Parties Meet, had the greatest turnout. It was the first time we had such a committee, and it is safe to say that it was a huge success! The delegates rose to the task of impersonating famous political portfolios and fearlessly debated in both fluent English and Hindi. The committee was a great learning experience for all as it discussed several topics that were very relevant at the time of the event due to the general elections.

All in all, these 5 committees - the whole Organising Committee and each and every participant of this intra-school MUN helped us to make this event successful and give us 12th graders a perfect farewell ending. It was an emotional closing ceremony for all of us and the event movie was the cherry on the top to this beautiful, multi-layered cake crafted by our very own Shikshantar students.

- Rohan Agarwal, Hadyn (XII), Secretary-General





## Some Quotes:

**Devaki Rajbala Sharma** - "The MUN this year was easily the best one so far. It was well organized, the EB was well prepared and overall there was a perfect balance between formal and informal."

**Aryan Chauhan** - "The MUN this year was about more than just enhancing my speaking skills. It gave me the power to look at the perspective of numerous nations, think about the greater good and see what it would be like to help create world peace."

Avi Narula - "One of the most memorable MUNs of the lot. After school, I am going to look back at this one and enjoy it for life."

# Mirror Mirror On The Wall!

The following article was published in the June 2019 issue of The Teenager Today, the only magazine for teenagers in India. The attached article "Mirror, mirror on the wall" explains how the mere image of a reflection, is so much more to the human mind. It highlights the importance of self-love and acceptance, with the path to happiness.

When you look into the mirror, what do you see? A reflection, a mere image. But the brilliant human mind makes it so much more than that.

Some of us avoid this reflection simply because it reminds us of our flaws. A few extra inches, love handles, those chubby cheeks. "Why should I look at myself when I already know all of this? Why should I constantly be reminded of these flaws?" With sixteen years into my life, I think I do have an answer to those questions. It's simply, acceptance. To make peace with yourself, to make your soul a little carefree and to remind yourself of how truly beautiful you are. You have to live with yourself up till your last breath, and that is a good enough reason to keep yourself happy. You are the only constant in your life and the most important one there will ever be.

But, none of this means that you accept a version of yourself that you do not believe is your best. Living in a false reality of acceptance is not the way to be. Working on yourself is a process that will last as long as life. Watching yourself grow and metamorphose into the person of your dreams, is the greatest pleasure known.

At the end of it, we are all seeking the same thing. Happiness. Happiness that is true and pure; happiness that cannot be trampled over by anyone; happiness that radiates from oneself. So now let me ask you the same question again. When you look into the mirror, what do you see?

This year's school trip was an exciting prospect for all. Although it was very early in the year, the last dregs of stress left behind from our 9th-grade final exams were finally washed away.

Our trip began with a bang- well, a jolt really, as we endured the long and bumpy bus ride to Camp Kyari, set in Kotabagh Valley near Corbett National Park. However, the bumpy bus ride was worth it- we sang songs, played games, and had a lot of fun along the way.

Right about when we thought the journey couldn't possibly become more fun, it did- we arrived at camp. It was a rather scenic place, and the tents we settled into were named after the natural flora and fauna of the region- dragonfly, banyan tree, paradise flycatcher (a bird), ant, and the like.

Our days were spent in warm and sunny weather-our activities included a trek to a refreshing river combined with a scavenger hunt. We spent a night away from camp at a hilltop- set up our tents, and cooked our own evening meals and spent the night gazing at the stars and the clear sky up above us. It was a wondrous sight; the Gurugram night sky

truly pales in comparison to that of the mountains. It was as though someone had spilled salt over a black table cloth, and traced a finger through it like the Milky Way.

We enjoyed several treasure hunts; one for types of birds' eggs within the camp, one exploring the flora and fauna of the valley. There was even a biking trail for us to follow.

Our nights at the camp were spent sitting around in a large circle in the dining area, with a false bonfire- it was a bit too warm for a real one- and discussing our experiences of the day. Our last night was spent with music and laughter; even the strictest of teachers shaking a leg and nodding their heads to the loud, joyful music of the region.

Overall, the 10th Grade trip to Camp Kyari was an interesting, exciting and interactive learning experience for us all. We learned about the lifestyle of the locals of Kotabagh Valley, heard some exceptionally mystical mountain legends, and had the time of our lives.

- Nikita Lakkaraju, Talamh (X)

# Once-in-a-Lifetime

The Class XII School Trip to Namik glacier is one of the toughest treks, but this didn't deter the students of the Batch of 2020. Being the last school trip, it causes one to inevitably reminisce about the school years and the trips before it, reminding us of the fleeting time we have left in school with our friends.

We set off on the morning Shatabdi and arrived at the charming Dankudi heritage house after a long drive, and stayed there for the night. The next morning we traveled by Jeep to our next stop- Shama, from where we could see the ice-capped mountains in the distance. We played cricket here through the afternoon and shared poems, raps, and sketches by the bonfire in the evening.

The next day our trek began at the Gogina base camp, the last point with a motorable road. We hefted our heavy rucksacks and sleeping bags, and trekked into the late afternoon, only taking a break to have lunch by the riverside.

On the morning before the perilous last three kilometers of our journey, we were treated to Maggi. We trekked up the steep incline, up a narrow winding mountain path with slippery loose stones. We finally arrived at our destination the Tourist Rest House, that was located at the height of 10,850 ft, was an abandoned and decrepit old building with its cemented walls covered in black graffiti. Despite the burning sensation in our leg muscles and the bone-deep feeling of exhaustion, we were filled with satisfaction at our accomplishment.

Here we found a gentle hill slope covered in snow, forming a natural slide. Even though it was terrifying, we went sliding down the slope, hoping fervently that the people at the bottom would succeed in catching us. A battle of the physics teachers was declared with everyone picking sides in the snowball

fight as Ashish Bhaiya launched a surprise attack on Gurpreet didi. We were all reluctant to leave the winter wonderland notwithstanding our numb fingertips.

We had reached our goal but our trip wasn't over yet. On the long drive back from Gogina to Dankudi, we stopped for a break in the middle of an empty road and danced our hearts out to music blasted from the speakers of a car.

We spent a relaxed last day at Dankudi, enjoying a performance by local musicians and dancing till midnight. The next morning we shared our final presentations, including all the poems, stories, and drawings of the past week. Everybody's feelings were expressed through rap and a heartfelt Hindi poem which served as a summation of the entire once-in-a-lifetime experience.

We said goodbye with heavy hearts, bidding adieu to all the people and places that will forever hold a special place in our memories.

- Sumedha Vashista, Hadyn (XII)

# MELODIES FROM THE MOUNTAINS

Mountain air, winding trails and purple skies, Beckoned us to write;
To capture, to draw, to sing.
Our feelings danced with the campfire's light As our words and art lit up our eyes.

On our trip to Camp Shyama, Wildrift devised a presentation system and divided us into groups. At the end of each day, each group would have to present something- a poem, a song, a picture, an artwork- anything based on the experiences of that day. At the end of the trip, each group had to compile all their presentations on a chart.

### EARTH'S CHILDREN

The smell of conifers, the golden fields, the thunderous skies, the soft rain, the mountains rose and fell against the hazy backdrop that changed colour according to its whims. The river that lazed around, Mother Earth's beauty was finally found. The clouds took shape, shapes of beauty beyond our imaginations. Our thoughts ran wild, awakening in us the ever present child. The trip had barely begun, with nothing but shackles of imagination to anchor us to reality.

- Neeraj Sahu, Hadyn, XII

### THE LAST SNOWBALL

As the last snowball
Hit my face, I wondered
Where I'll get to
See this again.

A white wonderland
And in it, us;
Smothered in cold joy
And frozen excitement.

As we walked the last mile
Of the last trek, I wondered
Where I'll get to
Feel this again.

Legs, laden but charged
And a heavy mind determined,
Sweat rolling off
A scattered group walking together.

But now our flag flutters far away,
As we sit here facing city lights
At the end of our last journey together
Looking back at nothing but
What would be memories,
I realize,
I would live them forever.

- Soham Dey, Ignis (XII)

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# **Special Thanks to**Shruti Didi & Shuvashree Didi