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ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019

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FMES REPORT 2018-2019

FMES established a new platform namely Health, Ethics and Law Institute for Training, Research and Advocacy (HEaL Institute) in addition to its two existing platforms namely, the *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics* and National Bioethics Conference. In this report we present the activities undertaken and accomplishments in relation to these three platforms.

A. HEALTH, ETHICS AND LAW (HEaL) INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING, RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY REPORT

FMES' two platforms – the *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics* (IJME) and the National Bioethics Conferences (NBCs) – have together emerged as the catalyst for bioethics activities in India. These two platforms aided in bringing people together, to showcase research and writing and to promote interest in bioethics among various sections of the healthcare professions, health activists and academics. Recently, the FMES has established its third platform the Health, Ethics and Law (HEaL) Institute for Training, Research and Advocacy to develop FMES' programmatic work in bioethics, with a dedicated website of its own (www.fmesinstitute.org). The HEaL Institute has been enabled and seeded by Tata Trusts via a grant from August 1, 2018 to July 31, 2019. This helped establish HEaL's own identity independent of FMES' two other established platforms, namely, IJME, and the National Bioethics Conferences.

As an organisation, HEaL conceives of health in its widest and most comprehensive scope that includes safeguarding the health of the planet. With this broader conception of health, the goal is to work towards contributing to the well-being of people via

research, advocacy, training and action; and to serve as a bridge between academia and activism for promoting and safeguarding people's democratic and constitutional entitlement to health, as an outcome of wide ranging social-economic-political-environmental determinants. This also encompasses ethics and human rights of health, health care delivery, health research, health policies and programs, and health economics.

As a newly established entity of FMES for programmatic work, HEaL is committed to taking up socially relevant empirical and theoretical research, as well as critical policy and program analyses to inform advocacy work at various levels and contribute to making a difference to peoples' well-being, especially of the underserved and underprivileged. While health and its determinants are centre-stage, our multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral approach facilitates and enables us to critically engage with law, regulations, constitutional entitlements, and the historical context of matters at hand alongside socio-cultural-political-environmental aspects.

The HEaL Institute during this first nine months since its inception accomplished the preparatory work for three short duration intensive training programs in three sub-fields of bioethics including setting up collaborations with various institutes and announcement of these trainings; preparatory work for two round tables on two themes namely, ethical issues in health journalism and ethical and legal issues in relation to health care professionals' role in death penalty; preparatory work for announcing essay competition for students from across the disciplines for the debut award namely IJME's Young Bioethicist and Change Maker; preparatory work for setting up first of its e-repository in bioethics in India; organised grand rounds and one of the two aforesaid round tables; and conceptualized two small

scale researches on the two aforesaid themes of round tables. Below we briefly present some of the highlights of these works.

Preparatory work for Bioethics Trainings

As part of the preparatory work for organizing short duration intensive training programs in four sub-fields of bioethics during this period three key preparatory activities/processes were completed during this period: (a) To develop draft curricula for four streams, that is, Biomedical Research Ethics; Social Science and Public Health Research Ethics; Clinical Care Ethics, and Public Health Ethics, (b) two consultations involving experts in the respective sub-fields as above to discuss and working towards finalising the curricula, and (c) setting up collaborative arrangements with various institutes from different parts of India. We approached a number of key institutions across India for collaborative arrangements. We announced three training programs during this reporting period, one each in three of the four aforesaid streams to take place in June and July 2019 in Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, and Mumbai.

The collaborators for three planned trainings are Indian Council of Medical Research - National Institute of Epidemiology (ICMR-NIE), Chennai, TN; Centre for Public Health, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (CPH-TISS), Mumbai, MH; Center for Policy Studies, IIT Bombay (CPS-IITB) Mumbai, MH; Indian Council for Social Science Research - Nabakrushna Choudhury Centre for Development Studies (ICSSR-NCDS), Bhubaneswar, Odisha; and Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine (CSTM), Kolkata, WB.

E-Repository

With the aim of setting up a one-stop repository for all ethics-related information, a review was carried out of nine e-repositories in bioethics and other fields, both from outside and within India. The objective was to systematically organise material on medical, healthcare ethics and bioethics in the form of

books, guidelines, manuals, case studies as well as papers from other journals which we hope would serve as resource for those interested in bioethics discourse and its applications to policies, programs, legal reforms which has implications for people's well-being.

FMES is probably the only organisation in India which has been working on bioethics in a concerted way. FMES also serves as a virtual think-tank which addresses issues in health and allied themes which impact people's lives. The *IJME* is a resource in bioethics which has helped respond to the gaps in availability of bioethics resources developed in response to issues and challenges we encounter in contexts specific to India and other similar contexts elsewhere. We hope that this e-repository will complement *IJME* by bringing together systematically organised resources from other sources including materials developed by civil society organisations and not easily available to the global peer community. We plan to launch the platform in the coming year and will continue to further strengthen it.

Essay competition

The HEaL Institute established and announced its maiden *IJME* Young Bioethicist and Changemaker Award in February 2019. The purpose of the award is to create opportunities for post-graduate students from across disciplines to reflect on contemporary issues in health and allied themes using bioethics lens. The award includes a fully supported study tour and internship of two weeks at a grass roots organisation in India which is contributing to enhancing common peoples' access to quality care as an ethical obligation. The three themes selected for the essay competition for this maiden award are: (a) Health care professionals and the death penalty in India: Ethical obligations and challenges; (b) Ethical challenges and responsibilities in journalism; (c) Artificial Intelligence in health care: Ethical and

regulatory quandaries. A three-member screening committee, consisting of Dr Anant Bhan (bioethicist and medical professional), Advocate Vijay Hiremath (advocate), Ms Rema Nagarajan (journalist), has been constituted.

Research

Ethical Challenges and Obligations in Health Journalism in India (2018-19)

In the burgeoning media scenario in India, reporters face all kinds of challenges in covering issues that influence public perception. Beats as crucial as health have a significant impact on the behaviour of the public towards issues that affect them. In order to explore the intricacies that influence and inform health reportage in India, this study examines the ethical challenges posed to health reporters. Employing the Qualitative and Mixed Methods of research, this study will not only highlight the seen and unseen influences on health reporters but will also probe whether they incorporate ethics in their work. The study will also illuminate how journalists represent issues (ethics, conflict of interest, privacy, confidentiality) pertaining to the public, especially marginalised groups. The purpose of this study is to allow health journalists to not only put forth the challenges they encounter on the field and come up with solutions, but also to elaborate on the various pressures and influences that shape their work. Furthermore, the research findings will aid in developing ethical guidelines specifically for health reporters in India. It is being led jointly by Dilnaz Boga, Sr Journalist and HEaL Institute affiliate, Mumbai; and Sunita VS Bandewar.

Participation of Health Care Professionals in the Death Penalty: An Empirical Exploration (2018-2019)

During the year 2018, India witnessed expansion of death penalty offences via amendments to Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012. Given that most of the world is moving towards abolition of the death penalty, such developments in India are intriguing. Currently the death penalty is valid in India for crimes of rape, murder and terrorist activities. Current international codes of ethics, such as, the ethics codes promulgated by international and national bodies of health professionals such as the World Medical Association (WMA) and intergovernmental entities, like the United Nations, generally mandate complete loyalty to patients. However, literature vindicates the fact that throughout human history, health care professionals did participate in executions and it continues till date, in different parts of the world, including India.

Against this backdrop, and in the current context of expanding scope of offences subject to the death penalty, exploring the various questions we have asked earlier is warranted. Ideally speaking, it seems that questioning the constitutional validity of the death penalty itself in India is warranted. However, in the interim it would be of importance to get insights into health care professionals' perspectives and attitudes about the death penalty and the role of death penalty within the justice system, various aspects of their participation in death penalty; as also on their role in improving prison standards including for health care in prison. The proposed research is a step towards this goal. This study team comprises of Nikita Surani, Amita Pitre, Sr Public Health and Gender Research professional, HEaL Institute affiliate, and Sunita Sheel Bandewar,

Bioethics Public engagement events

The other two key activities under bioethics public engagement included organising collaboratively grand rounds and round tables as below:

Grand Rounds

September 2018: Grand Round on 'Grant Medical College and Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Hospital: Foundation, Renown and Decline'.

FMES organized this grand round in collaboration with Centre for Equity into Health and Allied Themes (CEHAT); (b) Department of Humanities, Seth GS Medical College and King Edward Memorial (KEM) Hospital, Parel, Mumbai; and (c) eSocial Sciences. It was held at the Jivraj Mehta Lecture Hall-Auditorium, KEM Hospital, Parel, Mumbai on Sept 27, 2018. The speaker at the event was Dr Sunil Pandya, Neurosurgeon, Associated with Jaslok Hospital, Mumbai; Editor Emeritus, *IJME*. The discussants were Dr S P Kalantri, Director Professor & Medical Superintendent, Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Sevagram, MH, India. The meeting was chaired by Dr Sanjay Nagral, Chair, FMES. It was attended by health care professionals including medical students, residents, faculty, and practitioners.

October 2018: Grand Round 2 on Response of bioethics community to #metoo movement and history and evolution of International Association of Bioethics

FMES organised an open meeting with Prof Dr Ruth Macklin on 'Response of bioethics community to #metoo movement and history and evolution of International Association of Bioethics'. The speaker was Dr Ruth Macklin, Professor Emerita, Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Her chief research interests are research involving human subjects, multinational research, global health, ethics in reproductive health, ethical aspects of research and treatment of HIV/AIDS, and human rights.

January 2019: Grand round 3 on 'Emerging Infectious Diseases and the Impact of

Behavior on Amplification and Spread of Diseases during Outbreaks'

On January 16, 2019, FMES, in association with the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Bombay, organised a lecture on 'Emerging Infectious Diseases and the Impact of Behaviour on Amplification and Spread of Diseases during outbreaks' by Dr Richard A Cash, Senior Lecturer, International Health, Department of Global Health and Population, Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health, Boston. The lecture focused on how individual or collective behaviours during epidemics, especially of new and emerging infectious diseases, can have implications for the amplification and spread of disease, the availability and acceptance of preventive measures and treatment, the psychological distress that may lead to complex social problems, and an economic impact on the community.

March 2019: Grand round 4 on 'The Case of the Spurious Drug Kingpin: Shifting Pills in Chennai'

On March 10, 2019, a public lecture on 'The Case of the Spurious Drug Kingpin: Shifting Pills in Chennai'; was delivered by Professor Sarah Hodges, Reader in the Department of History, University of Warwick. It was organised by FMES in association with Centres for Law and Society, School of Law, Rights and Constitutional Governance, Centre for Public Health, School of Health Systems Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai and eSocial Sciences, Mumbai. Dr Hodges recounted the tale of a spurious drugs kingpin and his scandalous business empire of re-labelling and recirculating expired medicines in Chennai. While re-labelling expired medicines was certainly a crime, it is far from clear if their re-labelling and subsequent restrictions constituted a public health danger. If actually existing unsafe drugs did not fuel this drug safety scandal, what did? Dr Hodges argued this case to illuminate two things. First, the illusory nature of certainty about drug safety, and second, how ambiguity about the safety of expired drugs facilitated

policing, not of relations within the pharmacological world but instead of social and economic relations. This episode mattered because it illuminated how, within apparent attempts to police the safety of circulation of drugs, the drugs themselves are neither subject nor object, but are instead the ground upon which market battles are waged.

Round Table

February 2019 Round Table cum Public Engagement on Death Penalty in India

A public engagement cum consultation meeting on the subject 'Death Penalty in India: Legal, Ethical and Health Issues' was held on February 22, 2019 at ILS Law College, Pune. It was organised against the backdrop of expansion of the death penalty in India via amendments to *The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act*. These developments drew many bioethicists into the fresh debate on relevance of the death penalty. Although the death penalty has been discussed at length from time to time, some of the important areas are less explored. These include the manner in which the criminal justice system works on the ground for conviction and sentencing; the impact of the death penalty on those sentenced and their families; the burden on mental health that convicts of death penalty bear, and issues of medical ethics regarding participation of health care professionals in the death penalty. The meeting was intended to contribute towards making the debate on (ir)relevance of the death penalty in India more informed and to encourage critical conversation on the conflicting obligations faced by health care professionals regarding their participation in it.

B. 14th WORLD CONGRESS OF BIOETHICS & 7th NATIONAL BIOETHICS CONFERENCE, 2018 REPORT

Forum for Medical Ethics Society (FMES), Mumbai; St. John's National Academy of Health Sciences, Bengaluru, Society for

Community Health Awareness Research and Action, Bengaluru and SAMA Resource Group for Women and Health, New Delhi co-hosted the joint 14th World Congress of Bioethics (WCB) and 7th National Bioethics Conference in Bengaluru from December 5-7, 2018. The theme of the Congress was, "Health for all in an unequal world: Obligations of global bioethics". The conference was held at an opportune time as we commemorated 70 years of the 'Declaration of Human Rights' of 1948 and 40 years of the 'Alma Ata Declaration' of 1978, both affirming health as a fundamental human right.

The WCB platform was established by the International Association of Bioethics (IAB), an international network established in the early 1990s, with the aims, among others, of exchange of information among those working in bioethics in different parts of the world; organising and promoting international conferences in bioethics; and upholding the value of free, open and reasoned discussion of cross-cultural issues in bioethics.

The WCB was hosted for the first time in South Asia and India and is now among the few Southern countries to have hosted the Congress. 655 delegates from 74 countries across the globe participated in the conference. Participants included 372 women, 278 men and five of non-binary or undisclosed genders. 6 participants were from South America, 19 from Africa, 22 from Australia, 35 from Asia Pacific countries, 58 from North America, 109 from Europe and 406 from South Asia. A total of 417 participants were from LMICs. 315 participants were involved in various capacities such as plenary speakers, oral presenters, panelists at the Rapid Round Tables or workshops, poster presenters and chairpersons of sessions and the rest were participants. Healthcare professionals, researchers, academicians, students and activists from the fields of medicine, public health, administration and management, life sciences, humanities including law, media and philosophy, and social sciences made up the participants.

The co-hosts were responsible for all activities relating to successful conclusion of the Congress which included conceptualising the Congress and its thematic strands; fund raising; setting up processes for review of submissions received; bursary application screening and process to award bursaries. The IAB board members and other colleagues from IAB provided guidance to the congress co-hosts from time to time.

The Main Congress was preceded by the 12th Feminist Approaches to Bioethics (FAB) Congress spread over two days, which deliberated upon feminist responses to global challenges in health and healthcare. There were eight Pre-Congress workshops/symposia on diverse topics: organ donation and transplantation; framing case reports for bioethics journals; paediatric bioethics; bio-markets, ethics, gender and political economy; developing a public health ethics curriculum; public engagement in controlled human infection model (CHIM) studies; and healthcare directives of the Catholic Church in India.

In addition to five plenaries on the Congress theme, including an “Editors’ panel” as part of the closing plenary, 32 parallel tracks for oral presentations (112 presenters), eight parallel tracks for rapid round presentations (32 presenters), 48 in-congress workshops/symposia, and 96 poster presentations spread across three days enriched the deliberations. Broadly speaking, the deliberations covered three main areas:

- Inequities in social determinants of health, health status and access to healthcare in the context of ethnicity, caste, gender, disability;
- Environmental ethics and sustainable development;
- Antipolitics in health: Obligations to respond to systemic and structural inequities

Possible strategies to overcome the existing shortcomings were also discussed.

A Parallel Arts Festival on Bioethics was one of the unique features of the Congress. It explored the Congress theme through a range of art forms which could speak to the uninitiated about the meaning of bioethics, alongside academic sessions. It was also intended to promote plurality through cross cultural perspectives.

The first *IJME* Ethics Award was conferred at this Congress on Dr Aquinas Edassery of the Swasthya Swaraj Trust, Odisha for her self-less and dedicated efforts to provide healthcare to the underprivileged and under-served people in Karnataka, as well as in tribal areas of the Thuamul Rampur block, Odisha, in India.

The deliberations suggest that globally the ground realities in terms of access to healthcare remain concerning. Many speakers highlighted the socio-political determinants of health, foregrounding adverse implications of power asymmetries in various contexts of health and health seeking. The deliberations delved deeper to look critically into the factors at meso and macro levels which explain sustained disparities in health.

C. INDIAN JOURNAL OF MEDICAL ETHICS

IJME has completed its 27th year of continuous publication, in spite of all the financial challenges it has faced, and managed to retain most of its old loyalists as supporters, even those not active on a daily basis.

The journal is now considered a reliable source of healthcare ethics information and policy to be cited by journalists, policy makers, and even judges of the country’s apex court. Its content is used widely as textual matter for ethics courses and its leading members are recognised ethicists invited to be part of ethics committees and courses on

ethics. While the healthcare scene itself is dismal all over the country, the journal has an important part to play.

This brief report summarises the journal's content and changes in its team from April 2018 to March 2019.

What we published

From April 2018 to March 2019, *IJME* published 117 items, 100 of them in the four issues from April 2018 to Jan-March 2019, and 17 Online First till March end. Their distribution section-wise was:

Journal section	No of items
Editorials	08
Articles	12
Theme articles	12
Comments	26
Case studies	02
Discussion	08
Law & Bioethics	01
Commentaries	02
Students' Corner	01
Creative Space	02
Reflections	02
Reports	04
Book/Film reviews	14
Letters	17
Obituaries	02
Statement of Correction	01
Retraction	01
Award Citation	01
Financial report	01
TOTAL	117

During the year, we published two Theme issues. The Themes were:

- *Legislating bodies: ARTs in the developing world*; and
- *Developing the ethics of controlled human infection models in LMICs*.

Two sets of articles were published under the section Discussions on

- *Emergency care in rural settings: Can doctors be ethical and survive?*

- *General implications of the Cochrane crisis*.

What we received

The journal received 217 submissions, including invited ones, over the year 2018-19. Of these: 102 were rejected, 73 accepted, 20 are with the authors for revision, 6 were withdrawn by their authors (most as they did not wish to carry out revisions); and 16 were still under review in April. Most of those rejected were for reasons like: having no focus on ethics (36); being on unoriginal subjects already substantially covered by the journal (30); weak methodology (19); inadequate revision (4); plagiarism (4) and duplicate publication(1); outdated information (1) and lack of access to cited data in a foreign language(1), among others. Among the rejected articles, 35 were summarily rejected within 10 days of receipt, most of them for the first two reasons above.

2018-19 was also the year in which we first had to retract a published article on account of publication under fake identity and affiliation. This has resulted in our tightening up of the entry level process and we now (i) ask for institutional email ids of authors and an explanation if this is not possible; (ii) run all accepted articles by the chief editor who has to defend them in public, in case of controversy; and (iii) try to do a stricter plagiarism check as well. This has been found somewhat inadequate. Hence, we will have to invest in anti-plagiarism software to make the process error-free.

Our editorial team

At the end of 2018, some members of the Editorial Board (EB), including Drs Jacob Puliyl, Sreekumar N, Vasantha Muthuswamy, and Xiaomei Zhai, stepped down, and we thank them for their active support over several years. We lost Dr Amit Sengupta in a tragic accident. He will be missed. The EB was joined in January 2019, by Drs Nikhil Govind, Sarah Hodges, Satendra Singh, Uma Kulkarni and Yali Cong.

During 2019, the group of Working Editors (WEs) has grown and been strengthened by Dr Olinda Timms, Prof Nikhil Govind, Dr Uma Kulkarni, and Advocate Veena Johari, all of them previously EB members, who bring in their own varied expertise and depth of experience. While this has been a great value addition, the workload of the WEs has changed only slightly, as there has been some increase in the number of submissions, especially in early 2019.

At the previous Working Editors' meeting held in June 2017, it had been decided that:

- (i) The Editorial Coordinators would screen all submissions for plagiarism and Ethics Committee approval (for research studies) before sending them on to a WE;
- (ii) All quantitative studies should be screened by Mala/Vijay first;
- (iii) Submissions could be sent to any WE regardless of subject area, so that they are more or less equally distributed. For submissions outside their own areas of experience and expertise, WEs could confer with others in the group.
- (iv) It was also decided to submit monthly reports from the editorial office on tasks completed.

We have tried to implement the above points, with some modifications, ie, the more experienced WEs tend to be sent more submissions. However, this will change as the editors gain experience. Submission of monthly reports has been irregular from November 2018 onwards, due to the increased volume of submissions and lack of staff. We hope to improve reporting in future.

Our authors

During the year, we had contributions from countries across the globe, chiefly from the US, UK, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Brazil, Libya, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Iran, Japan, Mexico, Australia, among others.

Published authors in *IJME* in 2018-19 comprised of 147 from India; and 70 from other countries.

Our reviewers

We are grateful to our reviewers for the dedicated work they put into working on and improving submissions. Besides our internal reviewers, we thank the following external reviewers for their support during the year 2018-19:

Alok Sarin, Amita Pitre, Angus Dawson, Anindita Majumdar, Anjali Nair, Anoop Thekkuveetil, Anuradha Rose, Arun Bhatt, Bevin Vijayan, Biju Soman, Calvin Wai Loon Ho, Charles Davis J, Chinu Srinivasan, David Healy, Denny John, Dheeraj Kattula, Douglas Wassenaar, Gayathri Prabhu, Jacob John, Jacob Leveridge, Jagadeesh Narayan Reddy, James Welsh, Jaya Sagade, Jayanta Bhattacharya, Jigeshu Divatia, Jing-Bao Nie, Ketki Ranade, KS Jacob, Lars Jorgensen, Luke Juran, Malu Mohan, Manickam Ponnaiah, Margaret Whitstock, Monica Sakhrani, Muhammad Fayyaz, Nandini Kumar, Naveen Kumar C, Navjeevan Singh, Neha Madhiwala, Nilangi Sardeshpande, Nithya Gogtay, Rajiv Sarin, Rakesh PS, Rakhal Gaitonde, Raman Kutty, Ravi Prasad Varma, Ravindra Ghooi, Rishi Goyal, Rukshan Mehta, Ruth Macklin, Saima Iqbal, Sangeeta Rege, Sanjay Nagral, Santosh Vijaykumar, Satendra Singh, Saumil Dholakia, Savitha D, Somashekhar Nimbalkar, Soumitra Pathare, Sudarshini Subramaniam, Sujith Chandy, Sunu Thomas, Supriya Subramani, Usha Raman, Upreet Dhaliwal, Varalakshmi Elango, Vineeta Bal, Vivek Divan, Vrinda Marwah, Zhang Long.

Move towards open review

So far, we have followed a policy of single blinding, in which the names of the authors are known to reviewers, but not vice versa. The issue of moving towards open review has been discussed often, and at the last WE meeting in June 2017, it was decided to publish the names of Manuscript Editors of each article, and give reviewers the option of having their names published along with the relevant article. We

began applying this from the July-September 2018 issue. This step has had a mixed response, with several reviewers preferring to remain anonymous, and quite a few agreeing to be named. During the period from July 2018—when we implemented this change—to April 2019, 20 reviewers agreed to be named, while 27 preferred to remain anonymous.

Digital Object Identifiers

Beginning 2017, FMES has been providing all our published articles with Digital Object Identifiers. This has been completed from 2004 till date.

Social media presence

The IJME Facebook group now has 7479 members. We also have a Facebook page for Indian Journal of Medical Ethics, with 1272 likes and 1297 followers. Bioethics news across media and new articles published in IJME are regularly posted on the Facebook page and usually stimulate lively discussions.

Indexing

We continue to be indexed in Medline, The Philosopher's Index and Scopus. We have joined Pubmed's LinkOut facility from 2017 onwards, in order to have direct access to readers searching the database. From a shaky start, the data below shows a steady increase in direct usage from the Pubmed database. By

Month/ Year	Hits (2017- 18)	Month/ Year	Hits (2018-19)
Mar 18	1151	Mar 19	1239
Feb 18	865	Feb 19	1058
Jan 18	931	Jan 19	1020
Dec 17	580	Dec 18	823
Nov 17	730	Nov 18	1032
Oct 17	735	Oct 18	966
Sep17	419	Sep 18	923
Aug17	57	Aug 18	897
Jul 17	--	Jul 18	885
Jun 17	--	Jun 18	814
May 17	--	May 18	1081
Apr 17	--	Apr 18	1136
Total	5468		11874

extending the range of our content in the law and social sciences, we can continue efforts to be included in more databases in those disciplines, making more readers aware of our journal.

Web management

Last year, our contract with our earlier website managing agency was concluded, and the website has been managed by Samanvay Foundation, Bengaluru, since then. Uploading of content on the website was being handled on a freelance basis for several months.

For several years, all accepted content was being copy edited by Byword Consultants, Delhi.

In an effort at cost cutting, we now copyedit several accepted pieces in-house and only send out the more complex papers, like research studies etc, to professional copy editors.

Since November 2018, the editorial office has been functioning with only one part-time EC working close to full time, and handling around 121 received submissions from November to end-April, besides the pending ones. This had reduced efficiency and lengthened timelines, especially in the early part of 2019. We had a new Editorial Coordinator for the brief period of six weeks (end-Jan to mid-March), but overall work slowed down considerably from November to April.

This was reflected in the slow pace of article processing and the reduced number of articles published Online First (only two in May, five in April, and four in March). Around 35 submissions have been under review for around 3 - 5 months each which is far too long.

Our website

Over the last year, the *IJME* website has been going through various technical and feature

improvements. The notable ones, (as provided by the web team), are:

1. The *IJME* team has switched to using the OJS platform for all communications and the review process - using @[ijme.in](mailto:ijme@ijme.in) emails.
2. The content uploading process has been improved for efficiency. The metadata XML for articles/issues for submitting to DOI is now automatically generated.
3. The long tail of errors observed on the website, only for certain articles/pages, has been dealt with. *IJME* now offers a better experience for https users.

Usage data for the website

The Table below shows information about the comparative usage of our website over the past three years:

Indicator	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Users	133207	156659	288962
No. of sessions	172809	198645	362369
Page views	324073	377224	554739
Pages/session	1.88	1.90	1.53
Average session duration (min: ss)	1:35	1:29	1.13
Bounce rates (%)	73.72	63.72	80.79
<u>Key to terms used:</u> Session A session is the period/time a user is actively engaged with the website. When user is inactive for 30 minutes or more, any future activity is attributed to a new session.	Bounce rate Any user session which views only one page is considered to have bounced. Bounce rate is single-page sessions divided by all sessions.	Cumulative time spent Total number of sessions multiplied by number of sessions. Day = 86400 seconds	

Explanation from the website team

1. The page views are up by 47% and the number of users is up by 89%.
2. Average session duration is down, pages per session are down, and the bounce rate is up. Given 1 & 2, the following inferences can be drawn: a) There is significantly higher consumption of *IJME* content because the page views are up.
b) There is a trend that the users are reading content in multiple smaller sessions than in one long session.

Finally, consolidating all metrics, the total time spent by all *IJME* users, in 2017-18 was 204.62 days and in 2018-19 is 306.17 days. This is up by 50%.

Automatic submission system

Our website uses Word Press as a user friendly and more flexible software at the front- end.

The back end utilises the Open Journal Systems (OJS) software providing for automatic submissions and processing of papers. So far, we have been using the OJS internally for all submissions, for greater transparency and efficiency, but plan to open it for direct submission of articles in a few more months. This is because, while frequent improvements have been made, some features are yet to be adapted to our needs.

Our print issue

We have maintained the size of the issue at 88 pages for all issues this year too, and the subscription rates have been revised as shown below:

	Indian			SAARC Countries		International	
Period	Individual (INR)	Student (INR)	Institutnl (INR)	Individual (INR)	Institutnl (INR)	Individual (US\$)	Institutnl (US\$)
One year	1,200	600	3000	1,800	3,600	72	150
Two years	2100	1,050	5,250	3300	6,450	120	270
Five years	5400	NA	13,500	8,400	16,500	300	675
Life	60,000	NA	1,50,000	72,000	1,65,000	6000	15,000

*Subscription Rates for IJME print issue
effective from January 2019, for Vol IV (Nos. 1-4)*

D. MEMBERS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BIOETHICS DISCOURSE

This will now be carried on the websites of IJME (ijme.in) and HEaL (fmesinstitute.org)

Sachin P. Mulgaokar & Co.

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

6/26, Tardeo AC Market, Tardeo, Mumbai - 400 034.
Tel: Off 2352 6274 | Mob: 98211 27174 | email: s_p_m@vsnl.com

REPORT OF THE AUDITORS

Name of the Trust: FORUM FOR MEDICAL ETHICS SOCIETY

Registration No. F-17441 dt. 14-05-1995.

We have audited the annexed Balance Sheet of the FORUM FOR MEDICAL ETHICS SOCIETY as on 31st March 2019 and also the annexed Income & Expenditure Account for the Year ended on the date. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in India. Those Standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

We further report that :-

1. The accounts are maintained regularly and in accordance with the provisions of the Act and the Rules.
2. The receipts and disbursements are properly and correctly shown in the accounts.
3. The cash balance and vouchers in the custody of the Manager or Treasurer on the date of audit were in agreement with the accounts.
4. All books, debts, accounts, vouchers or other documents or records required by us were produced before us.
5. The trust does not own any immovable property. The trust has maintained registers in respect of moveable property.
6. The Treasurer or any other person required by us to appear before us did so and furnished the necessary information required by us.
7. No property or funds of the Society were applied for any object or purpose other than the object or purposes of the Trust.
8. There are no amounts which are outstanding for more than one year and no amount is written off.



9. No tenders were invited for repairs or construction, as there was no such expenditure in excess of Rs 5000 incurred during the year.
10. The moneys of the Society have not been invested contrary to the provisions of Section 35 of the Act.
11. The Trust does not hold any immovable property and as such the provisions of Section 36 of the Act do no apply.
12. So far as it is ascertainable from books of accounts and according to the information and explanations given to us there were no cases of irregular, illegal or improper expenditure, or failure or omission to recover moneys or other property belonging to the Society or of loss or waste of money or other property belonging to the Trust.
13. The budget required to be filed under Rule 16-A is filed.
14. The maximum and minimum number of the members of the Trustees is maintained.
15. The meetings are held regularly.
16. The minute books of the proceedings of the meeting is maintained.
17. None of the Trustees has any interest in the investment of the Trust.
18. No Trustee is debtor or creditor of the Trust.
19. No irregularity has been pointed out by us in our previous report.
20. There is no special matter, which we think fit necessary to bring to the notice of the Deputy or Assistant Charity Commissioner.

MUMBAI

Dated: 28th September 2019

For SACHIN P. MULGAOKAR & CO.

Chartered Accountants

Firm Reg No 108945W



SACHIN P. MULGAOKAR

(Proprietor)

Membership No 40942

UDIN: 19040942 AAAAD28933 .

Name of the Public Trust : Forum for Medical Ethics Society

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2019

FUNDS & LIABILITIES	Rs.	Rs.	PROPERTY & ASSETS	Rs.	Rs.
Trusts Funds or Corpus:-			Immovable Properties (at cost)		
Bal. as per last Balance Sheet	136,157.00		Balance as per Last Balance Sheet		-
Addition during the year	-	136,157.00	Addition during the year		-
			Less: sales during the year		-
			Depreciation upto date		-
Other Earmarked Funds			Investments		
(Created under the provision of the Trust Deed or out of the Income)			Market Value of Investments in Rs		-
Contingencies Reserve Fund		45,000.00	Loans(Secured or Unsecured): Good/Doubtful		
(As per last Balance Sheet)			Loan Scholarships		-
			Other Loans		-
Loans (Secured or Unsecured)			Furniture & Fixtures		
From Trustees		-	Balance as per Last Balance Sheet	96,540.00	
From Others		-	Addition during the year	286,886.03	
				383,426.03	
			Less: Deletion during the year	-	
			Less: Depreciation upto date	121,620.00	261,806.03
			(Refer Schedule A)		
Liabilities			Advances		
For Expenses	-		To Trustees		-
Duties and Tax	-		To Employees		-
For Rent and other Deposits	-		To Contractors		-
Due to Employees	4,300.00	4,300.00	To Lawyers		-
For sundry Credit Balances	-		To Others (Deposit for Office Premises)		50,000.00
			To Tax Deducted at Source		157,847.90
Life Subscription Fees(Refundable)			To Prepaid Expenses		-
As per Last Balance Sheet	430,570.00	430,570.00	To GST Credit		174,222.00
Addition during the year	-				
(See Note c in Schedule C)			Income Outstanding		
			Rent		-
			Interest		-
Income & Expenditure A/c:-			Cash & Bank Balances		
Bal. as per last Balance Sheet	2,262,140.84		a) In Saving Accounts with The		
Surplus as per Inc. & Exp A/c	2,166,624.99	4,428,765.83	Saraswat co-op. Bank Prabhadevi Br	1,999,219.62	
			b) In saving account With Bank Of India	165,399.12	
			b) In saving account With Central Bank Of India	27,430.16	
			c) Fixed deposit in Sarawat Bank	2,200,000.00	
			c) Fixed deposit in Central Bank	6,033.00	
			d) With the Trustee	2,835.00	4,400,916.90
Total Rs.		5,044,792.83	Total Rs.		5,044,792.83

Notes : Schedule C

As per our report of even date
For Sachin P. Mulgaokar & Co.
Chartered Accountants
Firm Reg No 108945W

Auditors
Membership No 40942
Mumbai
Dated : 28th September 2019



The above Balance Sheet to the best of my belief contains a true account of the Funds & Liabilities and of the Property and assets of the Trusts

Trustees
Mumbai
Dated : 28th September 2019



THE MAHARASHTRA PUBLIC TRUSTS ACT, 1950
SCHEDULE IX
[Vide Rule 17 (1)]

Regn. No.: F-17441 (Mumbai)

Name of the Public Trust : Forum for Medical Ethics Society

Income & Expenditure Account for the year ending 31st March, 2019

EXPENDITURE	Rs.	Rs.	INCOME	Rs.	Rs.
Expenditure in respect of Properties		-	Rent		-
Rates, Taxes, Cess		-	Interest		-
Repairs & Maintenance		-	On Fixed Deposit with Banks	277,852.00	
Salaries		-	On Saving Bank Account	<u>54,542.00</u>	332,394.00
Insurance		-			
Depreciation		-			
Establishment Expenses		-	Dividend		-
Remuneration to Trustees		-	Donations		40,000.00
Remuneration (In case of Math)		-			
Legal Expenses		-	Income from Other Sources		
Audit Fees	35,000.00		Advertisement Income	60,000.00	
Contribution to Charity Commissioner		-	Membership Fees	62,288.58	
Amount written off		-	Subscriptions	<u>227,128.76</u>	349,417.34
Bad Debts		-			
Loan Scholarship		-	Conference Receipts		6,544,354.23
Irrevocable Rents		-			
Other Items		-	Grant Received		3,200,000.00
Miscellaneous Expenses		-			
Depreciation		86,052.00			
Amount Transferred to Reserve or Specific Fund		-			
Life Subscription Fees (Refundable) Account		-			
Contingency Fund		-			
Expenditure on Objects of Trust					
Religious		-			
Educational (Sch B)		8,178,488.58			
Medical Relief		-			
Relief of Poverty		-			
Other Charitable objects		-			
Donation		-			
Surplus carried to Balance Sheet		2,166,624.99	Defecit carried to Balance Sheet		-
Total Rs.		<u>10,466,165.57</u>	Total Rs.		<u>10,466,165.57</u>

As per our report of even date
For Sachin P. Mulgaokar & Co.
Chartered Accountants
Firm Reg No 108945W

Auditors
Membership No 40942
Mumbai
Dated : 28th September 2019



Trustees
Mumbai
Dated : 28th September 2019



FORUM FOR MEDICAL ETHICS SOCIETY

Schedule A

Schedule of Fixed Assets

Sr. No.	Particular	Gross Block				Depreciation			Net Block W.D.V. as at 31.3.2019
		As at 1.4.2018	Additions	Deletion	As at 31.3.2019	As at 1.4.2018	During the Year	As at 31.3.2019	
1	Computers	70,750	111,229	-	181,979	28,300	53,633	81,933	100,046
2	Equipments	-	81,407	-	81,407	-	16,282	16,282	65,125
3	Furniture & Fixtures	12,000	69,500	-	81,500	5,199	4,155	9,354	72,146
4	Printer	13,790	24,750	-	38,540	2,069	11,982	14,051	24,489
	Total	96,540	286,886	-	383,426	35,568	86,052	121,620	261,806

Mulgaokar

MULGAOKAR & CO.
Chartered Accountants



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FORUM FOR MEDICAL ETHICS SOCIETY

Schedule B

Schedules forming part of the Income & Expenditure Account
Expenses incurred on objects of the (Educational)

Tata Education and Development Trust Project Expenses

Accommodation Charges	10,665.42	
Bank Charges	890.93	
Electricity Charges	2,090.00	
Honorarium	95,500.00	
Advertisement	7,965.00	
Office Expenses	19,210.00	
Postage & Telegram	4,062.00	
Printing & Stationery	9,268.00	
Professional Fees	48,970.00	
Rent	30,000.00	
Salary	1,517,627.00	
Telephone and Internet Charges	7,615.00	
Traveling & Conveyance	211,509.54	
Xerox Charges	120.00	
Audio Video Facilities	4,000.00	
Conference Hall Charges	8,100.00	
Diwali Expenses	2,800.00	
Misc. Expenses	11,910.10	
Hospitality and Meeting Expenses	131,795.00	
Platform Development	540,472.46	
Staff Welfare	7,549.78	2,672,120.23

NBC and WCB Congress Conference Expenses

Bank Charges	10,256.49	
CC Avenue Charges	230,409.69	
Postage & Telegram	4,998.00	
Printing of Journal for Conference	91,875.00	
Printing & Stationery	4,131.00	
Professional Fees	108,836.00	
Traveling & Conveyance	95,832.99	
Website Expenses	107,719.00	
Accommodation Charges	11,760.00	
Auditorium Establishment Charges	1,475,000.00	
Hiring Charges	210,950.00	
Hospitality and Meeting Expenses	1,649,673.00	4,001,441.17
Bank Charges	191.76	
Computer Software Expenses	8,496.00	
Honorarium	749,637.00	
Electricity Charges	16,360.00	
Rent	138,000.00	
Advertisement	10,384.00	
Office Expenses	10,168.00	
Postage & Telegram	50,404.00	
Printing of Journal	182,485.20	
Printing & Stationery	9,398.00	
Professional Fees	48,667.00	
Repairs & Maintinances	1,250.00	
Telephone and Internet Charges	9,165.00	
Traveling & Conveyance	25,792.00	
Website Expenses	154,540.00	
Xerox Charges	424.00	
Duties and Taxes Paid	9,393.00	
Interest paid on GST	4,132.00	
Interest paid on TDS	260.00	
Hospitality and Meeting Expenses	19,832.96	
Membership Fees Paid	35,669.00	
Miscellaneous Expenses	9,771.26	
Staff Welfare	10,507.00	1,504,927.18
		8,178,488.58



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FORUM FOR MEDICAL ETHICS SOCIETY

Schedule C

Notes Forming Part of Accounts

Major Accounting Policy

Method of Accounting :

- (a) Method of Accounting followed by Trust is presently on Cash Basis
- (b) Fixed Assets are stated at Cost less Depreciation
- (c) Life Subscription fees (Refundable) Rs.430570-,represents amount refundable to Life subscribers if the Society ceases to publish its Journal "Indian Journal of Medical Ethics".

As per our report on even date
For Sachin P. Mulgaokar & Co.
Chartered Accountants
Firm Reg No 108945W

Sachin P. Mulgaokar

Auditors
Membership No 40942
Mumbai



Dated : 28th September 2019

Trustees
Mumbai

Sachin P. Mulgaokar

Dated : 28th September 2019



THE MAHARASHTRA PUBLIC TRUSTS ACT, 1950
SCHEDULE IX C
(Vide Rule 32)

Statement of Income Liable to Contribution for the year ending 31st March 2019

Name of the Public Trust : **Forum for Medical Ethics Society** Regn. No.: F-17441 (Mumbai)

	Rs.	Rs.
1. Income as shown in the Income and Expenditure Account (Schedule IX)		10,466,165.57
Note: This being an Educational Society, its income is not liable to contribution. The Society makes efforts to educate health care professionals on ETHICS. To this end we publish a registered journal, organise meetings, and conferences. take lectures on medical ethics		
II. Items not chargeable to Contribution under Section 58 and Rule 32:		
(I) Donation Received from other Public Trusts and Dharamdas	-	
(ii) Grants recd. From Government and Local authorities	-	
(iii) Interest on Sinking or Depreciation Fund	-	
(iv) Amount spend for the purpose of secular education	8,178,488.58	
(v) Amount spend for the purpose of medical relief	-	
(vi) Amount spend for the purpose of veterinary treatment of animals	-	
(vii) Expenditure incurred from Donations for relief of distress caused by scarcity, drought, flood, fire or other natural calamity	-	
(viii) Deduction out of income from lands used for agriculture purposes:-		
(a) Land Revenue and Local Fund Cess	-	
(b) Rent payable to superior landlord	-	
(c) Cost of production, if land is cultivated by trust	-	
(ix) Deduction out of income from lands used for non-agricultural purposes:-		
(a) Assessment, cesses and other govt. or Municipal taxes	-	
(b) Ground rent payable to the superior landlord	-	
(c) Insurance premia	-	
(d) Repairs at 10 percent of gross rent of building	-	
(e) Cost of collection at 4 percent of gross rent of building let out	-	
(x) Cost of collection of income or receipts from securities, stocks etc. at 1 percent of such income	-	
(xi) Deduction on account of repairs in respect of buildings not rented & yielding no income, at 10 percent of the estimated gross annual rent	-	
	-	8,178,488.58
Gross Annual Income chargeable to contribution Rs.		2,287,676.99

Certified that while claiming deductions admissible under the above Schedule, the Trust has not claimed any amount twice, either wholly or partly, against any of the items mentioned in the Schedule which have the effect of double deduction.

Trust Address:
O-18, Bhavna
Veer Savarkar Marg
Prabhadevi
Mumbai 400 025

Dated : 28th September 2019

Dated : 28th September 2019



For Sachin P. Mulgaokar & Co.
Chartered Accountants
Firm Reg No 108945W

Auditors
Membership No 40942
Mumbai



Trustees

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Annexure to Financial Accounts F. Y. 2018-2019

Remuneration/Honorarium/Salary/Seating Fees for meeting and workshop paid to Managing Committee member for the Financial Year 2018-2019 for work related to Forum for Medical Ethics Society

Sr. No	Name	Designation	Amount
1	Sanjay Nagral	Chairperson	Nil
2	Sunita Bandewar	Secretary	601960.00
3	Lubna Duggal	Treasurer	Nil
4	Shamim Modi	Member	Nil
5	Barun Mukhopadhyay	Member	Nil
6	Sunita Simon Kurpad	Member	Nil
7	Shyamala Nataraj	Member	Nil

