

VANI AGARWAL

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EDUCATION

Heritage International Xperiential School

2018-Present

Grades 11 & 12 IBDP

Grade 11: **42/42**

Coursework: HL Literature, HL History, HL Biology, SL Mathematics AA, SL French B, SL Economics

Grades 9 & 10 IGCSE

Grade 9: **8 A*s, 1 A**

Grade 10: **10 A*s**

Coursework: First Language English, English Literature, International Mathematics, Additional Mathematics, French, Biology, Chemistry, History, Business Studies, Global Perspectives

STANDARDIZED TESTING

SAT- **1540/1600 (780RW, 760M)**

TOEFL: **116/120**

AP - US Government & Politics: 5/5

LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Founder, [Rare Humans of India](#)

June 2022-Present

Launched a **pan-India** initiative to *unalienate* & *empower* patients with rare genetic disorders, in collaboration with [Apollo Hospitals](#).

Public Advocacy and Awareness

- Interviewed over **40 patients** to write stories and reduce stigma about rare disorders
- Created a website that patients can use to connect to each other, and build a support network.
- **Host of [DNA Diaries](#)**—Podcast series by **Apollo Genetics**, where **experts**, such as **geneticists and genetic counselors**, combat misinformation and raise awareness about the importance of genetic testing.

Advocacy amongst healthcare specialists

- Featured at **national conferences** for doctors, advocating for early genetic diagnosis and specialist referrals.
 - **Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP)** and **Apollo-affiliated conference workshop** 'Genetics Workshop for Pediatricians: Integrating Genetics into everyday clinical practice' attended by **30+ pediatricians**. **Felicitated** by the IAP for **advocating** for patients with Rare Disorders.
 - **Apollo Genomics** affiliated seminar 'Genetics and Genomics of Cerebral Palsy- New Clinical Dimensions' attended by **50+ pediatric neurologists, pediatricians, & genetic specialists**

- The Federation of Obstetric and Gynecological Societies of India-affiliated seminar on 'Genetics in Breast Cancer.' attended by **90+ obstetricians, gynecologists, breast surgeons, & oncologists**

Patient support and post-diagnosis management

- Created an **online platform** that hosts **patient support networks** for different Rare Disorders. **Onboarded 80+ patients and families with rare genetic disorders.**
- **Engaged 30+ specialists & other practitioners (therapists, dietitians)** to provide interdisciplinary care and management advice to patients, and resources.
- Provided **clinically verified post-diagnosis resources** in multiple **regional languages** to ensure accessibility for a diverse audience.

Research and Policy work

Identifying Key Factors for Recurrence of Genetic Disorders: Insights from Indian Families with Multiple Affected Children

Author & Researcher

January 2024-August 2024

- Conducted an original qualitative research, under the mentorship of a senior genetic counselor at **Apollo Hospitals** to study a unique cohort of **30 families** with rare genetic disorder recurrence.
- Authored a research paper, *Identifying Key Factors for Recurrence of Genetic Disorders*. Supervised by **Dr. Dhavendra Kumar, Senior Consultant, Genomics, Bart's London and Apollo Hospitals.**
- **Published** by *Springer Nature's Journal of Community Genetics* after peer review. The research paper also includes **policy proposals** to be implemented by healthcare officials and relevant government ministries.
- **Selected** for and **presented** at **9th Annual Conference of the 'Society for the Indian Academy of Medical Genetics'- 2024.** Received a **"Special Mention"**.

Lightning strikes twice! : Patient narratives featuring reappearance of severe recessive disorders in multiple children.

Author & Researcher

November 2023-Present

- Guided by **Dr Hemant Hora, Instructor, Harvard Medical School** on rare disorders, orphan drug pricing & availability challenges
- Authored **manuscript** on **recessive diseases and their recurrence**, incorporating patient narratives, which is under review for **publication** by the **Indian Academy of Medical Genetics journal 'Genetics Clinics'.**
- Working on a report on the **National Rare Disease Policy (2021)** & its role in **funding treatment** and supportive care for patients. Comparing **Indian and American Healthcare systems** to gain better insight into the issue.

'Not So Rare: Addressing the Concerns of the Rare Humans of India'

Author & Advocate

July 2024-Present

- Wrote a [policy proposal](#) leveraging **healthcare partnerships, in-person outreach campaigns** and **tech platforms** for efficient **Rare Diseases diagnoses** and **post-diagnosis patient support.**
- Submitted to **Fortis Innovation Challenge 2024.**
- Received **Top-10 finalist status** for the competition.
- Presented to a **panel of experts** from **Fortis Memorial Research Institute and Hospitals - a multinational healthcare provider network**
- Working with them to develop and implement ideas.

'Transforming Rare into Care'

Author & Advocate

August 2024

- Wrote a policy proposal suggesting a **Rare Humans of India Equity Act**
- Submitted to the '**Institute for Youth in Policy**' **Policy Pitch** competition, open to high school and college students worldwide. Received [Top-10 finalist status](#) for the competition.

Co-founder and Editor, The Penguin Scribble Society

July 2021-Present

- **Revitalized** and rebranded the literature and journalism club, establishing its digital presence and launching innovative publications like [The Metropolitan Diary](#), which chronicled Gurgaon's local stories.
- **Published** the quarterly newsletter *The Heritage Gazette*.
- Led workshops for **25 members** on journalistic and literary skills, complemented by engaging simulations like mock interviews.
- **Organized** the *Literary Café* event 'कॉफी and कहानियाँ' (*Coffee and Stories*), creating a space for students to relax, play literary games, and read magazines curated by fellow students.
- Participated as a **writer** and **designer** for the previous journalism society, 'The Heritage Express Editorial Board' in grades 9 and 10.

TEDx, Speaker, and Core committee member

October 2023-December 2023

- Chosen by school to deliver a 15-minute TEDx talk titled "[The Ultimate Trolley Dilemma: STEM vs. Humanities](#)" at TED-affiliated ticketed event.
- Led TEDx 2023 **curation**, overseeing **communication, editing, and speaker preparation**.
- Assisted external speakers in brainstorming, drafting, and refining their scripts, and provided detailed proofreading to enhance their presentations.

Founder, Byline

June 2022-August 2023

- Empowered marginalized communities by leading [creative writing workshops for 20 students](#), raising [\\$1000](#) to establish a mini-library. Compiled and edited their work into multiple editions of the [Byline Gazette](#), a newsletter that provided students with a platform to showcase their writing and receive recognition for their efforts.
- **Developed** a comprehensive [6-part curriculum](#) focused on creative writing and journalism, aimed at fostering original expression and enhancing students' storytelling and reporting skills. The curriculum was distributed to students of Delhi-based NGOs such as Sukhad.

Co-founder, Project Eklavya

October 2021-March 2023

- [Led 18 workshops for 50+ students across two states](#), with a focus on North-East India.
- Taught 21st-century skills such as research, source analysis, identifying misinformation, and technological skills, along with extracurricular skills like art.
- [Presented policy proposals](#) for improving rural education at a [UNESCO-affiliated Learning Planet Alliance panel](#), advocating for equal learning spaces.
- Emphasized the importance of integrating cultural, extracurricular activities, and life skills in government schools to enhance education quality and opportunities for holistic development.

INTERNSHIPS

Trilegal, Legal intern

June 2024-July 2024

- **Accepted** for a selective legal internship after a rigorous application process.
- Researched health and technology law, with reports on AI-driven healthcare solutions and

privacy protection (with special emphasis on the Digital Information Security in Healthcare Act).

- Developed **policy recommendations** for the **accessibility of life-saving drugs** and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).
- Received [letter of recommendation](#) in-person upon completion of internship.

Polyphony Lit, Editing intern

April 2023-December 2023

- Completed an online asynchronous course on editing for literary magazines, hosted by Polyphony Lit, publishing high school students' poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction.
- Gained skills in close reading, analyzing literary devices, and providing insightful commentary.
- Joined Polyphony Lit as a Junior Editor
 - Provided detailed feedback and constructive critiques on submissions to help young writers refine their work.
 - Shortlisted pieces for publication.

India Lost and Found, Writing Intern

June 2021-October 2021

- Interned with a non-profit dedicated to promoting awareness of India's historical sites.
- Researched and crafted compelling articles that brought lesser-known monuments to life, sharpening my storytelling skills, and deepening my cultural awareness.

ACADEMIC HONORS & AWARDS

- **IGCSE: Distinction award in grade 10**
- **School Appreciation Award for all A*s in IGCSE Board exams:** 1 of 3 people awarded the School Appreciation Award for all A*s in IGCSE boards

Civics Unplugged Fellowship

August 2023-September 2023

- Accepted to a selective (~11% acceptance) fellowship and civic leadership program that prepares high school students with the knowledge and skills to produce novel solutions to well-defined community and societal problems.
- Analyzed one social issue in weekly sessions, and attended live discussions with members of government, policymakers, and activists, like Mark Kennedy and Darryl Finkton Jr.
- Received a **high commendation** for collaborating with 4 other individuals and designing innovative solutions for a fashion corporation, Bombas, to help them advance their mission to combat the challenge of people currently unsheltered and unhoused
 - Focused on climate poverty, addressing the impact of extreme weather on the homeless. Our initiative, 'Style Shield,' expanded Bombas's product line to include woolen caps, mittens, and ponchos.
 - Presented a [detailed plan](#), including materials, financing, and marketing.
- Wrote a case study analyzing the challenges faced by the Indian Justice System.

SUMMER PROGRAMS

Yale Young Global Scholars, Politics Law & Economics

July 2024

- Co-designed policies for a multicultural political party as part of a capstone project.
- Participated in seminars on law, politics, and economics, and performed at the YYGS *Speaker Series*.

Oxford Summer Courses, Introduction to Law

July 2023

- Completed a two-week in-person program on Law, covering criminal, human rights, contract, tort, and public law through real-life case studies.
- Participated in mock courts, and served on the prosecution team in a human rights case, where I applied relevant articles from the Human Rights Act to build and present our argument. Engaged in practical exercises such as negotiation and cross-examination to sharpen legal skills.
- Delivered a presentation on criminal law titled "To criminalize deep-rooted concepts, traditions, and values would create chaos in the law."
- Earned a final grade of **10/10** and a [letter of recommendation](#).

Boston University, Summer Journalism Academy

June 2021

- Participated in the Boston University Summer Journalism Academy: a two-week, writing-intensive program, where I gained exposure to topics including ethics in journalism, short- and long-form article writing, editing, and publishing.
- [Authored articles](#) as part of the course, which were later **published** on the program's official website, The Terrier.

EXTRACURRICULARS

Theater: direction, writing & acting

July 2021-Present

- Selected for the HIXS Theater Team, where I actively participated throughout middle and high school.
- Performed in [7 plays](#) and took on roles in casting, directing, and screenwriting for various productions.
- Notable achievements include:
 - co-authoring and co-directing a *Lion King* adaptation with over 250 students.
 - co-directing and co-writing the play *Main Tenu Phir Milangi* for a ticketed TEDx school event.

Scuba Diving

August 2023

- Obtained PADI certification for individual open water dives to 18m through a week-long course in Pondicherry.

Himalayan Treks

August 2021 and October 2023

- Completed Bhagirathi Lake Trek—a week-long expedition that concluded in a summit at 14000+ ft.
- Undertook the Dayara Bugyal Trek, a week-long journey culminating in a summit at 12,000 ft.