

# BREAKING BARRIERS - BRIDGING GAPS

## SILVER JUBILEE



## EDITORIAL

BY- DR INDRANIL CHAKRAVORTY

The Silver Jubilee Conference was a celebration of many firsts for the British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (BAPIO).

It was the first major milestone in the life-cycle of an organisation; it was the first time that the group had met in person after the catastrophic 18 months that the COVID-19 pandemic had wreaked on us and the world; it was the first time that arms-length bodies of the organisation - the Bapio Institute for Health Research, the Bapio Faculty of Leadership and the Forum for Wellbeing were introduced to the rest of the organisation- having been conceived and delivered their many initial successes in the virtual world; it was the first time with the formation of British Indian Nurses Association - the organisation became truly multiprofessional; It was the first time that BAPIO had conceived and delivered a complete project on one of the topics closest to its heart - the launch of the report on tackling differential attainment - (Bridging the Gap 2021 Report); it was the first time that BAPIO was consolidating its mission into the 4 pillars- that had been a vision in the minds of the leadership.

There is no event linked with the Indian psyche that does not include some ethereal connection with Bollywood. We were lucky to have one of the leading lights of the 'thinking man's Bollywood' represented by none other than the charismatic director Shekhar Kapur. Shekhar was witty and thoughtful, sharing his ideas on inequalities and his passion for tackling climate change.







## BIRMINGHAM, CRICKET & FLAMBOYANCE

To every person with any connection to the Indian subcontinent, either directly, indirectly through association with the West Indies or South Africa or through its colonial links - one of the key catalysts for conversation, emotions, hopes and heartbreaks - is the game of cricket. Therefore, it is only right that the silver jubilee celebrations were hosted in the majestic grounds of Warwickshire County Cricket Club in Edgbaston, Birmingham. There were so many memories of amazing games, memorabilia and some towering personalities to stir one's passion. The BAPIO cricket team led ably by Gajanan and his troupe did not miss a chance to show their prowess at the vibrant green pitch.

It was also fitting that the Guest list at the Gala dinner was graced with the wit and the magnanimous persona of Farokh Engineer. Farokh Engineer was dynamic with bat and a sprightly chatterbox behind stumps.

He also scored 94 in the first session of a Test, was a Brylcreem model, and remains the last Parsee to play for India. Engineer's debonair, handsome yet rugged looks made him the first Indian cricket's pin-up boy.

No wonder he was delighted to share the stage with Bhasha Mukherjee (the first British Asian and a Doctor to win the UK Beauty pageant in 2019). She spoke about her work in the NHS and mission in the world to support healthcare workers and focussing on wellbeing.

The fact that she was a Bengali, born of immigrant doctors from India was an added feather. There were many who were moved by her passion and looked up her as a role model

The silver jubilee celebrations were hosted in the majestic grounds of Warwickshire County Cricket Club in Edgbaston, Birmingham.



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# BREAKING BARRIERS - BRIDGING GAPS

Finally, this conference was the time for BAPIO to come of age. As an organisation, it has always described its mission of promoting excellence in patient care, encouraging empathic leadership, supporting doctors (and now the wider range of healthcare professionals) and leading in education and research. All the 4 pillars of the organisation were harmonised under the single ambition to achieve equity, equality and justice for patients and the healthcare workforce. Hence, the central theme for all the sessions at the conference were exploring breaking barriers, finding ways to bridge the gaps and support wellbeing.

Central to all the sessions was acknowledging the contribution of immigrant healthcare professionals to the UK NHS and economy. Recognising the hardships and difficulties that many have faced in their life and careers due to inherent structural barriers or inequalities. Every member, every delegate, every speaker and every expert at the conference were open and honest in recognising the structural barriers, the impact of societal inequalities on minority ethnic population or professionals and in urging their leaders to take a stand to eradicate this injustice.

Many of the experts and leading stakeholders from the General Medical Council (Charlie Massey), Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (Helen Stokes-Lampard), Royal College of Physicians (Andrew Goddard, London and Andrew Elder, Edinburgh), Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health (Camilla Kingdon), Royal College of General Practitioners (Michael Mulholland) expressed their genuine commitment to work on tackling the barriers and supporting joint initiatives with BAPIO.

There was huge support from the British Medical Association (Chaand Nagpaul), Workforce Race Equality Standards Group (Mala Rao), Medical Women's Federation (Neena Modi), NHS Race & Health Observatory (Habib Naqvi) and NHS England Equality & Diversity Leads (Anton Emmanuel & Partha Kar) for the Bridging the Gap report recommendations and for collaboration on many fronts. There were innovative solutions discussed with Alison Johns for working closely with AdvanceHE in developing a new diversity benchmark for tackling differential attainment.

There was recognition of the work of developing partnerships with India, supporting educational initiatives developed by Health Education England's Global division with Ged Byrne, the International Radiology fellowship with Robin Proctor) and the exchange training program with Bapio Training Academy. There was renewed commitment with American University of Antigua (Neal Simon) and collaboration in research as well as publications (The Physician, Sushruta Journal of Health Policy).





# EXPANDING BAPIO FAMILY

Ultimately, there was recognition that BAPIO was still young at heart, only reaching its early youth. Having gained a plethora of forums and arms-length bodies, BAPIO was still early in its journey of becoming a formal charitable entity with better support for equality within and beyond.

The BAPIO Publication journals are growing as a voice for many and an open platform for science, innovation and policy changes - with their online presence, co-hosting with ScienceOpen, and due to become recognised by PubMed and similar directories in 2022-23. There is much more work to be done in developing leadership, mentorship, reaching out to the several thousands of minority ethnic healthcare professionals who are still not part of the BAPIO family and continuing to build on its own research on diversity and collaborative education portfolio. Bapio remains at its core a place for support (Medical Defence Shield), for camaraderie and wellbeing.

by- Dr Indranil Chakravorty







# A STEP TOWARDS WELLBEING

## SHOWCASING HEALTH AND WELLBEING FORUM

*By Dr Payal Mehta*

The silver jubilee conference was the perfect occasion to showcase the splendid work done by the newly formed BAPIO health and well-being forum (HWF).

Over the 3 days of the conference there was daily morning yoga to get you going or a joint walk around a local park connecting with nature all with friends which made these activities enjoyable.

There was an important session where the chair of the forum, Dr. Saraswati Hosdurga , described the 4 dimensions of well-being ie physical, social, emotional, and spiritual.

She described a daily scenario, where a doctor neglected her iron deficiency anemia . Although anemia is common, symptoms can be vague and go on for years unless a particular attention is paid to the chronology. Progressive symptoms over 3 years in this case included ; tiredness, weakness, lethargy, ringing in the ear, brittle hair and alopecia. All this was attributed to the stress of commuting, work and busy schedule. She highlighted that we need to pause, think and act to take care of our own health first including preventative screenings and treatments.

She discussed a recent paper published about the psychological impact of COVID-19. Evidence shows a low wellbeing index in all HCW but particularly so in women and ethnic minority groups. Saras then explained the protective factors for wellness which includes a slower pace of life, having a routine, social interactions, social supports and other coping mechanisms. The take home message was “We all function better when we feel our best”

The second talk by Dr. Geetha Upadhyaya was very inspiring . She spoke about creativity in well-being and how well-being was not just the absence of disease. She described the 3 major components of well-being as life satisfaction, positive and negative experiences. She explained the 7 pillars of health: eating well, moving, social connections, sleep, soothing tools, how we think, and detoxification. She stressed that self-care is not an optional extra but a necessity, and how patient safety depends on the doctor's well-being.

The benefits of self-care are that it helps us uncover things that our conscious minds cannot, it helps us understand things differently, help us let go of judgments, work with an open mind, and discover things that hold us back.

Creativity is not limited to artistic activities. Functional creativity encompasses a willingness to make changes in aspects of our lives, increases our appreciation of life, can show us a fresh approach to interpersonal relationships, can help us explore new possibilities and solutions, and promotes cognitive flexibility amongst others. Creativity can help in various ways, such as, as a contemplation tool, it can help give us the mental space to reassess problems and make plans, can help build our self-esteem and confidence, as well as help our self-development.

The talk helped us understand the different facets of well-being, as well as give us practical steps we can and should take towards our well-being.





## A MEETING OF KINDRED SOULS

### A REFLECTION

*By- Dr Arun Dev Vellore*

Any organisation or institution of historical significance has its seeds in individuals with a clear vision and the mettle to embark on a mission to realise it. Some organisations are born of a shared perspective, often a sense of discomfort of the state of affairs and most importantly, conceived by those with a clear insight into what the present forebodes for the future. It was to be a culmination of all the above, when a group of doctors decided to meet in a small room in Bedford, to join their vision, teamwork and talents to create a unique organisation – The British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin.

And 25 years on from a meeting of kindred souls, here we were, organising the Silver Jubilee conference in Birmingham on 22-23 October 2021, while still in the shadows of the worst pandemic of our times. The venue had to match the grandeur and significance of the event; it was set in the background of Edgbaston cricket stadium, which staged the first ever test match with MCC in 1886. And fittingly, the underlying theme of the event was “Breaking Barriers, Bridging Gaps”

The passion and toil that went behind the organisation of such a mammoth meeting cannot ever be described in any detail. Suffice to say that it was an opportunity to showcase our unity, perseverance and attention to detail.

Preparations for organising the conference started more than a year ago under the leadership of the Chair of Organising committee Dr Achuthan Sajayan (Sajay) with Vice Chair Mr Divya Prakash, both very experienced organisers of large scale events. Different streams of the conference were led by members of the local organising committee contributing their talent and experience. The team included, in no particular order, Dr Renu Jainer, Dr Ashok Nair, Dr Sanjay Vaidyanath, Dr Sanjay Gupta, Dr Binu Raj, Dr Sapna Agrawal, Dr Cherian George, Dr Pooja Arora, Dr Krish Radhakrishna, Mr Chandrasekar, Dr Neeraj Bhala, Dr Arun Menon and me.

Describing each and every stage of organising such an event would not be possible in a few words. Here are a few highlights -

The huge task of putting together an extensive programme with more than 20 sessions and 120 speakers was undertaken by Sajay and Dr Ramesh Mehta with the input from BAPIO national team. The LOC met on a regular basis to evaluate the progress and to provide update from various forums and divisions of BAPIO. The speakers and session chairs showcased the best in NHS, with enthusiastic participation from organisations like the GMC, BMA and the Royal Colleges. The conference had 300+ doctors and 150+ nurses and allied professionals attending the daytime sessions.

The topics presented and discussed were wide-ranging: strategic leadership, inequalities in workplace, SAS doctors, the role of women in delivering healthcare, working partnership with India, health and wellbeing, to name just a few.



More than 430 guests attended The Gala Dinner and Awards ceremony on 23 October, featuring Farokh Engineer and Shekhar Kapur as Guests of honour and Miss England 2019-21 Dr Bhasha Mukherjee as a special attendee. The foot tapping and scintillating entertainment by Navin Kundra attracted the dancing talent of speakers, attendees and the guests. Needless to say, the success of any event is also measured by the quality of the food served; the lunch and dinner menus catered by Sukhdev Caterers did not disappoint and was thoroughly appreciated by the guests.

One can go on about every area of the event- the illumination, sound system, billboarding... not to forget the morning cricket and wellbeing sessions. However, there has to be two special mentions. The BIHR research session sessions were highlighted by enthusiastic young attendees vying for the prizes; covering a wide range of topics. The sessions were insights into how an organisation like BAPIO is ever expanding horizons to provide leadership for the younger population of medical students and trainees in the NHS.

Then there was the energetic participation and help from a dozen of young student volunteers, whether it be in the registration section or helping out in the conference rooms. In time, they will be the new members of BAPIO, strengthening and vitalising the organisation in the years to come.

The memories of the year of hard work leading on to three days and two nights of mind-blowing celebrations will stay with us for ever, as will be the camaraderie we developed and nurtured in the process.







# VISION OF THE FUTURE

## BY SAS & LED FORUM

*By - Dr Kantappa Gajanan*

The SAS & LED forum was delighted and honoured to be given a panel session at the Silver Jubilee conference. The forum members played a significant role in the conference via many different channels.

**The Physician Vol 7/ Issue 2/Nov 21:**

The forum secretaries, Sneha Bisht and Priyanka Nageswaran helped with the editing process for the The Physician alongside the forum chair Kantappa Gajanan and BIHR.

**Wellness cricket:**

Dr Gajanan, Chair of the SAS & LED forum, worked collaboratively with the wellness forum and Mr Divya Prakash to organise a cricket session. The session gave the opportunity to not only play cricket but also to meet England Cricketer Olly Stone and Warwickshire cricket club's Physiotherapist. This session was inclusive to all members of the conference.

**Research Competition First round:**

The SAS & LED forum secretary, Dr Priyanka Nageswaran, was actively involved with the judging of the Medical student oral presentation along with prominent panel members. This was a great experience and exposure for the young LED doctors.

**Research Competition – Final round:**

The forum's vice chair Dr Shaheen Mannan carried out an oral presentation at the conference and also took home first prize for the research competition. A great achievement from Dr Mannan.

**Bridging the Gap- Discrimination: Main stage**

SAS & LED Chair, Dr K Gajanan, and Dr Thangamma Katimada, a Locum Consultant took to the stage to give their personal experiences of discrimination. These lived moments set the stage for the panel session on discrimination and how to tackle it.

**Dinner and Awards ceremony:**

During the awards ceremony, Dr K Gajanan was recognised for his contribution towards doctors in distress during the Covid-19 pandemic and was awarded the Imran Yousuf Memorial award.

**SAS & LED session:**

The SAS & LED Forum had their own separate session for the first time with a high turnover of attendees who were very interested to hear from well know speakers. The attendees heard from the AoRMC about recognising SAS Doctors and also had a detailed vision on the future of SAS doctors from Dr Waled Arshad. Dr Amit Kochhar spoke from the view of the BMA regarding recognising SAS and how we can help them in the future. With both the BMA and AORMC involved in highlighting the future of SAS, we discussed how BAPIO can involve with them and influence this change. The Q&A session was very fruitful and lots of interesting questions were asked. Overall, there was successful involvement from the SAS & LED forum.



# BAPIC AWARDS



Dr Sanjay Arya  
Doctor of the Year 2021



Dr Kodali Siva Rama Krishna Prasad  
Professional Excellence (Academia)



Dr Sonali Kinra  
Professional Excellence (Services to NHS)



Mr Coumarassamy Marimouttou  
Nurse of the Year 2021



Dr K Gajanan  
Imran Yousaf Memorial Award



Mrs Neelam Mehay  
BMA award: Outstanding Contributions to Diversity and Inclusion





Ms Alison Johns  
President's award: Excellence in Education



Mrs Ritu & Mr Prakash Chhabria  
President's award for Humanitarian Efforts during Covid19



Dr Saraswati Hosdurga  
Women's Role Model of the Year



Professor Andrew Elder  
President's award for Professional Excellence



Dr Nandkishore Bhatt  
Outstanding Service to BAPIO

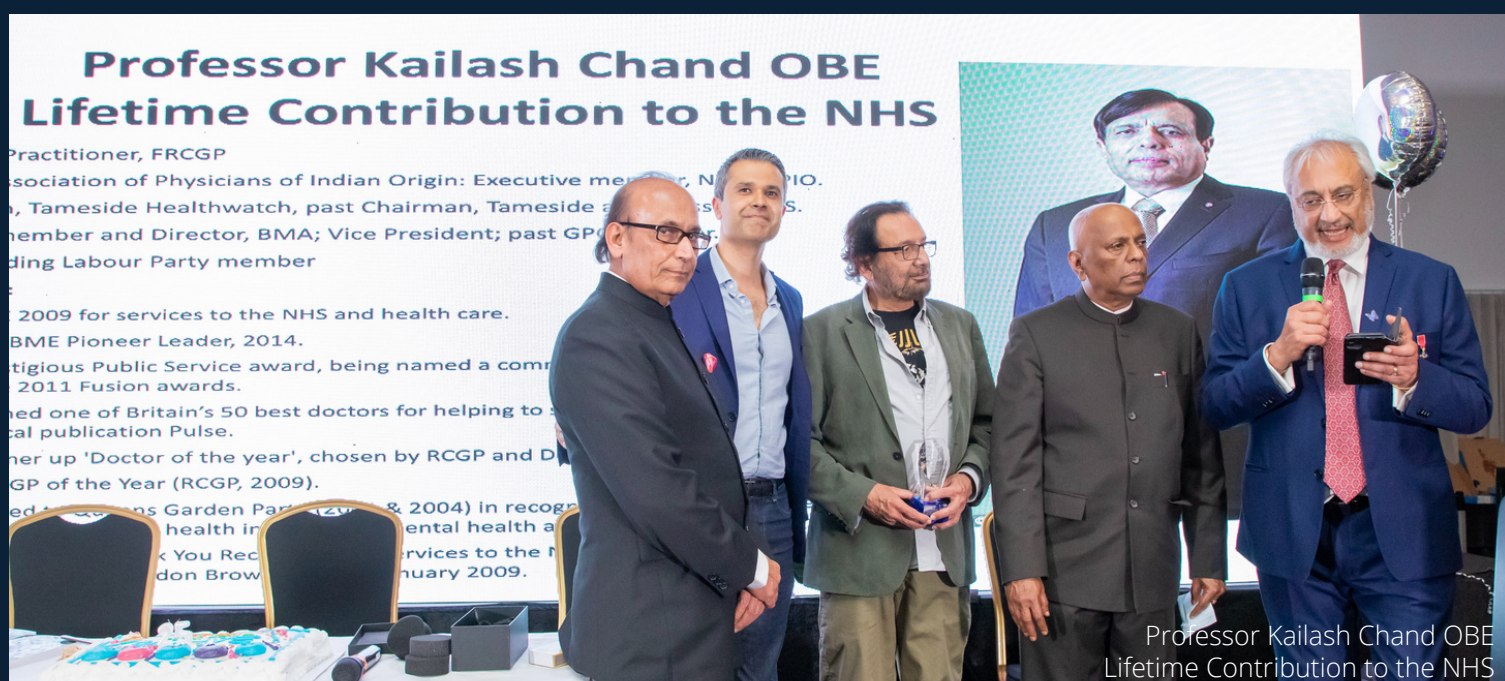


Dr Achuthan R Sajayan  
Outstanding Contribution to BAPIO



Dr Satheesh Mathew  
Lifetime Contribution to the NHS





[Silver Jubilee Conference Gallery.](#)

[Click here for Conference programme.](#)





# BAPIO FAMILY



## **British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin**

The Chapel, Trinity Gardens, 9-11 Bromham Road  
Bedford  
Bedfordshire  
MK40 2BP  
United Kingdom

### **E-mail**

BAPIO Head office: [admin@bapio.co.uk](mailto:admin@bapio.co.uk)  
Policy and Sponsorship: [office@bapio.co.uk](mailto:office@bapio.co.uk)  
Advice line: [info@bapio.co.uk](mailto:info@bapio.co.uk)

### **Phone**

+44 (0)1234 363272  
+44 (0)1234 212879