

# A caravan to tide over hatred and discrimination

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**GURUGRAM:** Singing a Tamil song dedicated to Babasaheb Ambedkar, 29-year-old Anushri, on Friday, spoke to about 200 students at Lancers International School about how recollecting one's humanity was crucial to erasing caste-based differences.

Anushri was visiting the city with 16 other women as part of a nationwide caravan journey to spread the message of peace with 'Baatein Aman Ki', a 24-day campaign. Charting their way through different states, the caravan is driving conversations on subjects ranging from constitutional rights, women's rights and hate crimes.

Anushri is a software engineer and the lead organiser of Trans Rights Now Collective, a Chennai-based organisation. A transwoman, she shared her experience of growing up in a



■ Ambreen, a member of the caravan, spoke of how the campaign was against violence against communities. YOGESH KUMAR/HT PHOTO

society that discriminated against transpersons and how she made efforts to initiate a conversation around LGBTQ rights through the journey.

"This is the first time I am travelling across states in northern India. The culture, the people, practices, and even the

languages here are different. However, I tried to overcome all these odds to initiate conversations around peace," Anushri, who uses only her first name, said.

Ambreen, another member of the caravan and an activist from Srinagar, told the students how

the campaign was against any kind of violence perpetuated against communities, whether the increasing incidents of mob lynching, crimes against Dalits, sexual harassment, or domestic abuse.

"Violence can be traced to power dynamics in the society. Our caravan opposes every kind of violence, and we seek to push that conversation forward through this journey," Ambreen, who quit her job in management to work as an activist, said.

On Thursday, the caravan visited Ferozpur Jhirka and Padla in Nuh and interacted with local residents. Talking about the visit, Anushri said, "Nuh is close to the Parliament and yet girls in the region are deprived of education. Girls told us how they wanted to study but were forced to drop out since there were no senior secondary schools in the vicinity."

Another member of the caravan, Manjusha Nayan, however, said she was pleased to see that men and women shared household responsibilities with each other in Nuh.

The caravan's activities in the city were coordinated by Gurugram Nagrik Ekta Manch, a citizen's collective.

Rahul Roy, documentary filmmaker and a member of the collective, said engaging with initiatives like Baatein Aman Ki was necessary at a time when the country was witnessing recurring incidents of violence.

"Gurugram has been witnessing tensions for the past six months. There are instances of manufactured conflict. In that context, it is important that there are different efforts to create a public discourse which counters hatred and violence. It is a small city and it is important to start conversations that talk about peace," Roy added.