



## *How I became a part of the BIS community*

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When I first sat down in the auditorium to witness the IB orientation at Gilbert Building in July 2019, I only expected a fraction of what I now know about Bombay International School. The school's name suggested that it was 'international', meaning that its thoughts and ideas disregarded increasingly artificial national borders. But what mattered to me more was that the school, its faculty, its students and the general ethos paid no heed to the borders that we repeatedly come across in our daily lives, based on belief, skills, abilities and so many other checkpoints. The school's mission of 'inclusion' has made me feel a sense of belonging, not merely as the school's first legally-blind student, but rather as someone who is an equal and is as much a part of the community as my peers.

First of all, I cannot extend enough praise to the faculty members, who have worked tirelessly since the beginning to make me and my skills, talents and personality stand out rather than stand apart from my fellow students. They have taken into account my needs, and worked hard to create a level playing field – whether by allowing me the use of a computer, permitting extra time for tests, instantly forgiving an assignment submitted late due to technical constraints, or taking pride in my participation in a class that involves the analysis of visual data. All these instances showcase their exceptional warmth, hard work and dedication and prove that BIS has stretched the wings of inclusion in every direction. It has also taught me – in keeping with the school's philosophy of independent and empowered learning – that independence is not about managing with absolutely no help whatsoever. It is more about knowing when and how to ask for help to achieve my potential. It has taught me that to be independent is to be empowered and to be empowered is to be independent.