



Meet

Dhanashri Kamble

26 y/o, Cleft Warrior from India 

As someone born with a cleft lip and palate, Dhanashri has faced several challenges since birth, including **feeding difficulties, medical and surgical challenges, speech difficulties, financial strains** and more. But, there is something above and beyond that goes unnoticed, **Psycho-social challenges**. It includes isolation caused by social stigma, social anxiety, lack of confidence and self-esteem, lack of acceptance due to social stigma, body image and identity concerns, mental health challenges, inhibitions of relationships and intimacy, rejections, limited opportunities of growth, and more.

Dhanashri is called a Cleft Warrior because her scars are a testament to the silent battles she fought while her smile beams her spirited courage and resilience.

Cleft lip and/or cleft palate occur when a baby's lip or mouth do not form properly during pregnancy. There are two main categories of clefts: *cleft lip with or without cleft palate and isolated cleft palate*. An effective cleft treatment requires a **multidisciplinary approach** which includes surgery, speech therapy, orthodontics, dentistry, nursing and psychology. Treatment typically lasts from birth to early adulthood.

Whilst good medical care is of course important, it is the wider context and environment that needs to be challenged and changed to ensure children and adults born with clefts are given equal opportunities to succeed – as infants, at school, in the job market and in society at large. This is why the approach of ECO and SIRAT is so important to create **“Equal Cleft Opportunities”**.



Sirat - The Cleft Warriors Ensemble is a not-for-profit company and a cleft-focused community founded in 2022 in India, by two proud cleft warriors, Ashim and Sakshi. They are committed to improving and empowering the lives of individuals born with Cleft.

Sirat means character. On their journey from 'Soorat to Sirat', their aim is to change the perspective of people from looking at the face-value (Soorat) to the inner-qualities and character traits of an individual (Sirat).

Our Key Programs:

- Community Growth
- Mental Health Counseling
- Cleft Resources Support
- Upskilling & Career Support
- Speech Improvement

Our Community:

- 150+ Cleft Warriors
- 150+ Cleft Allies / Parents
- 45+ Cleft Professionals
- 15+ Volunteers
- 500+ Instagram and LinkedIn Followers
- Membership in more than 45 cities in 20 states

Our Journey:

- 75+ Online Warriors Catch-ups
- 25+ Online Allies Catch-ups
- 10+ Offline Events
- 15+ Consultation / Q&A sessions with professionals
- 12+ Upskilling Workshops
- 60+ Personal Consultation / Counseling Sessions
- 35+ Partnerships / Associations / Collaborations

Our Potential:

Urban India, Internet and WhatsApp Users first. Warriors b/w 15 - 55 y/o, Allies / Parents of warriors b/w 0 - 35 y/o

180,000 (Cleft Warriors) + 420,000 (Cleft Allies) = 600,000 (Warriors + Allies)



ECO - European Cleft Organisation is a not-for-profit NGO founded in 2007 in the Netherlands.

It has 20 years of experience in Europe in developing educational exchanges, standards setting, training programmes in early care, resilience, communication and speech training as well as developing coping strategies for those with a visible difference. Making patients true partners and building support networks beyond the walls of the hospital.

ECO is currently seeking funding to put together a fact finding mission to India to meet with key representatives from SIRAT. Together we will set out a collaborative programme that will meet the urgent needs of people born with clefts in India. Your support will kick start this collaboration.

Please give generously on our website via this QR code. Thank you!

ECO can provide support to SIRAT in the following ways:

- Providing Capacity Building
- Supporting Policy Change
- Raising Awareness
- Developing and Sustaining Cleft Support Groups
- Countering Stigma

Scan below to Donate!



Scan the QR Code to know more about Sirat community, their journey, their programs and growth potential.

Scan below to view Sirat's detailed proposal!



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