

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
DEPARTMENT REPORT: 2019-20

Department profile:

Jihasa Vachharajani (Head)
Dr (Sr) Ananda Amritmahal
Samrita Sinha
Nishtha Dev
Dr Elwin Susan John

Innovative Teaching Methods/best practices:

Poetry reading sessions, workshops and other activities:

Samrita Sinha:

“Tea, Coffee and Literature”: Every year, the SYBA students are invited to a tea party where along with refreshments, discussions on the background concepts from the syllabus are held. Students were expected to come prepared with their thoughts on the texts and concepts like African-American Poetry of the 20th century, Jewish-American Literature, Literature of the Chinese Diaspora in America and Literature of the Indian Diaspora in America.

“Literature Beyond the Classroom”: Ms Sinha collaborated with Dr Tina Chakravarty from the BMM department to design the programme “Literature Beyond the Classroom” in which SYBA English and SYBMM students were encouraged to form a poetry reading club. The students met as per their convenience, and read and discussed poetry. They were also encouraged to read out their own poetry. Preference was given to regional poetry and marginalised poetic voices. These sessions were held in open spaces outside the classrooms. The quieter students of the class benefited a lot from these interactive sessions. .

In the Communication Skills classes, students were asked to write letters to each other in class in order to facilitate learning via their peer group. Additionally, four clubs, namely, Reading club, Movie Club, Cookery Club and Debate Club were created to encourage more class participation among students and to hone their public speaking skills. Elected coordinators chose books, movies, recipes and topics for the class to discuss.

Nishtha Dev:

For the unit on report writing on Communication Skills, Ms Dev asked her students to write reports based on the crimes and the ensuing investigation depicted in an episode from *Castle*, for a fictional newspaper. The class was divided into groups for the class presentation and feedback was provided to them.

She also organised a dance workshop in her Communication Skills class as an activity for report writing (activity reports). .

Debates and creative writing sessions were organised to celebrate National Integration Day and Constitution Day.

Dr Elwin Susan John:

Clubs like Film Club, Vocab Club and Debate Club were created in order to help students hone their public speaking and writing skills.

Students were encouraged to draw inspiration from the birds on campus and to compose poetry. Their poetry was e-published in a volume titled *Ruminations*.

Silent movies were screened to improve their dialogue writing and creative writing skills.

Students were asked to write letters to each other in class in order to facilitate learning via their peer group.

A/V aids, ICT, film screenings:

Ms Sinha screened films like *Days That Shook the World* and *Three Iranian Women* to encourage discussion on issues like gender and global politics. The film *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* was screened to help students link it with the play *Death of a Salesman*. She screened documentaries, Satyajit Ray's films and contemporary Bollywood films in her Mass Communication classes. The silent animation film *Paperman* was screened as part of the exercise on dialogue writing. Students were asked to imagine and write the dialogue for the film.

Ms Dev screened old advertisements and scenes from *Hum Log* in her Mass Communication class.

Dr John made a detailed PPT on the history of English literature (which included the information on the important events of the era, the prominent writers of each period, their works and the popular genres of the times) for Paper IV. She screened the films *Spotlight* and *Snowden* for her Mass Communication students. The screenings were followed by interactive sessions on censorship and freedom of expression. The National Theatre's production of Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* was screened. The lectures on Unit II of Paper VI ("Postmodernism and Popular Culture") were supported by powerpoint presentations.

Handouts:

Handouts were prepared by members of the department to aid their teaching in the following papers:

Mass Communication (Nishtha Dev): handouts containing readings for various topics in the syllabus

Paper II (Dr John): handout on background readings on Indian Writing in English

Paper III (Samrita Sinha): handout on American poetry

Paper IV (Dr John): poetry handout containing poems from the syllabus and texts from outside the syllabus

Student presentations:

Ms Sinha encouraged the Mass Communication students to make presentations on the history of radio and Indian cinema. She asked the TYBA S/M students to make presentations on the theoretical aspects of modernism and postmodernism and on short story writers of the 20th century.

Dr John encouraged the students of Mass Communication to make presentations on the history of print media and the role of journalism in contemporary India. TYBA students made presentations on “Coffee Houses in 17th and 18th century English Culture” and “Fashion in 18th Century England”.

Contact groups: The TYBA English S/M students met their mentors once a week to review their academic progress and to ask them questions related to the syllabus, the writing of answers, reference work etc.

Google groups: Google groups were used to share academic material, announcements related to departmental and college activities, information on job and internship opportunities, and cultural events held in the city.

Unsupervised tests: Unsupervised tests were conducted for the TYBA English S/M class.

Texts for IAs (FYBA English, TYBA English etc.) are taken from outside the syllabus.

N-List: FYBA, SYBA and TYBA students were asked to activate their N-List accounts at the start of the academic year. They were encouraged to make use of the facility.

Syllabus formulation:

The Department of English prepared the draft syllabi for the SYBA Mass Communication and English courses as part of the syllabus revision process under autonomy.

Paper-setting and Moderation:

Members of the department were appointed as paper-setters and examiners under autonomy.

Ms Dev was invited by Jai Hind College, Mumbai, as a moderator for Business Communication, Nineteenth Century Literature and TYBA Popular Culture papers.

Dr John was invited by Jai Hind College, Mumbai, for the moderation of the semester-end answer papers.

Department Activities:

Matribhasha Diwas and Marathi Bhasha Divas.: The department celebrated Matribhasha Diwas and Marathi Bhasha Divas in February 2020 by organising exercises and events in the Communication Skills classes.

Peace Week: The Department of English in association with Story Circus, a Mumbai-based theatre production company, organised a solo theatre piece by Ulka Mayur titled "Cast Off All Shame" in the A V Hall on August 9, 2019. Dr John was the event coordinator.

Ananya: The department organised a performance titled "Ramji Aayenge", an inter-textual adaptation of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and Ramayana's "Kishkindha Kaand", in association with Mr Abhinav Grover, founder of Be Taal, a Mumbai-based theatre company, on November 29, 2019. Ms Dev was the event coordinator.

Conferences/seminars organised:

The Departments of History and English, Sophia College, in collaboration with Literature Live! 360@ Campus organised a two-day international conference on "Mythology in Indian Culture, Literature and Art" on January 30 and 31, 2020.

Inter-collegiate collaborations:

The department organised a lecture titled "Existentialism: A Philosophical Approach" by Dr Biraj Mehta from the Department of Philosophy, Wilson College, on August 9, 2019. Ms Sinha was the event coordinator.

The Departments of English of Sophia College and St Andrew's College organised a session on "Gender and Fandom" which was part of the Gender Studies Certificate Course (designed by St. Andrew's College from July-September, 2019) at Sophia College on August 14, 2019. The talk, which was titled "For the Love of the Thing: Interrogating Fandom and Desire", was delivered by Dr Rukmini Pande. Ms Vachharajani was the event coordinator.

Inter-departmental collaborations:

"Literature Beyond the Classroom": Ms Sinha collaborated with Dr Tina Chakravarty from the BMM department to design the programme "Literature Beyond the Classroom" (the details of which are provided in the section on Innovating Teaching Methods). 22 SYBA English students were part of the club.

Sessions organised:

The department invited an ex-student, Ms Nikita Rana, to conduct a session on "Getting Published" for the TYBA English students on February 28, 2020. Ms Vachharajani was the event coordinator.

The Department of English, in collaboration with Godrej India Culture Lab, organised The Godrej India Culture Lab Leadership Programme, on August 30, 2019. Ms Dev was the event coordinator.

Field trips:

The Government of Maharashtra asked colleges across Mumbai to send students to watch the film *Uri: The Surgical Strike* in theatres on July 26, 2019 on the occasion of Kargil Vijay Divas. The organisation of the event was done via the Communication Skills classes. FYBA students of Sophia College were sent to Roxy theatre to watch the film. A discussion on the film was held in the Communication Skills classes after the screening.

Committees:

Jihasa Vachharajani:

- Chairperson, Board of Studies, Department of English
- Member, Academic Council
- Member, Grievance Redressal Committee
- Member, Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee
- Member, Admission Committee
- Co-coordinator, EXAP
- Staff member-in-charge, College Magazine
- Staff member-in-charge, SCEDA
- Staff member-in-charge, Literary Arts, Kaleidoscope
- Member, Organising Committee of the Degree Conferring Ceremony

Samrita Sinha:

- Member, Board of Studies, Department of English
- Member, IQAC sub-committee
- Member, EXAP Cultural Committee
- Member, Ananya Committee
- Staff member-in-charge, Bhartiya Sanskriti Parishad
- Member, Bridge Courses Committee
- Staff coordinator, Sophia College Rotaract Club
- Member, Registration Committee of the Degree Conferring Ceremony

Nishtha Dev:

- Member, Board of Studies, Department of English
- Member, EXAP Seminar Component
- Member, Examination Committee
- Member, Attendance Committee
- Staff member-in-charge, English Literary Society
- Member, Organising Committee of the Degree Conferring Ceremony

Dr Elwin Susan John:

- Member, Board of Studies, Department of English
- Member, EXAP Research Committee
- Member, Timetable Committee
- Member, Attendance Committee
- Member, Swayam Committee
- Member, Staff Action Committee

Academic Audit:

The department presented the data related to its teaching-learning as well as the evaluation processes during the Academic Audit held in February 2020.

EXAP Projects Guided:

Ms Dev guided Juhi Dhruva and Dhruvi Joshi for their EXAP Research Component paper titled, "The Portrayal of Disabilities in Contemporary Children's Literature in English In India".

Orientation/Refresher Courses attended:

Dr John participated in UGC HRDC's Refresher Course from August 6-20, 2019 at the University of Kerala.

Papers presented:

Ms Sinha's research paper on "A Comparative Study of Poetic Voices of Dissent from the Northeast India, Kashmir and the Dalit Community" has been selected for presentation at the 4th Annual South Asian Conference at Dublin City University, Dublin, to be held in September, 2020 (date not specified owing to the COVID-19 pandemic).

Ms Dev presented a paper titled “Gendered Heroisms in *Amar Chitra Katha*” for an international conference on “Contesting Violence” held on January 20-21, 2020 at SRTM University, Nanded.

Invited talks:

Ms Sinha was invited by the Department of English, Jai Hind College, to be the moderator for the paper on Victorian Literature in October 2019.

Publications:

Ms Sinha’s article titled “Negotiating Identity with Otherness: The Aesthetics of Postcolonial Narrative Strategies in Mamang Dai’s *The Legends of Pensam*”, presented at the International Conference on Literature and Marginalization organised by the University of Mumbai, was published in the *International Journal of Innovative Knowledge Concept*, ISSN: 2454-2415 (UGC recognised journal No. 41311) The same article has also been published in the book, *Literature and Marginalisation*, brought out by the University of Mumbai in October 2019.

Dr John’s paper titled, “I Used to Be Human Once: Trauma and Reconfigurations of the Body in Chemical Disasters” was published in the book *Topography Of Trauma: Fissures, Disruptions And Transfigurations* by Brill Press, Boston.

Awards/recognition/grants/degrees:

Ms Sinha is currently working on the MRP on “Marginalised Narratives from the Northeast India: Select Writers Writing in English” and on the MRP granted by RUSA on “Registers of Protest: Poetic Voices of Dissent from the Northeast India, Kashmir and the Dalit Community”.

Conferences/seminars attended:

Ms Dev attended the seminar and panel discussion on "Homi Bhabha and 'Signs Taken for Wonders'" by Prof Vijay Mishra, organised by Literary Arts and Academic Forum of the Department of English, KC College, on September 15, 2019.

Workshops attended:

Ms Vachharjani attended the workshop on “Understanding Assessment and Evaluation: Learning Objectives and Learning Outcomes” conducted by Dr Andrea Coutinho on October 5, 2019.

Ms Vachharajani attended the workshop on “Developing Learner Competencies and their Relation to Paper Setting: Value of Assessment Rubrics” conducted by Dr Ivan John on October 5, 2019.

Dr John attended the workshop on “Understanding Assessment and Evaluation: Learning Objectives and Learning Outcomes” conducted by Dr Andrea Coutinho on October 5, 2019.

Dr John attended the workshop on “Developing Learner Competencies and their Relation to Paper Setting: Value of Assessment Rubrics” conducted by Dr Ivan John on October 5, 2019.

Events/programmes attended:

Ms Sinha attended the staff enrichment programme on sexual harassment at the workplace organised by Sophia College in February, 2020.

Dr John attended the induction programme for new lecturers conducted by IQAC on October 4, 2019.

Postgraduate teaching/evaluation and/or guidance/mentorship provided to postgraduate students:

Ms Shadab Zaveri and Ms Marlyn Pereira of the Department of English, SNDT Women’s University, completed their internship of 241 hours, from December 4, 2019 to January 31, 2020, under the mentorship of Ms Vachharajani, as part of their MA programme.

Ms Maryln Pereira, an ex-student of the department, took DCA lectures in February 2020, under Ms Vachharajani and Ms Dev’s guidance.

Ms Sinha was invited as a guest lecturer by the Department of English, S.N.D.T University to teach the Semester III optional paper on the 18th and 19th Century Novel to M.A Part II students. She takes one to two lectures per week.

Election duty:

Ms Vachharajani was appointed as the Presiding Officer for the Assembly Elections held on October 21, 2019 for the 178 - Dharavi Assembly Constituency.

Other activities:

Ms Vachharajani attended a folk music recital by renowned Hindustani classical singer, Dr Soma Ghosh, organised by SCESA in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, on July 6, 2019 in the AV Hall.

Dr John was invited to judge a slam poetry event on December 9, 2019 by the English Literary Society.

Dr John completed an online quiz on “To Understand English Language and Literature Through Indian Writers” conducted by the IQAC of Vidya Vikas Mandal’s Arts and Commerce College on April 29, 2020.

Dr John completed a Covid-19 Awareness Quiz conducted by the NSS of K J Somaiya College of Science and Commerce on April 30, 2020.