

Kutch Trip Report

Date: 8th-12th February

Number of Students: 6

Day 1:

The students of Sophia college (empowered autonomous), accompanied by Dr. Rajula Shah visited Kutch, Gujarat from 8th-12th February. Their journey started by them boarding the train on the 8th of February. A few students boarded the train from Bandra and the others from Borivali. They reached Gandhidham on 9th February and then visited Dr. Rajula's relatives in Adipur. Then they traveled for another hour to reach the Vanki Mahavir Jain Temple, which was their stay for the rest of their trip. After having lunch in the temple's bhojnalaya, they visited the Adani port in Mundra which is the largest commercial port in India owned by Gautam Adani. The students saw how the cargos were loaded and unloaded from the ships and how they were transported from one place to another by cargo trains. The students also saw a model room, where a 3D model of the whole Adani port was made from scrap metal. There were also various other models and structures made from waste nuts and bolts. In the model room, there was a list of individuals who worked and contributed to the growth of this port. The board that covered the list was highly male dominated. The students observed that the Adani port was a very well maintained place where plants were watered through drip irrigation. The port itself worked 24/7 during the Covid lockdown. The workers who worked in the special economic zones wore helmets whereas the ones who didn't just wore the safety jackets. Some areas of the port were restricted but nevertheless, the students were able to learn how the port functions.

The next place they visited was the Bhagvan Mahavir Pashu Raksha Kendra Anchorwala Ahinsa Dham, an animal protection organization which looked after animals who were abandoned, rescued and these animals were also treated. The animals there were categorized according to their health conditions. The healthy animals were separated from the ones which were infected. The students got to feed fodder to the cows. They also visited the Vineshalay museum where they could view the horns of a bull named Gopal which weighed 176 kgs. Gopal's horns were in the Guinness world records for the heaviest horns. These horns were removed surgically since they were affecting Gopal's health. Inside the museum, various posters were put up to spread awareness against animal cruelty. These posters also promoted vegetarianism and claimed that certain gods resided in animals that were slaughtered to consume. There were also posters that showed how animals were slaughtered for consumption. Some of the posters also showed how certain animals and their produce caused diseases in humans, like for example egg causes cancer. After exploring the other parts of the museum, the group headed to have dinner and returned to Vanki.

A . P . Patil

Dr. Anagha Tendulkar Patil
HOD



Day 2:

The morning started with a visit to the Jain temple in Waki. It is approximately 250 years old. The walls are intricately carved. The temple is dedicated to Lord Mahavira. The walls of the temple are filled with depictions of various folklores on Lord Mahavira descriptive of his spiritual journey. These paintings were supported by various patrons from all over the country. Kutch is home to a huge Jain community.

We soon left for Dholavira after breakfast at the temple *bhojanalay*.

Dholavira is situated at the center of a huge salt marsh. The only road connecting Dholavira is a 30 km stretch called the Road to Heaven. It is a narrow strip of connecting road with expansive stretches of white salt stretches on both sides. During most parts of the year it is filled with water and it crystallizes for a few days. This road leads straight to the village of Dholavira, one of the biggest Harappan sites excavated in India.

We explored Dholavira in the afternoon. We got to see the various layers of excavations indicative of the various stages of the then existing civilization along with a few wells and remnants of houses which are called *bhoongi*. After that we had lunch and headed off to the infamous festival of Rann of Kutch also called the Rann Utsav.

The group then continued to Dhordo, a small village in the Rann of Kutch in Western Gujarat, allowing the students to visit and experience the famous salt marsh. The Rann of Kutch, reputed to be one of the largest salt deserts, is a result of a geological shift, and its vast expanse stretches between the rugged borders of India and Pakistan. The word “Rann” translates to Desert; a fun fact the students learned is that Kutch derives its name from a local fable that the region’s map, if turned upside down, resembles Kachchh, the Sanskrit word for “tortoise.” This also shows a comparison between the rough exterior of the tortoise shell and the desert environment.

When at the Rann one of the students also enjoyed a paragliding ride with a view of the sunset and the vastness of the desert.

The group headed into the Rann Utsav, unfortunately, due to it being late in the day a lot of the festival was closed. There was a long walkway prepped right in the middle of the desert at the entry, it was quite a walk and there were even camels and horses pulling a type of carriage with around 10-13 people seated on it. The Rann Utsav was envisioned and started by PM Narendra Modi when he was the then chief minister along with President APJ Abdul Kalam, promotion of Kutch's natural and cultural splendor, and social uplift were the event's primary goals. In the winter season, every year the festival is organized and runs for approximately 3-4 months from November to February. This time the festival was from 10th Nov 2023 to 27th March 2024. This annually organized festival offers an opportunity For visitors to attend folk dance and music concepts, to watch artisans at work, and to Shop directly from NGOs craftspeople.

While walking through the entrance the group also got a small glimpse of a Kutchi music performance. After this, the students visited handicraft and food stalls filled with small businesses selling authentic products; it was also the last day of the stalls being open. The group got a chance to visit the tent city and explore the grounds; the tent city has become a huge tourist spot that garners around 5,00,000 visitors from 20+ countries. Along with this, they got to partake in an immersive percussion performance. The students headed back to their stay in Vaanki after making a small stop in Bhuj for dinner. After the long day, the group only reached the Dharamshala around 3 am.

Day 3:

Considering that the group returned to Vanki at roughly 3 AM, day 3 of the trip started a little late. After breakfast, the students took a stroll outside the premises of the Jain Tirth to explore the village of Vanki. On the walk, Dr. Rajula showed various parts of the village such as the old houses of various families, the village center where all the people gather to socialize, the bus stop, and so on. The students then visited the ancestral home of Dr. Rajula, where she also showed them where her family deity is kept. The students sat inside the room with Dr. Rajula while she explained the history of how her ancestors began worshipping the deity, the rituals they follow, how the ritual is performed, and the various intersections of gender, caste, and religion that can be seen especially while performing these rituals.

After lunch, the students were taken to a ship-building yard in Mandvi which is a well-known port in Kutch. Students interviewed a worker working on the ship with the help of Dr. Rajula for translation. They understood the history of the ship-building industry in Mandvi, where the ships are taken to, and the kind of work that goes into maintaining and repairing the ship. Students also inquired about the kind of work that is expected from the worker, whether they receive insurance while working as well as when he is sailing on the ship. They also learned where the ships go and the types of products that are imported and exported in India as well as other countries.

After the interview, the group headed to Bhuj to see Smritivan- the 2001 Earthquake Museum. After a long ride the group visited the Smriti Van Earthquake museum located at the top of Bhujia Hill in the state of Gujarat. The museum was built in tribute to all those people who lost their lives during the earthquake that occurred on 26th January, 2001 in Gujarat. The museum was divided into 7 stages, where they explained in detail how the earthquake occurred. There were special speakers for each section of the museum. In the first stage, they showed the group a

documentary about Earth. They explained the different layers Earth has, which includes the Crust, the Mantle, the outer core and inner core. They also explained how man has tried to explore the depths of earth and have tried to dig into earth's core but due to the heat emitted from those areas they are not able to reach that point. We further moved on to another screen, where they explained how earthquakes occur and how they can either destroy or form new islands along with creatures existing there as well, the platelets shift around and move around which forms our islands.

The group moved on to the next part in which they showed them the stone age period, how evolution occurred from monkey to man. There was also a display of the various tools and weapons that were used during those times. There was a huge screen, where if people walked through it they could see the transformation of humans from monkey into man. There was also a map that showed all the pots, jewelry and weapons that were found from different places around India.

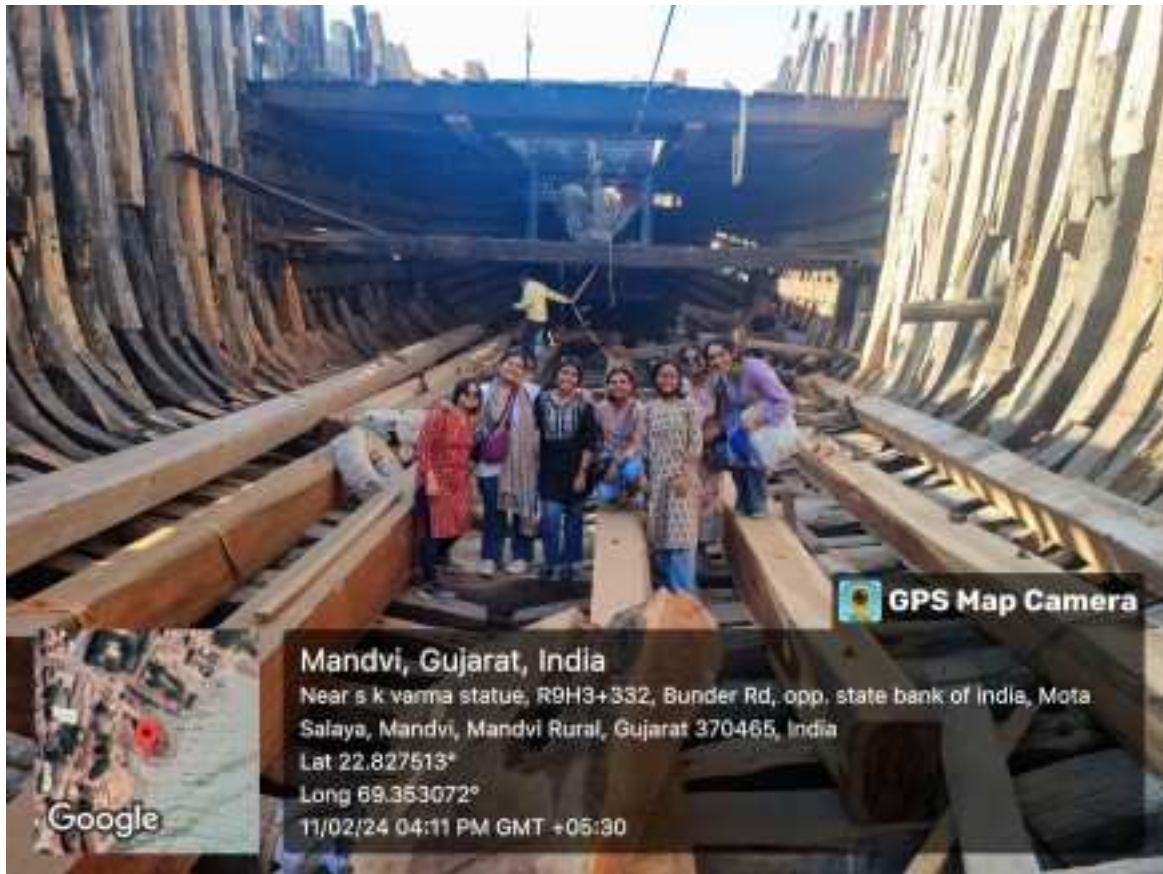
The group eventually moved on to the earthquake related section of the museum, in which they portrayed how Gujarat was affected by the earthquake. There was a telephone booth with several landlines hanging from the ceiling, through them you could hear the sounds of people calling their families and trying to get in touch with them but weren't able to because the impact of the earthquake completely isolated Gujarat from the world. There was a video shown of two workers, rescuing and helping survivors and tending to their injuries. The situation was so horrible they did not have any place to even perform their rituals for the dead. People lost their houses and were forced to sleep on the streets. There was a room filled with different designed doors that showcased the doors of Kutch, and behind some of them there were small screens that featured the stories of people who had experienced the earthquake and survived.

The next part of the museum portrayed the scenes of the earthquake. There was a line of rubble and between that were statues of people stuck in the rubble. It featured men, women and children, and their cry for help. There was also a live depiction of a lady asking for help and searching for her family. The museum provided several tablets that showed the progress of Gujarat from the earthquake till date, their progress in education, infrastructure, and economically. There were also small figurines that displayed the after effects of the earthquake, the burnt spaces, the cleaning up of places, etc. there were small games and activities provided that gave us knowledge on how to survive in such situations. They also gave people a test with situations and what measures they would take to survive.

The group then moved on to the next part of the museum, which was a simulation in which they got to experience actual earthquake tremors. There was a huge screen like a dome, which showed various scenes during an earthquake which looked very realistic.

The final part of the museum was dedicated especially to the people who lost their lives during the earthquake. There were screens there through which people could pay their respects to those who passed away. On the ceiling there were around 20,000 lights that hung, each light symbolizing a soul lost that day. After that the group proceeded to exit the museum for dinner.

For dinner, they decided to taste the street food of Kutch, where they tried various delicacies of that place. After finishing off with their dinner, they headed back to the Dharamshala in which they were staying.



Day 4:

The group explored the Vanki District, in which Dr. Rajula Shah showed them the contributions her father made in the village. We were introduced to one of the locals Mr. Harsh, he showed us around the temple. There was a new temple built there and a Jain saint shrine, this shrine was for the monks, male and female. Though living in the same premises they were not allowed to interact with each other.

Mr. Harsh took us around to visit a school that was run by the state as well as through various corporate social responsibilities. The school was inaugurated during the lockdown by PM Narendra Modi in online mode. This place is maintained by the students and teachers employed by the state government, this school has also won various awards. The school provides comfortable surroundings that enrich their minds for learning. The classes consist of smart boards instead of black boards which show a technological advancement within the school. The school only consists of grade Nursery to 8th, but that doesn't stop them from getting into competition with any top notch school in Mumbai, with a clear indication that there are no dropouts.

The group moved on to a different section of the school, the medium of instruction in this school is Gujarati but they still teach their students English. There is an even ratio between the boys and girls. They are also provided with a TV screen that asks the students general knowledge questions. The science laboratories and libraries are maintained by the students themselves and it is well maintained. There are private schools which provide further education. No in-school transfers are happening. There is a divide in town that has high caste people staying in the old

town and later extending to the new variety we show Muslims' chimney and women can sit in the darshan.

On the same day, the students conducted three interviews. The first participant used to work as a public health provider but is now retired. He has three sons and two daughters in the family, of which the daughters are married off. He has 5 acres of land, on which he grows jeera and BT cotton during the rainy season. He also has cows that he mentioned are not for commercial use. He farms as a hobby and has kept male and female laborers. The students asked him about the laborers, where he specified that if the male workers want to do extra time they get paid extra as well, but the female workers are not recognized as workers. Their weekly wages are between 250-300 Rupees for 5 hours of work, and more wages are given for the number of hours they work overtime.

The second participant was a farmer who does organic farming. The students learned that the government gives them a 70% subsidy for solar panels, which is why he was able to install and use solar panels. He also uses CNG for cooking and other purposes, for which he showed the students the connection he built to his kitchen stove. On his farm, he grows jeera and castor plants. The farmer is very interested in CNG and spoke extensively about it to the students. In organic farming, the output is low and the production cost is high.

The third participant was also a farmer. He was the main land owner and he had three farmers under him. Students noticed how there was a difference in the way he spoke to his female workers as opposed to how he would speak to a male. They also noticed the clear line of intersectionality in terms of caste, gender, age and various identities of an individual.

The farmer has a huge plot of land (roughly 30 acres), on which he grows BT cotton, fruit trees like chikoo, custard apple during the rainy season. He also grows tamarind in summer, along with coriander, spinach, Keshav Mango, tomatoes, sugarcane, orange, dragon fruit, and Rajputi mango for commercial purposes. On our way to the Jain temple, the students came across a goat shepherd, who was from the Rabad caste. They tried goat milk which had a pure nutty taste due to the food the goats eat. The students returned to their rooms to pack their luggage and had lunch in the bhojnalaya, after which they left for Gandhidham. The group explored the new Anjar market, which is a wholesale market. The old Anjar was completely demolished by the earthquake. After some fun shopping, the trip ended on a happy note where the students bought various Kutch delicacies like sweets and pickles from the store. The students then headed to Gandhidham railway station to catch their train back to Mumbai.

Documentary & Discussion: Lights off for Kolhapur

Date: 22nd August 2023

Paper: Paper 5B

Number of people: 23 students

Time: 1:30 to 2:30pm

A 10-minute documentary was presented to students enrolled in the Sociology of Agrarian Studies course. The documentary shed light on the challenges faced by farmers in India, particularly focusing on the cultivation of sugarcane crops. It highlighted how the cultivation of sugarcane requires ample water supply, but frequent electricity shortages pose a significant obstacle for farmers in providing water to their crops. Due to the erratic availability of electricity, farmers often resort to watering their crops at night. However, this practice comes with its own risks, as the darkness increases the likelihood of encountering snakes in the fields. As a result, farmers are at risk of being bitten by snakes while tending to their crops during the night.

Following the screening of the documentary, a group discussion was conducted among the students. The discussion provided a platform for students to express their perspectives on the challenges faced by Indian farmers. Each student shared their viewpoints based on their understanding of the situations depicted in the documentary, offering insights into the diverse challenges and hardships encountered by farmers in India.



Documentary on Feminism

Date: 23rd August 2023

Paper: State, Civil Society, and Social Movements

Number of people: 12
Time: 11:30am - 12:30pm

On August 23rd, 2023, the Department of Sociology organized a documentary screening on feminism for the single major students. The documentary was selected by Professor Rajula Shah to delve into the rich history of feminism. The screening aimed to provide students with a deeper understanding of feminist movements and their impact on society. Following the documentary, a lively discussion ensued among the students, where they shared their thoughts, insights, and questions on the subject matter. The event was not only informative but also encouraged critical thinking and dialogue among the participants. Professor Rajula Shah facilitated the discussion, guiding students through various aspects of feminism and its relevance in contemporary society. Overall, the documentary screening and subsequent discussion were insightful and thought-provoking, contributing to a deeper exploration of feminist ideas and principles.



Documentary Screening: Podcast on My Indian life Kalki Koechi

Date: 1st August, 2023
Paper: Sociology of agrarian studies/ Paper 5B
Number of people: 25
Time: 1:30 - 2:30

On August 1st, 2023, the students of Paper 5B were engaged in a thought-provoking documentary featuring the remarkable journey of Dalit Activist Rahul Sonpimple. This documentary, titled "My Indian Life: A question of caste," aimed to shed light on the profound challenges faced by Dalits in India's social fabric. Rahul's personal narrative unfolded as a powerful testament to resilience and courage in the face of adversity. Born into a Dalit family, he

recounted his childhood experiences, marked by financial constraints that often deprived him of educational opportunities. As the screening progressed, emotions ran high among the students as they connected with Rahul's struggle for dignity and equality.

The podcast also explored the historical context of the Dalit community, tracing their journey through centuries of discrimination and marginalization. Kalki, the host of the podcast, provided insightful commentary on the systemic injustices faced by Dalits and the significance of government interventions such as reservations. Through stirring anecdotes and poignant reflections, the documentary painted a vivid picture of the realities of caste-based discrimination in India.

Following the screening, a discussion emerged among the students, with passionate exchanges about the complexities of caste dynamics in society. Many shared personal insights and reflections, drawing parallels between Rahul's story and the broader socio-political landscape. The event served as a catalyst for introspection, prompting students to contemplate their role in advocating for social justice and challenging entrenched inequalities. The documentary screening not only educated the students about the historical and contemporary challenges faced by Dalits but also sparked a sense of empathy and solidarity. It underscored the importance of awareness and activism in addressing caste-based discrimination and striving towards a more inclusive and equitable society. The event concluded with a resolve among the students to continue learning, engaging, and advocating for meaningful change.





Industrial Visit Report: Understanding the Informal Sector in Matheran

Date: 28th February, 2024

Place: Matheran

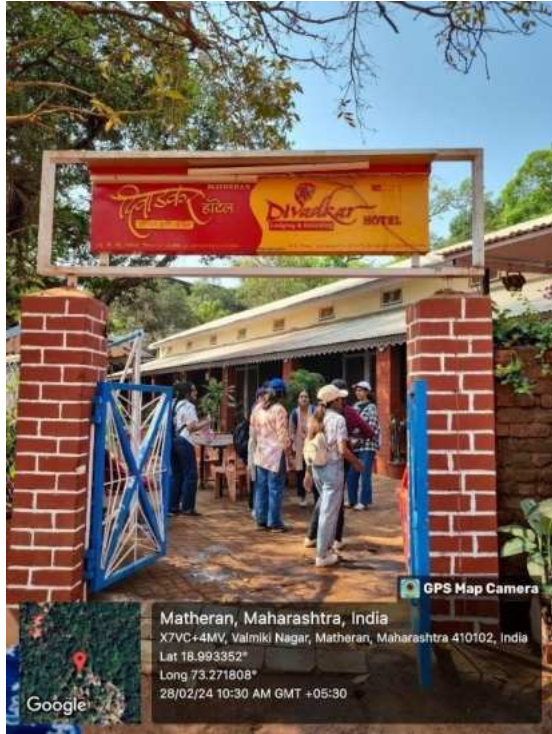
Number of students: 13

On February 28th, 2024, a group of 13 students from Sophia College's Department of Sociology, accompanied by two professors, embarked on an enlightening industrial visit to Matheran. This excursion was designed to provide a hands-on understanding of the informal sector, employing field view and direct communication methods for data collection. The students were immediately struck by the diverse landscape of Matheran, adorned with religious establishments such as temples, churches, and mosques, reflecting the area's rich cultural fabric. As they explored the local market, they were captivated by the creativity on display, particularly in an interview with a Game Zone proprietor, showcasing innovative entertainment offerings.

One of the most notable observations was in the leather bag shops, where mass production was evident, with each item taking approximately an hour to craft. This highlighted the industrious nature of the local businesses. Additionally, the students witnessed laborers transporting materials, reminiscent of horses' labor, underscoring the physical demands of such work. They also noted the unique mode of transportation for tourists, with hand-pulled rickshaws operated by carriers who were compensated per trip.

The prevalence of contract laborers and the discovery of key institutions like banks tucked away in isolated areas painted a picture of the intricacies within the informal sector. They were struck by the adaptive reuse of abandoned properties, now transformed into structures with striking architectural designs. The presence of monkeys as a tourist attraction and the local school's provision of essential facilities like clinics and toilets for neighboring villages further emphasized the community's dynamics.

This industrial visit was a valuable opportunity for the students to witness sociology in action, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. The firsthand experiences gained have enriched the students' understanding of the complexities inherent in the informal economy. The observations made during this visit have not only broadened their perspectives but have also ignited a deeper curiosity to explore further and delve into the intricacies of sociological phenomena in real-world contexts.





Meditation Session

Date: 11th August 2023

Paper: Human Resource Development

Title: Meditation Session

Type: Role of an HR manager

A TY student, Riya Pal, took on the role of an HR manager and led a brief 10-minute meditation session for their colleagues as an example of how corporate organizations are implementing the concept of “Fun Fridays”. This session also served as an example of how mindfulness practices can be used to motivate employees and create a more positive work atmosphere.

The meditation focused on calming the mind and enhancing present-moment awareness. The student-leader guided participants through breathing exercises and visualizations to cultivate inner peace and clarity. Following the meditation, Riya Pal emphasized the significance of motivation in the workplace. She highlighted how stress can negatively impact productivity and engagement, while practices like meditation can empower employees to manage stress, enhance focus, and boost overall well-being. This experiment demonstrates a novel and innovative approach to employee motivation. Integrating mindfulness techniques into the workplace can create a more harmonious and productive environment for everyone involved.





VIVEK CONFERENCE 2023
KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Prof. R. Indira
Vivek Singh Lane, Cumballa Hill, Mumbai, India
400026, MH, India
Lat 18.969747, Long 72.807327
12/11/2023 09:59 GMT+05:30
Note : Captured by GPS Map Camera

Mumbai, MH, India
Vivek Singh Lane, Cumballa Hill, Mumbai,
400026, MH, India
Lat 18.969747, Long 72.807327
12/11/2023 09:59 GMT+05:30
Note : Captured by GPS Map Camera

GPS Map Camera

DR. RANU JAIN

Dr Ranu Jain holds the Position of professor and chairperson at the centre for studies IN Sociology of Education, Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai. Her areas of specializations are Sociology of Education, Sociology of Religion, Ethnicity and related fields like Communalism, Secularism and Minority- Majority dynamics. She has published many research papers, conducted many projects including an action project titled as “Towards Communal Harmony”. She has also published the book “Education for Peace” for the frontline workers. She was the member of the study group constituted by the Chief Minister of Maharashtra for comprehending backwardness among the Muslims in Maharashtra.

Ranu Jain left Sociology around 30 to 40 years back and joined Tata Institute of Social Science where social work was the highlight of the curriculum. Until then she was a sociologist, who also combined sociology with anthropology. In Tata Institute of social sciences, interestingly Sociology was not an integral part of social work and it was seen as applied sociology and today Sociology is not being taught even as a course. The field of Sociology is becoming more application based such as education, criminology, etc. The real essence is being forgotten. In order to the understand the potential of the subject it is important to understand one’s own society. At the same time, we need to make an effort to compare the basis of problem with other societies rather simply adopting European theories. The purpose is that problems can defer from country to country.

According to Dr Jain sociology in changing times is happening at both the societal level as well as at the state level. States are transforming from Welfare State to Neo Liberal state. The market requirements are moving more towards privatisation and commercialisation including important sectors like health and education. The constant changes in the policy making has led to poor job security, which in turn has given rise to unemployment amongst the masses. These important concerns have pushed us towards marketisation to make people understand why sociology is important which was also put forth by Dr. R Indira. Sociologists have done rigorous studies and come up with important concepts such as cultural studies, concept of space to understand ones immediate surrounding.

Change makes things uncertain in the society, as they could be both negative or positive. In today's time we are getting back to a regime, a centralised regime in terms of authority, power making everything abstract. We don't know what shape the new liberal consumerize society will take and whether people will like it or not. Sociologists like M.N Shrinavas, etc criticise sociology for not having epistemological framework.

In Ranu Jain personal opinion sociology does have an epistemological frame stated by C Wright Mills in his ‘The Sociological Imagination’ (connecting one structure to all others) he talks

about how in order to study sociology it is important to consider this holistic approach. Certain sociologists think that sociology is a borrowed discipline, which can be our strength as sociology is an empirical science based on observation. It is important to understand that we cannot always rely on European concepts; instead, we need to build more indigenous concepts to deal with the society.

According to Dr. Jain, there are challenges faced by sociologists:

- There are not many takers of sociology (Dr. Jain herself states that while she was in Mahmud Rahman's committee, she wrote a background paper for Ranganath Mishra's committee not as a sociologist but as a Muslim community expert)
- Vocationalization - pushing towards funding projects.
- Sociology is in a transformative stage and very few are interested in studying it. - Society is in a technological transformation stage where we are exposed to tremendous data sets. And one of the major problems is finding a pattern in such monumental detailed data.

She concluded her lecture by stating that "Sociology has a unique theoretical frame that draws from and engages in all societal institutions in historical and contextual perspectives. The importance of sociology in its empirical roots gives it an advantage to study current affairs; however, we should not get lost in the common-sensical quick sensing of the current affairs. A proper understanding of current affairs requires a rigorous study and understanding not only of our society but also of other societies to develop a critical perspective on the structures that are behind the social issues and problems that we are experiencing today."



DR. TV SEKHER

Dr. T V Sekher is the head of the International Institute of Population Sciences' (IIPS) Family and Generation department in Mumbai. He is the principal investigator of the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India, which is supported by the Indian government's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Furthermore, from 2016 to 2017, Dr. Sekhar was a Fulbright Nehru Senior Fellow at Cornell University in the United States. In 2003, he held visiting fellowships at the MSH Foundation and the Wellcome Trust Centre at UCL in London. Additionally, he served as a visiting fellow at Oxford Brookes University in 2009.

In addition to publishing over 100 research articles in both domestic and foreign journals, he has written and edited 10 books. He served as a consultant for the Population Council, NITI IO, UNFPA, UNICEF, and the Government of India Planning Commission. Currently, he serves as the President of the Indian Association for Social Sciences and Health.

He began his speech by taking into account the changes in our society. What we learnt in school and what we are experiencing today are completely different. Changes are occurring in family

systems as well as marriage dynamics. Many challenges face society as a whole, and if sociologists are prepared to face them is a whole question in itself. His acknowledgement of these challenges echoed Professor R.Indira's sentiments, laying the groundwork for understanding the critical need for sociologists to re-calibrate their approach to reflect contemporary realities.

His speech included a pivotal point about the need for sociologists to embrace new methodologies and technological advancements. He emphasised the significance of conducting large-scale surveys and utilising available data to ensure that the discipline remains relevant to societal needs. He demystified the perceived challenges associated with quantitative skills and data analysis by sharing his personal journey of moving from a qualitative focus to incorporating quantitative methods.

Throughout his presentation, Dr.Sekher emphasised the symbiotic relationship between technology and data in modern sociological research. He urged sociologists to make use of existing data sets while staying up to date with technological advances. The survey conducted by the American Sociological Association served as a poignant reminder that sociologists must be adept at utilising technology and data analytics in order to keep up with the changing landscape. The uniting call for sociologists to broaden their research horizons was a key takeaway from his presentation. He advocated for a shift away from conventionally oppressive focal points, such as a fixation on caste systems, and urged scholars to investigate more diverse and contemporary topics. He emphasised the critical importance of researching issues such as social demography, healthcare, and ageing, recognizing these fields as crucibles for future research and policy development. His insights into IIPS offered a model for effective contributions to the sociological field by shedding light on the role of research institutions. He emphasised the institute's dedication to setting the research agenda, conducting independent and collaborative research, and providing leadership on critical population science issues. IIPS was highlighted as an example of how research institutions may generate significant contributions to sociological advancement through a dual focus on teaching and research, as well as active participation in national-level surveys.

Dr. Sekher's illuminating talk is a call to action for sociologists to navigate their discipline's changing currents with resilience and adaptability. From shifting family dynamics to a competitive job market, the challenges outlined necessitate a paradigm shift in sociological methodologies. He emphasises the importance of embracing the digital era and large-scale data analytics, encouraging sociologists to overcome their fears and use technology to conduct impactful research. The loud call to broaden research horizons is an invitation to venture into unknown waters, transcending traditional boundaries. Sociologists are encouraged to investigate critical issues such as social demography, healthcare, and ageing, recognizing these domains as incubators for innovative research and policy interventions. His perspectives spark a transformative journey, compelling sociologists to embrace change, foster innovation, and work together to create a sociological landscape that reflects the complexities of our dynamic society.



DR. ANUREKHA CHARI WAGH- ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, HYDERABAD UNIVERSITY

Dr. Anurekha Chari Wagh is an associate professor at the Department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad. She specializes in the areas of gender, citizenship rights, agrarian issues, micro finance, development, teaching and learning, feminist pedagogy, and mentoring. She has published on the above issues in the national & international journals & chapters in edited books. Her forthcoming publication included doing feminist studies and auto ethnography towards self as epistemologically significant. She was also the coordinator of the sociology papers 'Sociology of India' and 'Sociology of Gender' under the Ministry of Human Resource Development UGC, that is the India E-Pathshala program which ran from 2012 to 2017, for developing e-content for post-graduate material in sociology. Her PhD is from Savitribai Phule University, Pune. She was awarded the C.V. Raman fellowship for post doctoral research at the

University of Connecticut. In this conference, she focused on the increasing diversity of students in the classroom and she specifically mentioned Xavier's College as an example.

Most of the experience that she gained was from teaching at Pune University and the University of Hyderabad. She also went beyond Sociology in crisis and mentioned that one of the important things about sociology is that it has developed always looking at the chaos in society. Drawing from Professor Indira, mentioned looking at the classroom and pedagogy, especially in terms of teaching-learning practices, and threw light on classical sociological theory. She gave insights on the why and how of engendering Sociology. She said that we must examine the concept of feminist sociology within the institutionalized practice of sociology in India, particularly addressing its epistemological concerns. She also argues that feminist sociology demands to use of an intersectional perspective concerning gender. She also recalled her colleague stating the following words, "I can be a feminist, or I can be a sociologist, but I cannot be a feminist sociologist." Dr. Anurekha stated how she can include the gender question in the core of every subject that she teaches and not just include the gender question while teaching the sociology of gender or gender sensitization. It is not possible to look at Sociology without looking at gender, not only looking at the gender question in terms of the binary of men and women but looking at it in terms of gender as a very diverse spectrum of identities and locating it in terms of intersectional perspective. It is in terms of our class, caste, race, gender, and location that we have to organize our time, so it is not just looking at gender in gender classes but an intersectional perspective of gender everywhere.

There are various ways in which we can look at feminist studies. Many scholars have looked at it like Sharmila Rege, Sujata Patel, and so on. She referred to herself as a feminist socialist and mentioned three important cores which are as follows: First, it is not just about epistemological stances like the process of knowledge production; second, it is about the research methodology that we employ in designing, carrying out, and documenting our findings; and third, it is about examining it from a theoretical standpoint, such as how to comprehend and explain social action, the interaction between the individual and society, and the nature of power relations. She says that rather than making things easy, we should find our space amid the unpleasant. She also talked about the teaching of classical sociological theory. She drew upon three important arguments "Why classical is classical", "Beyond the sociological canon" by Alatas and Sinha. She developed takeaways, a concept, as one of her teaching and learning tactics. She outlined the 20-mark assignments that University of Hyderabad students are given, which allow their lecturers to assign any takeaway-related activity. It is mandatory for all students to write on their key takeaways at the end of each module. The questions that arise in the mind of a theory enthusiast while examining a theory are more important to consider than the knowledge acquired.

She suggested that rather than taking these classical scholars and celebrating them, how can we contextualize them has to be the important question. In the end, she mentioned about one of her student's takeaways from doing theory and she said "Comte and Spencer both theorists bring the white male subjectivities of their time without questioning it objectively, and notions of women as irrational, domestic, caregiving bodies incapable of venturing into intellectual pursuits. Comte positions as self-contradictory. He proposes a new positive science which is sociology, to study

society that rejects metaphysical concerns with essential features but then portrays women as weak, characteristics of wife and mother. He pushes for empirical observation and reason to study the world but resorts to his white European male thinking. He perceives women as unfit for political power (which is about the suffrage movement period) and how Comtian mind women emerge.” While looking at different ways of changing or reframing sociology, one major argument made by Dr. Anurekha in the end is that engendering sociology based on intersectional perspectives should not be only in terms of adding a force on Sociology of gender, but also doing certain workshops or orientations, attending courses whenever we can, using assignments, classroom discussions and so on.



DR. M.T. JOSEPH- ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, MUMBAI UNIVERSITY

Dr. Josheph, a prominent HSC professor of the sociology department at Mumbai University, delivered a comprehensive analysis of the New Education Policy (NEP) during his recent speech. With a background in the sociology of religion and a focus on the contemporary religious identity of new Buddhists in Maharashtra, Dr. Josheph has a unique perspective on educational reforms.

During his address, Dr. Josheph highlighted NEP's emphasis on interdisciplinary learning, drawing from ancient Indian traditions. The policy's recognition of esteemed institutions like Nalanda and Takshashila, along with its incorporation of Indian philosophical thoughts, received positive acknowledgment from Dr. Josheph. He praised the policy's alignment with global educational standards while deriving inspiration from India's ancient knowledge systems.

However, Dr. Josheph raised crucial concerns regarding the NEP. He criticized the policy's narrow focus on ancient universities, advocating for a more inclusive approach that acknowledges modern educational institutions. Multidisciplinary education was identified as a significant area lacking attention in the policy framework. After critically examining NEP Dr. Josheph highlighted three major shortcomings within the NEP: Economic Chamber: The policy's economic aspects might need further elucidation or refinement. Cancel Culture Dominance in the Public Sphere: Dr. Josheph expressed concerns about the prevailing culture of canceling opinions and its impact on education.

Concentration of Power: He pointed out the concentration of authority within the policy framework.

Notable aspect of Dr. Josheph's discourse was the attention given to the challenges faced by the NEP. He emphasized the significance of diversity within classrooms, encompassing aspects such as gender, class, caste, and disability. He found this diversity fascinating yet identified it as an area demanding nuanced approaches within the educational policy.

Dr. Josheph's critique of the NEP highlighted both its strengths and weaknesses. While acknowledging its alignment with ancient Indian traditions and global educational standards, he underscored the necessity for a more inclusive and multidisciplinary approach, along with addressing the challenges posed by classroom diversity.



📍 GPS Map Camera



Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
XR95+W4C Science Building, SOPHIA COLLEGE, Sophia
College Dr, Cumballa Hill, Mumbai, Maharashtra 400026, India
Lat 18.969745°
Long 72.807585°
11/12/23 12:17 PM GMT +05:30

**SESSION 2- REMAINING SOCIOLOGY THROUGH NEP Chaired by-
Dr. Manisha Rao (Associate Professor, University of Mumbai)**

ST. XAVIERS COLLEGE

Presented by Dr. Pranoti Chirmuley of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of St. Xavier's College, a higher educational autonomous institution in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India which is affiliated to the University of Mumbai.

According to Dr. Chirmuley, the major challenges of NEP lie with the clueless students and worried parents. There has been an obstacle with the declining numbers of students as well. The credit system weightage for themes, concepts and theories undergoes a massive change. Another place of concern is that students are being made to decide major life choices at the average age of 19 years. However, Dr. Chirmuley is hoping to make the most out of the changes that are coming with the NEP despite its limitations.



SVKM'S MITHIBAI COLLEGE

The speaker expresses concerns about the transformation of sociology classes into knowledge production centres rather than knowledge transmission hubs and raises questions about whether the current approach to education fosters critical thinking, social awareness, and life skills, or merely focuses on standardized assessments. However, the contemporary education system, influenced by industry demands, has shifted towards information transmission and skill development, raising concerns about critical understanding and life skills. The challenges posed by the swift implementation of NEP were discussed, highlighting the administrative burden, increased workload, and the need for trained teachers to handle new courses. Issues such as credit transfer between colleges, infrastructure constraints, and the pressure on faculty members were raised. Despite the challenges, Mithibai College introduced innovative courses like Sociology of Performing Arts, Sociology of Indian Folk Dance, Media, Culture, and Society, and Anthropology of Food. These courses aim to provide a more holistic and critical understanding of societal elements beyond conventional subjects. Emphasizing the importance

of community engagement, the speaker mentions collaborations with institutions like IITB for projects like Aple Krishna Aple Vigyan demonstrating Mithibai College's commitment to practical, hands-on learning experiences.

Recognizing the attention span limitations of the current generation, the speaker suggested the need for more interactive and experiential learning beyond traditional classroom setting. The speaker gave a prime example of taking her sociology lectures to Juhu Beach and emphasizing on the importance of fieldwork. Mithibai College's journey under NEP reflects both challenges and innovations. Dr. Khevna Desai concludes by raising critical questions about the readiness of classrooms and students to co-create knowledge and encourages a balanced approach that integrates global perspectives while preserving the essence of Indian knowledge systems.



KISHINCHAND CHELLARAM COLLEGE

Presented by the HOD Ayesha Dutta and from Kishinchand Chellaram College, commonly known as KC College, is a higher educational Autonomous institution in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India which is affiliated to the HSNC University

According to the HOD the drafting of the course has been a big challenge as it demands reshaping of the curriculum not just for NEP but due to change in its university status. But the timings of both challenges have sort of matched and helped with the courses. With an extension planning of new syllabus Kishinchand Chellaram College is hoping to make most of what

everything good that NEP has to offer despite of all the challenges, drawbacks and limitations.



KET'S V.G VAZE COLLEGE

Kelkar Education Trust's VG Vaze College of Arts, Science and Commerce is a higher educational Autonomous institution in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. The head of the department of sociology - Ms Deepa Sirsat along with Ms Shilpa Biju spoke about the challenges along with the experiments they undertook as a department due to NEP. As a department even with the inclusion of NEP they have retained most of their syllabus. Their main aim is to expose students to social realities and build their practical knowledge in sociological research.



JWES' WILSON COLLEGE

Presented by the HOD Mrs. Muneerah Naushad Khambhawala of Wilson College, commonly known as Wilsons, which is a higher educational Autonomous institution in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. Wilson has been facing difficulties as all 3 years of degree college are under different systems. TYBA is under Mumbai university, SYBA is under autonomous rule whereas FYBA is the new NEP batch. To conquer NEP, Wilson's sociology department didn't make a lot of changes in their syllabus or way of teaching. The challenges that they have been facing is with regard to understanding how to make the syllabus easy and compliant with the FYBA students so that they can enjoy studying sociology along while understanding the practical application of it.



SOPHIA COLLEGE (HOST COLLEGE)

Presented by HOD Dr. Anagha Tendulkar, Ms Sukanya Menon and Ms Wilma Monterio from Sophia college which was also the host college. It is an undergraduate women's college, affiliated to the University of Mumbai.

The presentation began with Dr. Tendulkar introducing the sociology department as very FC centered department. The department is more interested in doing quality work with most of the ideas coming from students themselves through interactions. It was followed by Ms Monterio who mentions that framing of syllabus also involves major help and guidance from BOS members such as Ranu Jain and Shanti Sheshadhri. The challenges the department faced was majorly seen in Masters especially gender studies because as per the NEP rule MA part1 had to be NEP complied course for which the department was not ready. New batch came in with the idea of having classes online which use to happen during covid but it did not align with the college policy. The college faced a drop from 11 to only 2 students. Hoping to have it more structured with having things completely offline along with field work. Social research method has

always been a strong point of the department for last 12 years and the college has been running a certificate course on social research.



Saras Exhibition

Date: 6th January, 2024

Venue: MMRDA Ground, BKC

On January 6th, 2024, students of the Department of Sociology at Sophia College embarked on an educational excursion to the Saras exhibition. The primary aim of this visit was to provide students with a practical understanding of the informal sector, particularly in terms of its funding mechanisms. Divided into two groups, 5A and 5B, the students were tasked with interviewing stall owners to delve deeper into the workings of their businesses.

Students from 5B were paired up and assigned to interview at a single stall sponsored by NABARD. This focused approach allowed them to closely examine the operations of a specific business within the informal sector. The stall, showcasing products from women entrepreneurs, provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by these individuals. The students engaged in meaningful conversations with the stall owners, gaining firsthand knowledge about their business models and sources of funding.

Meanwhile, students from 5A were given a broader scope, tasked with interviewing multiple stalls from a single state. This group had the opportunity to explore a diverse array of businesses at the exhibition. From handicrafts to organic produce, the students interacted with a wide range of entrepreneurs, each with their unique stories and challenges. The vibrant atmosphere of the exhibition, coupled with the enthusiasm of the stall owners, made for a rich learning experience.

Throughout the visit, students actively engaged with stall owners, discussing topics such as market challenges, marketing strategies, and the role of funding organizations like NABARD. The exhibition not only provided insights into the economic aspects of the informal sector but also highlighted the cultural richness and diversity of entrepreneurial endeavors. Students were particularly impressed by the resilience and creativity of the women entrepreneurs, many of whom hailed from rural areas.

The Saras exhibition visit proved to be an enlightening and enriching experience for the students of the Department of Sociology. It offered a real-world perspective on the informal sector, bridging the gap between theory and practice. The discussions, interactions, and observations made during the visit deepened the students' understanding of entrepreneurship and the challenges faced by businesses in the informal economy. Overall, the event was a resounding success, leaving the students with valuable insights and a newfound appreciation for the complexities of the informal sector.



UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY: NATIONAL LEVEL WORKSHOP EVENT REPORT

Department of Sociology, Sophia College

1st February- 2nd February 2024

Day 1

The Department of Sociology and the Department of English Literature organised a National level workshop on the 1st and 2nd of February 2024 in the Sophia College Campus titled 'Understanding Disability'.

The event begins with Dr. Mala Pandurang speaking about disability and her connection with Dr. Someshwar Sati. She also thanked the Sociology and English Literature department for curating such an event. Dr. Anagha Tendulkar welcomed Dr. Someshwar Sati, Dr. Nandini Ghosh, Dr. Mala Pandurang and all the colleges involved. Dr. Someshwar Sati then started his introductory lecture where he shared his experiences of disability and how people around him perceived it. He shared an experience of how he faced rejection from the Director of a leading college in India when he proposed the idea of a Conference on Disability. He was told that "disability belongs in a hospital". He emphasized on how disability is more than just a medical condition 'of a human body gone wrong', and that it is a social, political, and cultural phenomenon. The students were then shown 2 videos which set the tone for the lecture and summarised the essence of the workshop. Dr. Sati then explained what disability is. He challenged the idea that disability is merely a medical issue of an individual by citing an example of how a wheelchair bound person will be rendered disabled when confronted with a flight of stairs. But if the same individual is given a ramp, they can ascend/descend on their own, which no longer makes them disabled. Disability according to him is less to do with the body, and more to do with how it is culturally determined. He also briefly spoke of the inevitable process of 'othering' in understanding the disabled.

The lecture ended at 10:30am, after which there was a Tea Break of 15 minutes.

Post the break, Dr. Nandini Ghosh's lecture commenced. She spoke of the negative connotations associated with disability, for which there is now an attempt to change them to something positive. The first stage of theorization is mapping out social perceptions about disability. For which there are 2 models- the social and the individual model, which is then divided into religious model, personal tragedy, and the medical model.

She spoke of disability as a personal tragedy and how there seems to be a standard of what is considered normal. Ranges of disabilities and labels are created on the basis of this standard. In India, the administration decides and labels you into a category and a degree of disability. They also assume that the more disabled you are, the more help you need, which isn't true. Dr. Ghosh also spoke of the political economy of disability by Mike Oliver, how capitalism as a system forced exclusion of people with impairments from the labour markets. Disability in a capitalist society is mainly concerned with how to prevent and cure it. She also made connections to Erving Goffman's theory of Stigma. Goffman says that the physical conditions can become their "master status", their condition is their identity. With regard to reconceptualising disability, she noted that stigma can be countered by taking into account historical, economic, political, and social constraints, and questions the concept of a normal body.

After the session, there was a lunch break of 45 minutes.

At 2:55pm, the next session began with an interactive discussion on the representation of disability in movies by Dr. Someshwar Sati and Dr. Nandini Ghosh. Students formed groups based on movies such as Barfi, Margarita with a Straw, Koi Mil Gaya, Krrish, Andhadhun, Taare Zameen Par, Housefull, and My Name is Khan. Each group took turns to explain how and what disability is portrayed in the film they chose, and whether or not it is accurately depicted. The discussions revolved around the exaggeration of the disability in the movie for the sake of the plot, or how some movies connect disability with some form of divine or supernatural intervention that magically cures the disability of the character. However, there were some movies (such as Barfi) that portrayed the disability accurately with careful research and authenticity.

At 4:30pm, Dr. Nandini Ghosh started her session on 'Disability and Development in India'. She began by questioning what development is, and how it can be measured. She then connected it to how 1 out of 5 of the world's poorest people have a disability. She also mentioned that 650 million people are disabled, of which 80% are in developing countries. As for disability in India, the 2011 Census indicated that 2% of the population (26.8 million people) have some form of disability, and that more men are disabled than women. It also suggested that disability prevalence is lower in children (7.8 million children). With regard to children in India, 54% of children with multiple disabilities have never attended school, and 95% drop out after primary school due to lack of accessibility (such as no ramps in schools), and inadequately trained teachers and staff.

With regard to livelihood, 36% of disabled people are workers. Of which, 31% are women in the agricultural sector. The rest are in the informal sector with barely any job security. Dr. Ghosh also shared her observation that the Census shows more data on the dependency of disabled persons on others, which shows how census collectors think about disability. Lastly, Dr. Ghosh covered the legal frameworks of disability in India, with emphasis on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), which recognises 21 types of disabilities. Her concerns with development and the legal framework are that there is very little focus on economic development. It exhibits a discriminatory attitude towards People with Disabilities at the institutional level. They are stalled and ignored when they need to be given welfare.

The first day of the workshop came to an end with a tea break.

Day 2

Day 2 began with a continuation of Dr. Sati's lecture on Representation of Disability in Literature. There is a constant construction of the "other" members of the society i.e. People with Disabilities. This leads to exclusion in society. Disability is usually depicted as some form of deviance and is understood as sometimes morally devious too. There is a constant process of dehumanization in the construction of the identity of a disabled individual by the non-disabled

world. He believes the only way this narrative can be countered is by channelizing the voice and agency of people who have lived this experience.

Dr. Nandini Ghosh gave a lecture on Gender and Disability. The gender discourse is rarely accommodated in the disability studies. There is assignment of abilities to certain bodies often assigned alongside their gender roles. For example, Disabled women are often assumed unfit to be mothers.

This led to another session on Inclusive Education: Concept, Challenges in schools. Sujata Bhan told us about the extensive work being done to accommodate students with all kinds of disabilities on the spectrum. She also spoke about diversities and intersections in classrooms, gender, income levels and disability. She advocated for schools with integrated facilities to support students with disabilities instead of socializing them in a disability school. Integration is the only way to achieve inclusion. Neha Trivedi too spoke about Challenges in pursuing a Higher Education. Higher education institutions are often not disability friendly. Accessibility of education to all individuals is a challenge the education system is only beginning to understand and acknowledge. There was a tea break followed by this session of 15 mins.

Chitra Laxman and Ketki Sanghavi spoke about the absorption of people with disabilities in the workforce. There are various levels of work done by various NGOs to advocate for equal work opportunities for people with disabilities. They are taught to be disability confident and work on specific skill training and capacity building with soft skills. After lunch, Ritika Sahni spoke about inclusivity of people with disability by using more inclusive language and creating awareness about the same.

Towards the end of the workshop Dr Sati and Ghosh divided the students into various groups and gave them situations to find more disability free solutions. All groups shared their set of discussed solutions. It was a very enlightening workshop for all participants. This was just the beginning of understanding disability from a closer social lens. The two day workshop ended with Dr Sati expressing his satisfaction on successful completion of the two day workshop and delivery of the vote of thanks.





Video on Mary Wollstonecraft

Date: 23rd August 2023

Subject: Gender and Society in India: Emerging Issues

Time: 1:30pm - 2:30pm

On August 23rd, a documentary screening took place at 1:30 PM for the students enrolled in the sociology of gender studies course. The documentary focused on the life and ideas of Mary Wollstonecraft, a prominent figure in the 18th-century feminist movement. Wollstonecraft is renowned for her advocacy of women's equal education and liberation from societal norms that confined them to traditional gender roles. The documentary emphasized Wollstonecraft's critique of traditional female education focusing on marriage preparation. She passionately advocated for recognizing women as intellectually and morally capable adults who could contribute meaningfully to society. Despite facing criticism and personal attacks, her writings inspired later feminist movements, empowering women to challenge societal norms and fight for their rights. Following the screening, the students engaged in a lively discussion about feminism and Wollstonecraft's enduring legacy. Topics of discussion included the historical context of Wollstonecraft's ideas, the challenges she faced in advocating for women's rights, and the relevance of her work to contemporary feminist discourse. The discussion provided valuable insights into the history of feminism and its ongoing struggles and achievements. Overall, the event served as an enriching opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of feminist theory and its significance in shaping social change.



Volunteering at Umang

Date: 3rd March, 2024

Location: Birla Matushri Hall

Number of students volunteered: 20

Time: 7:30am to 2:30pm

The Department of Sociology at Sophia College, in collaboration with Silver Innings NGO, organized a meaningful volunteering opportunity for 20 students, predominantly from the SYBA program, along with a few from the TYBA Sociology department. This initiative, known as "Umang", aimed to support and engage senior citizens through a talent show event. The students actively participated as volunteers, playing essential roles in different teams to ensure the success of the event. The preparation for "Umang" began in February, with meticulous planning and coordination to create a memorable experience for the senior citizens involved. On the day of the event, March 3rd, the student volunteers dedicated long hours to various tasks, such as assisting performers, managing logistics, and ensuring the smooth flow of the program. Their enthusiasm and dedication were evident throughout the event, making a positive impact on the attendees and organizers alike. After the successful completion of "Umang," each student volunteer was recognized for their valuable contribution with a certificate of appreciation. Additionally, the Department of Sociology at Sophia College was honored with a trophy, symbolizing their collective effort and commitment to the cause. This event not only provided the students with practical experience in event management and community engagement but also fostered a sense of empathy and social responsibility among them. The Department looks forward to continuing such meaningful collaborations to create more impactful initiatives in the future.



A . P . Patil

Dr. Anagha Tendulkar Patil
HOD