

The Students' Social Reform Initiative (SSRI) SSRI CLUB REPORT 2020-21

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The Students' Social Reform Initiative (SSRI) provides a platform for students who are committed to reaching out to the wider community. Their activities aim at bringing about change and transformation in the lives of many others. Using the means of politics, history and current affairs, SSRI believes in building individuals that are active agents of social change in our society.

This year SSRI went a step ahead and tried to broaden the horizon of our students and have them actively engage with the world of social change and what it means to be an individual living in these times. We used the means of art, photography, interactions with activists, advocates and members of our community to help our members be better citizens or begin their journey of social reform and change.

This year we organised as many as 12, both through the portal of Instagram as well as interactive events on Zoom.

These Zoom events began with a **Charcha (discussion) session on the 5th of September**, where we introduced our First-Year students to SSRI and had them express what the Covid Lockdown was like for them. The event included candid interactions between the Second-Year and First-Year Students, poetry recitations, story-telling about how harrowing the past few months had been as

well as just a general feeling of togetherness between all the SSRI members. This event was followed by the **launch of the Sophia Queer Collectives page on Instagram**. This separate page was launched to keep all the activities of the queer collective together and to create a thriving community of the SQC. The page put out plenty of informative posts about topics such as, “The Significance of the ‘+’ sign in LGBTQIA+”, the breakdown of the extremely controversial film, “Laxmi”, Media Representation of the LGBTQIA+ community, and many more such interesting topics.

September also saw the **launch of the Humans of Sophia: Home Edition**. This new series of Humans of Sophia included self-portraits taken by our very own students of Sophia College. The pictures were supposed to be taken by themselves, in the safety of their homes and photographing these safe spaces. We got several entries, each more beautiful and entrancing than the other. These pictures were accompanied by a short writeup that expressed our students’ inner thoughts and experiences that they wanted to share.

In October, **we launched two more new online initiatives called Kranti: Voices of Change and So Now We Know**. Through the Kranti series, SSRI talked about social reformers and people who have significantly contributed to change in the past and the present.

The series was kickstarted with Savitribai Phule and Fatima Begum. Followed by Kiruba Munusamy and Chandrashekar Azad to bring forward the issues of caste and to amplify Dalit voices. Further, Professor Shoma Sen, Ruth Manorama, Anna Julia Cooper and Fannie Lou Hamer have been covered as of October.

On October 6th, So Now We Know was started. SNWK was The series included infographic posts based on current events. The posts summarised what was happening in the country and why we must be aware of the events. The topics included, the Hathras Rape Case of October 2020, the UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevent Act) and the arrests taking place under the act of activists and teachers, The Manual Scavenging Act, The Transgender Protection Act and many more such pressing issues that are of crucial importance to our country.

In a first, on the **27th of October, Kranti held its first interactive meeting with Anti Caste activist Manisha Mashaal**. The event was held to bring to the

spotlight the vital conversation around Dalit oppression and discrimination in Indian society. Our guest Manisha Mashaal, touched upon several issues faced by Dalits in India and specifically Dalit women. She began by acknowledging the lack of publication of Dalit struggle for freedom, from the British and oppressive caste system in school textbooks which gives rise to the widespread ignorance of Dalit oppression.

In November, two online Instagram Story Series were initiated. Point Out the Problem (POTP) and This Month in History. Both the series took place on Instagram's story feature. POTP showed problematic and controversial scenes from old films, TV shows and music videos that are beloved by people from all around the world and asked them to guess what was the problem with the piece of pop culture. The series was interactive and garnered a lot of attention and answers. The History series was a quiz series that asked questions about important events in the past and then explained in detail what the significance of these historical events was to us today.

On **21st November 2020**, Sophia Queer Collective in collaboration with the International Relations Club held a webinar/panel discussion via Zoom which pertained to discussing the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill of 2019 and how it has impacted the transgender community. The panellists included Anjali Siroya, Ankan Biswas, and Rachana Mudraboyina.

December and January was a hiatus period due to examinations and their preparation. SSRI resumed working from the 15th of January. The online series of POTP and the history quiz continued as is. The preparation for Mizaaj, the cultural amalgamation of all the flagship events of the clubs of Sophia College took place from January.

On **20th February, SSRI held its flagship event for the year called, Eating Your Beliefs**, a movie screening and panel discussion on the Politics of Food in India. The panellists included renowned historian, Dr Kurush Dalal. Filmmakers, Ghania Siddique, Talat Shakeel, Ananyaa Gaur, and Atul Anand. The event was a grand success with as many as 150 participants from 12 colleges around India.

March was the last month for the functioning of the club. On the **13th of March, SSRI organised the Gender Sensitization Workshop with NGO Rohaa.** The

workshop informed the audience regarding the difference between gender, sex and sexuality, the intricacies of gender bias, the significance and importance of gender empathy, information regarding the importance of consent and actions that can be taken if consent is violated amongst other things.

On the **20th of March, a session on Fast Fashion and Consumerism** was organised with resource persons, Apoorva Vijn and Ishi Srivastava, who were teachers from NIFT and Pearl Academy Mumbai. They educated our students on the effects and fast fashion and its impact on the environment.

24th March was the last event of SSRI for the year 2020-21. SSRI helped in organising the **pre-screening or Forward of the Kashish International Queer Film Festival, along with the Department of Education.**