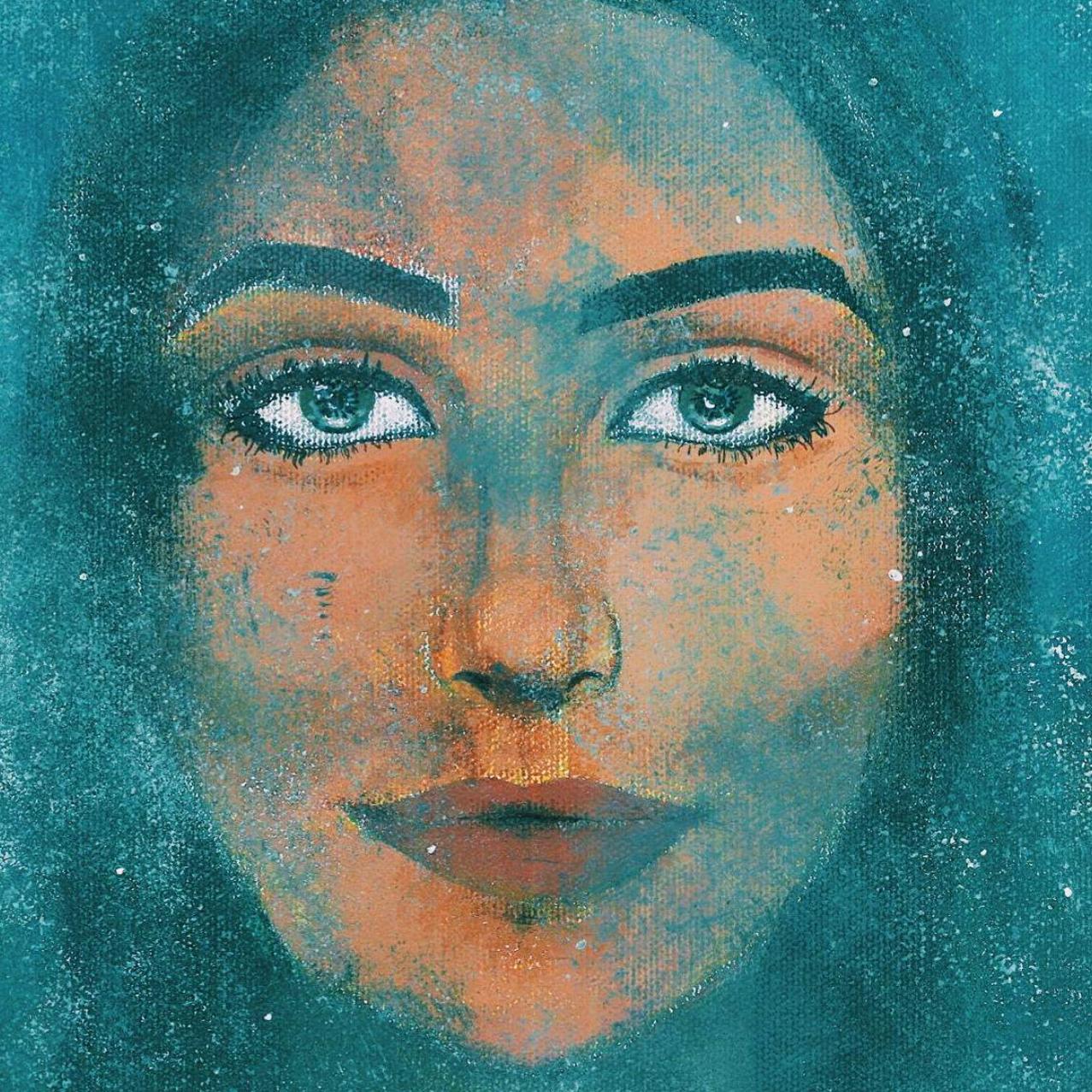


THE LIGHTHOUSE



DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIOLOGY

ANNUAL PUBLICATION
YEAR 2017-2018



FOREWORD

*"And all the lives we ever lived and all the lives to be are full of trees
and changing leaves."*

— Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*

Welcome to The Lighthouse 2017-18!

The Lighthouse of the Department of Sociology is like the 1927 novel, 'To The Lighthouse' by Virginia Woolf. 'To The Lighthouse' is a multilayered work that ostensibly is about a family, and the guests who visit them in their holiday home. At another level, it is a novel that reflects the constant shift from one's inner consciousness to the external world. There is no central dominant narrator, it's not a single story but multiple stories. Woolf's work reflects on the changing experiences of being in this world. It travels through time and across time.

The Lighthouse Magazine of our Sociology department is like Virginia Woolf's novel but does not have a dominant narrative. It reflects a constant shift from one character to another. It reflects the inner conversations of people. It reflects the shift in inner dialogues and emotions while meeting others. The conversations are in prose and poetry; humor and laughter; happiness and sadness. It is a work of fiction, a work of reality.

The collection in The Lighthouse magazine is a reflection of the changing individuals over time. They appear to be scattered without a structure and a dominant theme, but isn't that the reality of life? Yes, that is exactly what it reflects. I am sure the reader will enjoy yet another edition of The Lighthouse. This has been possible because of the hard work of Ishani Chakrabarti, Asmaani Kumar, and Dr. Binu Sundas. Thank you team LightHouse for giving us "structures to think with" as Bourdieu once said.

- Dr. Reema Bhatia

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CHRONICLES OF THE DEPARTMENT

CAPTURING THE REVOLUTION OF IDEAS THIS YEAR



BURAKUMINS: THE SCENT OF DESPAIR

-Tamdin Wangmoa, 1st Year

Dr. Aya Ikegame, a professor at the University of Tokyo graced the Sociology department of Miranda House with her presence on the 1st of August, 2017. She focused on the effective comparison between the sensitive issues of the Dalits in India and the Burakumins in Japan.

The Dalits and Burakumins are both subjected to the same inhumane acts of discrimination, isolation, and pollution, but the degree of intensity is different. What the Burakumins experience is far less tragic than the Dalits of India. But the point she made here is that the hardship is something a human should have to go through. It is a known fact that the Japanese are proud of their race but they are also extremely reluctant to share the same pride for being a Burakumin. They often hide their Burakumin identity from their children. These Burakumins are also referred to as 'Eta' i.e. filthy, as they were known during Edo period (1601-1868). Though the Burakumin comprises only 3% of the



Japanese population, the Dalits comprise 15%- the actual number accounted to be 4 million of the Indian population, which is huge. The main source of livelihood in the past was farming but the Burakumins have been deprived farm ownership. Their only occupation was to take care of the farm animals, they had adapted to this way of life where hardships trailed them every day. From denials and isolations to the Samurais refusing to touch the Burakumins on the grounds of pollution, they've faced it all. But the Burakumins were fighters, they didn't give up. They struggled for equal rights, dignity, and basic humanity, thus they fought for their future. The Shin Buddhist initiated a movement similar to the Bhakti movement in India which witnessed a disagreement against the bias and inequality among the society and gave hope to the suppressed at the same time. Zen monks made sure that the Burakumins lived their lives as inferiors. Not only that, but he also made sure that they are remembered as "beasts" by carving the same on their tombstones which showed a clear demarcation between the Burakumins and other classes. Then happened the Meiji Restoration (1969), the formal modernization of Japan, where the emperor proclaimed "kaitou-rei"- Emancipation Edict on 12th October of 1871 to abolish the hierarchy system that defined Eta as a low caste, and declared them as Shin-Heimin (new commoner). The Buraku Liberation League also operated from 1955 under the leadership of Jichiro Matsumoto (1887-1966) with the method of "Kyoudan" meaning impeachment. They started to denounce all those who looked down on Burakumins and criticize the government whenever issues regarding Burakumins would crop up, making the group fearful and effective.

The Burakumins at the present enjoy the same rights as any other Japanese citizen, yet they still face minor discriminations at work and marriage. So in a nutshell, Dr.Aya Ikagame's presentation was extremely insightful about the history of Burakumins and their journey to the new world of equality. The hardships that one encounters must never deter them from seeking a better place, a better space to inhabit.

SAMDRISHTI: A VISION FOR ALL

-Mridula Lathan, 1st Year

The Sociology department of Miranda House organized an innovative event- 'Samdrishti' on the 10th of August under the leadership of 'Lakshita', the society for visually challenged students. Like any other event conducted by the college, Samdrishti turned out to be a pioneering event witnessing active participation of both the students and the faculty members. It encompassed a wide variety of games for the sighted as well as the



non-sighted. Samdrishti gave everyone an opportunity to perceive and understand the day-to-day life of the visually challenged.

The event seemed to be a crowd-puller and we were extremely overwhelmed with the responses we got. The sighted students were blindfolded and the non-sighted students were to be accompanied by a volunteer each who would guide them. The participants were given score cards to make the session all the more interactive. The games varied from identifying different denominations of money to drawing shapes. While the sighted students faced immense difficulty at each step, the non-sighted students did it with ease. Zee News was present throughout the event and they interviewed and covered the participants, teachers, as well as the volunteers.

We often forget to appreciate and fail to empathize with the hardships and the struggles of the visually disabled. The event sought to promote the idea of sensitization and awareness as the sighted and the non-sighted students performed the same activities, and took part in the same games. The event also proved to be an interactive session between the students and the teachers where we learned that kindness is a language familiar to one and all.

BOOK READING SESSION: PROF. SUSAN VISVANATHAN

-Amisha Singh, 2nd Year

The Sociology department of Miranda House successfully organized a book reading session with Prof. Susan Visvanathan on the 31st of August 2017. The book she talked about was her latest collection of novellas, *Adi Sankara and Other Stories*. Prof. Visvanathan is currently a Professor of Sociology and Research Guide at the Centre for Study of Social Systems at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She has been teaching for the past 34 years and is best known for her work in Sociology of Religion. She is the author of a number of published works, both academic and fiction. *Adi Sankara and Other Stories* is her latest book.

The session was held in Lecture Hall number 145, and commenced at 9:50 am. Among those present were Principal Dr. Pratibha Jolly; the Head of Department of Sociology of Miranda House, Dr. Reema Bhatia,



and the Faculty members of the sociology department. The discussion, though centered on her book, covered various other topics too and was quite eclectic and stimulating. The session began with Prof. Visvanathan reminiscing about her days as a Miranda House student. She then went on to read excerpts from her book, which is a collection of three novellas with religious themes strongly present in their stories. She talked about her influences that were different for every novella. The different styles of writing she employs were discussed. She also spoke about writing fiction as a sociologist and its necessity in understanding the discipline. She also said that her writing was influenced by her work and experience, but that she believed in not becoming a part of the story, which merely finds the author, and is always "waiting to be told". The extracts she read out were remarkable for the simplicity of their language and beautiful poetic tone, something that Dr. Jolly expressed her admiration for.

After the book reading, Prof. Visvanathan took questions from the audience. There were quite a few interesting questions asked and comments made. To answer them, Prof. Visvanathan talked about various subjects, ranging from her birthplace, Kerala, to her current workplace and residence, JNU. She spoke about the importance of questioning and free debate and condemned censorship at various levels. She also spoke about women as teachers and mentors, and about her own teaching experience. She disclosed parts of her biography, which provided a glimpse into the life of a renowned academician. Refugees, politics of ideologies and the worrying triumph of particular ideologies, and the need for institutions where intellectuals could work without fear was also discussed, among other topics. The session was a highly stimulating and enriching experience for all present.

The session ended with Prof. Visvanathan being given a token of appreciation, a potted plant, by the principal, Dr. Jolly. A thank you note was delivered by a student. The objectives of the session, talking about the book and discussing it with the author, were met. Sessions of this kind are invariably experiences that the students gain a lot from, and it is hoped that the Department of Sociology conducts more such events.

GANDHI FELLOWSHIP: A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR ASPIRING LEADERS IN CHANGE MANAGEMENT

-Arundhati nath, 1st year

The Seminar Hall of Miranda House witnessed an unconventional workshop on the 24th of August, 2017. Organised by the Gandhi Fellowship Circle, the workshop involved various enjoyable activities, and an interactive session with Mr. Salman Khan, a Gandhi Fellowship Alumnus and Program Manager.

The Gandhi Fellowship is a practical educational program in Transformation Leadership for Social Entrepreneurs. The aim of this program is to nurture the potential vanguards of sociopolitical change in India by focusing on the problems and opportunities in the development sector. The program prepares fellows to take on leadership roles as entrepreneurs, through a process of understanding change management through an entrepreneurial lens. It aims to help each of its Fellows to impact 1 million lives in 10 years through a sustainable profit-based model.

The workshop started with a series of games, each of which provided an important lesson in teamwork, strategy, and perseverance. The games were to be played in groups, and in a light and subtle manner, they disseminated a great deal of knowledge about the skills that need to be developed in order to bring about change in the current sociopolitical scenario, including listening skills and negotiation.



The workshop was concluded with a discussion with Mr. Salman Khan, a senior fellow of The Gandhi Fellowship, who has been working for a decade as a “change leader” (as he termed it) in society. Mr. Khan shared his experiences and talked about how the thought of working for social change struck his mind. He was on a visit to Toronto, and there he came across government schools which he found very different from the government schools in India. Startled by the stark contrast, Mr. Khan wondered what could be reasons for the underdeveloped state of the government-funded schools in India. His will to bring about change in the lives of the children in these schools inspired him to work towards the development of the education system of the country.

To bring about change on a larger scale, Mr. Khan believes, it is essential to reform the root of the problem – the nation’s failing education system. The Gandhi Fellowship provides each Fellow the opportunity to interact with school administration and government officials under the Education Ministry. The fellows work towards a common mission – for each school under their influence to achieve the status of a “model school”. The Gandhi Fellowship, he says, not only provides an opportunity to impact the lives of millions of people but also allows the Fellows to familiarize themselves with the roles and responsibilities of a leader. The workshop ended with a series of questions raised by the students, to which Mr. Khan responded very enthusiastically. On the whole, the workshop was a great success.

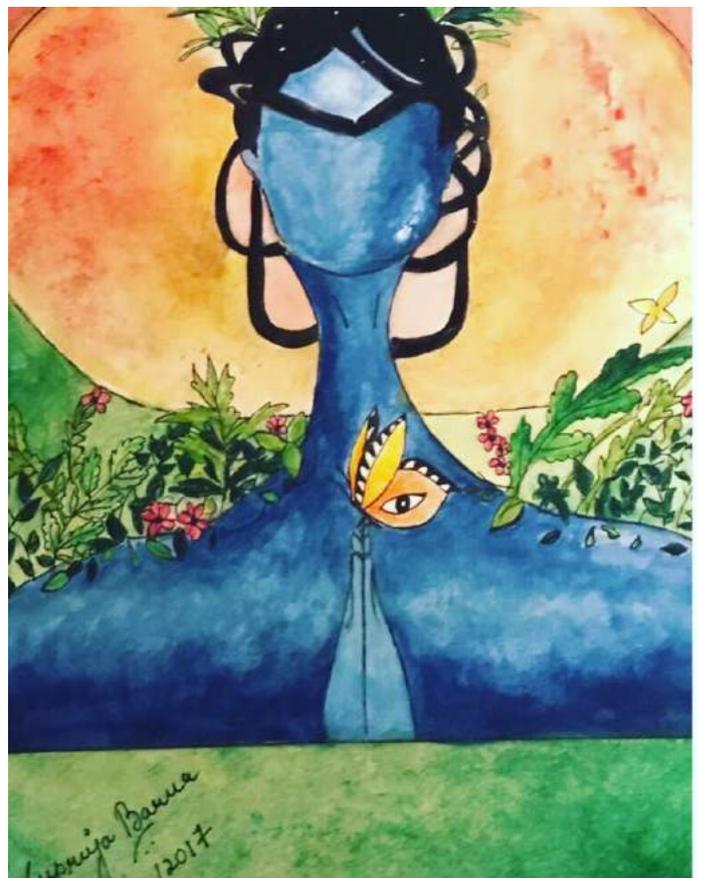
BUILDING MEMOIRS OF AN UNBORN: A LECTURE ON MEMORIALIZATION OF THE DECEASED FOETUS

-Koyal Sindhu and Shivani Sharma, 2nd Year

The Department of Sociology organized a lecture by Dr. Harish Naraindas, Associate Professor of Sociology at JNU, adjunct faculty at the University of Iowa, and currently, a visiting professor at the Department of Ethnology, South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University. The topic of his lecture was on the 'Sacraments for the Dead? The Unborn person and the miscarried parent in the Anglophone world.' He began the talk by introducing the concept of a foetal cemetery which is present in abundance in Switzerland. He also showed the audience a video of a foetus funeral in Australia, which gave us further insight into the topic.

The practice of the memorialization of pre-natal death is a phenomenon that began in the 1990s with the Touching Heart Programme in the US, in which miscarried or stillborn fetuses were made a 'memory' through proper burials with caskets made by women in their mid-sixties. The unborn babies were dolled up in hand-knitted mittens and clothes. Their photographs, footprints, and locks of hair were preserved as mementos.

The secular aspect of memorialization is usually accompanied by the religious aspect, in case of couples who've lost their child, and are willing to get the foetus baptised. This poses a dilemma for the priests because it is believed that sacraments are only for the living. This conflict has led to the creation of sacramental actions, which are rituals akin to sacraments. The communal aspect also plays out in eulogies made during the funeral, which often contain verses from the Bible. Along with this 'religious rediscovery', Professor Naraindas concluded his lecture with an emphasis on the second aspect of the memorialization; 'miscarried parents' and their loss is acknowledged. While abortion and miscarriage are still considered as taboos, the community is increasingly becoming sensitised to the implications of these occurrences.



The lecture was followed by a Q&A round, which proved to be equally enlightening as the lecture. The session ended with Prof Naraindas being presented a memento by his former student and a current Miranda House Professor M. Kamminthang. The Department hopes to replicate the success of the lecture in all its events in near future.

SOCIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL: ACCESS AND ACCESSIBILITY

This year the Enabling Cell of Miranda House College, Lakshita, organized a two-day international conference on “Social and Technological: Access and Accessibility” on the 18th and 19th of January, 2018. The inaugural address given by eminent social activist and scholar Dr. Mithu Alur, the Founder and Chairperson of The Spastic Society of India, ADAPT (Able Disable All People Together). The keynote address was given by Ms. Dorodi Sharma who is a Disability Rights Specialist in the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office of India while the valedictory remarks were addressed by Dr. Anil Aneja. The session focused on the question of how children and youths with cerebral palsy, autism, down syndrome and other disabilities, could be given inclusive and equitable quality education and life-long learning opportunities in India. Several dimensions of the social issue were discussed in this session to spread awareness and to ensure equal access in every level of opportunities and the rights of the disabled.

Another Keynote Speaker was Dr. Dipendra Manocha who is the President of Daisy Forum and the National Association for Blind (NAB). He spoke of the importance of providing holistic educational training with the use of advanced technology and updated software

at the school level curriculum itself. He laid emphasis on an atmosphere of sensitivity not just within educational institutions but also within workspaces.



Of the several panel discussions that were held, the first was on “Representations: Disabled or Differently Abled? Going Beyond Labels” moderated by Dr. Nikhil Jain who is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science, Dyal Singh College and composed of eminent personalities such as Dr. Renu Adlaka, a Professor and Director of Centre for Women’s Development Studies (CWDS); Mr. George Abraham, founder of SCORE Foundation; Ms. Thilakam Rajendran, Founder and Director of ATPAR (Alliance to Promote Abilities and Rehabilitation); and

entrepreneurs Mr. Samuel Mani and Mr. Murarli Lal. Dr. Addlakka stressed on the growing visibility about the discourse of disability and wanted it to be a part of the everyday conversation that was not stressing on the negative element of 'dis' in the term reflecting a lack of something but rather an engagement in deep discussions that moved towards accepting differently abled people the way they are as members of the society and not as burdens. Mr George Abraham, on the other hand, emphasised on the importance of the mind-set of the family in providing care and a supportive structure to differently abled people and encourage everyone to follow the 5D's of life: Dream, Desire, Discipline, Dedication and Determination.

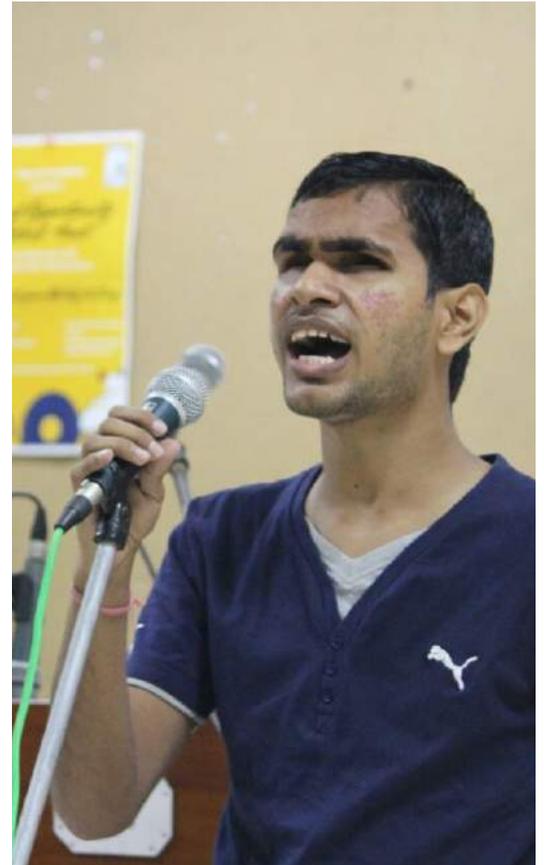
Ms. Rajendranan in her presentation touched upon the following themes such of going beyond the labels, economic discrimination against the disabled, going beyond institutional and rehabilitative boundaries, skill entrepreneurship, and community as an enabler for the people and the role of family support. While Mr. Lal spoke about the change in people's perspective when they see disabled people in the public places such as Bank or ATM counters and the need for sensitivity in access to public services and facilities, Mr. Mani who founded 'Neutron Computers' that refurbishes old computers from industries spoke of the need for encouraging differently abled people to come out of the confines of their homes.

The second panel discussion was on "**Access and Accessibility**" chaired by Dr. Bipin Tiwary who is an Officer on Special Duty (OSD) of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) of the University of Delhi; and moderated by Dr. Reema Bhatia who is the Convenor of the Enabling Unit of Miranda House. The panellists included Dr. Geetam Tiwari who is the TRIPP (Transportation Research and Injury Prevention Programme) Chair and Professor at the Department of Civil Engineering, IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) Delhi; Ms. Karishma Chhabra who is the Senior Manage of Operations and Accessibility in the Microsoft Office; and Dr. Tara Prakash who is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Daulat Ram College. Dr. Tiwari focused primarily on physical infrastructure such as public transport. Although 2014 amendments to The Disability Act, 1995 led to the implementation of schemes such as such AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transport) and HRIDAY (Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana), smart cities continue to lack a constructive policy towards the accessibility of public spaces.

Ms. Chhabra informed us that Microsoft is playing an important role in providing accessibility to all by working on inclusive planning and techniques. In 2012 they formed a disability answer desk which looked after people's requirement and provided them adequate counselling. By 2014, Microsoft launched ten accessibility projects and created applications such as Seeing AI to assist visually impaired people. She argued that inclusive integration is a must for universal accessibility and the mission of Microsoft is to empower the disabled and for this inclusion is essential. Dr. Prakash has specialisation in

topics such as digital technology, social media, secondary orality, and texts and technology. his main emphasis were on rethinking disability in electronic and social spaces using the people first approach. The panel discussion was summed up by highlighting how the discussions were largely concerned with the situations prevalent in the developed world and how the context must now be shifted to not only the developing world but in relevance to India, to the rural contexts as well. New perspectives dealing with material needs and differing contexts need to be waged and before all of this is lies the change in the attitude of people.

The final panel discussion was on **"Negotiating the Normal"** chaired by Dr. Balwant Kaur. The panellists were Rinki Chokhani who is a Ph.D. Scholar at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, JNU (Jawaharlal Nehru University); Dr. Nikhil Jain who is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science, Dyal Singh College; and Dr. Manoj Rawal who is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Mathematics, Miranda House. According to Ms.Chokhani, the experience of disability provokes deep questions in mind as our society never celebrates the difference in disables; rather they always have to struggle or to negotiate to fit into the normal. Despite the never-ending effort of the government to have more accessibility in all spheres of everyday life; the various basic necessity of the disabled, including accessibility and inclusion, is a long cry for them. People who fail to speak the language of normalcy, are labeled and treated as deviant; any inhuman treatment against them is hence justified. Along with technical challenges, the societal norms, attitudes, and perceptions about the disabled limit their access to certain areas in their everyday life. A society that poses doubt on disabled bodies never recognizes the fact that, it has been designed according to the need and comfort of the normal people; normal body. Hence the attitude of the people should be such that, it does not automatically exclude them from the system, the system despite being disabled friendly.



Dr Jain questioned the origin of the term 'Normal' as put forward by the society. He argues that this term is ambiguous and the way society has defined it should not be considered to be universal. If the society has to assign normality to its members then, everyone should be considered normal; if not, then none. He firmly believes that 'Disabilities can succeed by pushing itself into the policies and into the minds of the people only when disability is imbibed into politics.' According to Dr. Rawal who has been affected with Polio, education is the only medium to become independent in life. He shared that his own village society wanted him to become a tailor, but he resented and proceeded to do what he had always aimed for. He took tuitions of Maths and English to pay for his education fees. His desire to become independent gave him so much of determination to move forward and reach the point where he is currently at. Proper education and awareness are needed to be present in society which will help in changing the mindset of the people towards the specially-abled.

The two-day conference that was held was indeed a success for it questioned the current rhetoric of disability and accepted the newly established ideas that reflect sensitivity and a desire of change while envisioning a new model composed of focusing on areas that have been neglected so far. It is indeed a great feat to bring together ideas that churn not only from the vantage point of the academia but also attempt to reflect something that stems from the personal as well.

INFLUENCE OF MEDIA AND YOUTH LEADERS IN THE DIGITAL SPACE: AN INSIGHT THROUGH ALFAAZ'18

-Abhija Chatterjee, 1st Year

The Department of Sociology, Miranda House had organized its Annual Department Festival ALFAAZ 2018 on April 10th. In order to celebrate this event, and make it memorable the department organized a seminar on "Influence of media and youth leaders in the digital age". The speakers who were invited were all renowned personalities from their respective field of work.

Rajesh Mahapatra, the first speaker is the Chief Content Officer at Hindustan Times. He initiated the talk by asking a crucial question. He said that the media nowadays has a lot of 'influencers.' So, what is then, the difference between an influencer and a 'leader'? Answering this question, he said that



an influencer is a person who plays a crucial role in shaping minds whereas a leader is a person with a strong persona, who has the ability to make people believe that she/he is the one to bring about a revolutionary change. Talking about the influence of media in this digital age, Mr. Rajesh Mahapatra commented that the digital space provides a ton of opportunities to voice one's ideas and concerns. He spoke about how media these days is a lot about influencers; but less of what one may call a 'leader.' He asks, 'why?' Why is it that we have less of leaders and more of influencers? To this, Mahapatra says that the youth today often gets easily influenced. He feels leaders would emerge only when the nation's youth learns to ask fundamental questions rather than being easily influenced. Lastly, he said that the distinction between a leader and an influencer is not a very rigid one. He hopes for a future when and where, using the digital space, some influencers would transform themselves into leaders.

Aasim Khan, the second speaker for the day is an assistant professor at IIT Delhi. In addition to that, he is a social scientist with cross-disciplinary interests in the theories of new media and social networks, and their intersection with the field of politics, policy, and democracy in contemporary India. Starting his talk, he said that leaders should begin at the very basic levels of a family or a student's union at a University. He said that in this era of networks, it is a matter of utmost importance to make use of the digital media. However, it is equally necessary to understand and go deep into these technologies. He said that the youth should ask questions; as was earlier pointed out by Mr. Mahapatra. These questions should include fundamental queries such as 'who owns these technologies?', 'what is the representation of women or any other kind of minority or less privileged groups in these digital forms of media?'

Karnika Kohli, the last speaker of the seminar is the social media editor at The Wire. She writes on fake news, online trolling and media. She has previously worked with prestigious media houses such as The Times Of India and News X. Throughout her talk, she focused on certain success stories of ordinary people who used the digital space as their medium and successfully voiced their opinions. She narrated the stories of Ashutosh, an ordinary boy from Pilbhit, UP and Harleen, a young adult who started talking about crucial issues such as sexuality in a platform like Twitter. Kohli talks about how this gradually made her an influencer, as women started sending her their take on sexuality and finally a leader for all those women who finally learned to accept that their sexuality was theirs.

Kanika's talk was followed by a Q&A round which proved to be equally enthralling. Starting from the students to the professors, everybody enthusiastically participated in this round. The talk was put a conclusion upon with the Head of the Department, Reema Bhatia, and other professors of the Department presenting mementos to the speakers.

Post this talk, there was an open-mic event where participants engaged in expressing their ideas on gender and emotions through the medium of slam poetry. The final talk of the day was given by Bhani Rachel Bali who is the creator and founder of KrantiKālī,

a multi- platform gender innovation lab working for gender revolution. Over the course of her session, she talked largely about the founding of her organisation and her participation in activities that call for the equality of genders. She is one of the leading co-ordinators of the nation-wide, award winning #IwillGoOut movement where Indian women took to the streets to reclaim their right to public spaces on 21st Jan, 2017. In all, ALFAAZ 2018 was a huge success; it was an event that the MH Auditorium will forever echo and one which the members of the department will always cherish for it encompassed the very crux of sociology: revolution of ideas primarily through the medium of technology.

AFTERWORD

A FILM SCREENING

On 16th April 2018, the Department of Sociology organized a Film Screening of the movie Afterword which was made by Mallika Visvanathan, a student of Sri Aurobindo Centre for Arts and Communication taking a course in Creative Documentary.

The movie was situated in the famous Daryaganj area of New Delhi and through an incomplete and unsent letter found within the pages of a second-hand book told the



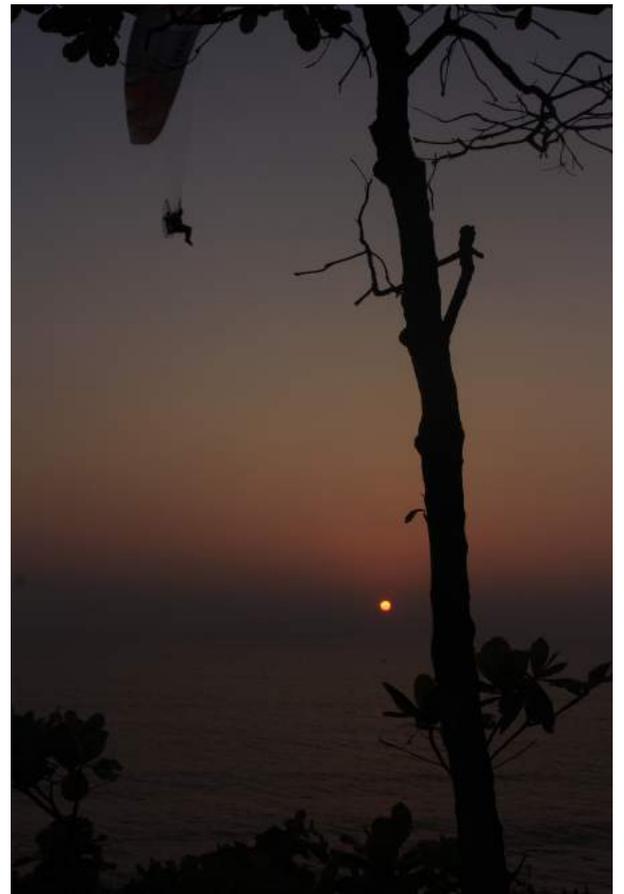
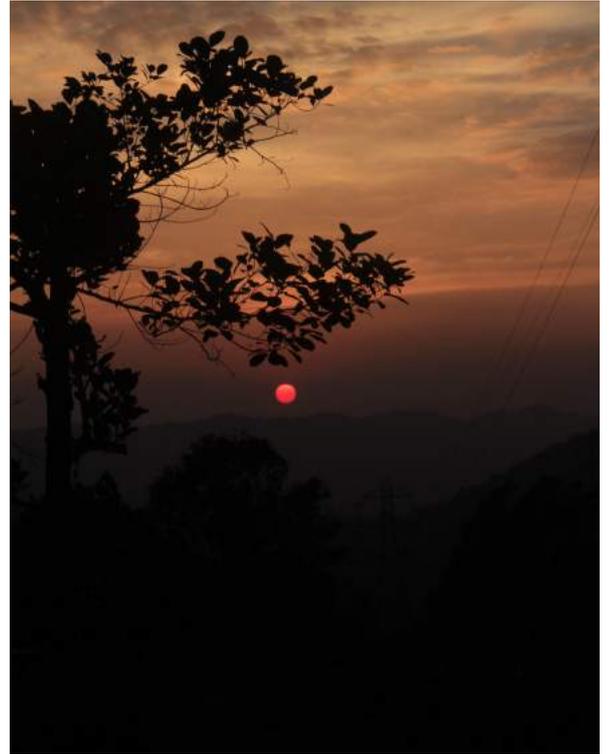
story in bits and pieces of a second-hand book seller and a Hindi typist setting up shop there. Creative documentaries are a step away from the idea of documentaries established so far for it fuses fiction and reality. The movie stemmed from ideas of bricolage put forward by Levi-Strauss which means the skill of using whatever is at hand to create something new, pertaining primarily to mythological thought. Another related to ideas of obsolescence and the director's initiative to question the ideas of obsolescence of a Hindi typewriter and a second-hand book. The movie reflected a beautiful immersion of thought in terms of poetry and the feel of music that were basically every day sounds. Post the screening, there was a discussion between the students and Ms. Visvanathan. It was indeed an interesting experience for it gave the students of sociology an understanding into the avenue of creative thought that could reflect social realities in newfound ways.

MARKET, STATE AND SOCIETY: THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MIDDLE CLASS IDENTITY

For its final event on 17th April 2018, the Department of Sociology organised a Talk on "Market, State and Society: The Construction of a Middle Class Identity" by Prof. Sanjay Srivastava who is currently associated with the Institute of Economic Growth.



His talk focused on the economic changes that took place in the post-nationalism phase and beyond. In tying up the realm of economic with society which is of the utmost necessity in this age where inter-disciplinary studies yield the most fruitful results, he emphasises on institutions such as Resident Welfare Associations that are a marker of the new middle-class identity and the idea of moral consumption where a temple site namely Akshardham has been turned into a site of consumption with activities in the complex that are not confined to just acts of worship. Moreover, the role of the state was also highlighted. The idea that this talk concluded with was with how the market, state, and society are increasingly impacting the economic trends of the here and now and it is up for us to not only decide but also understand whether these influences are moving in the right direction or not.



- SHAILY AGGARWAL, YEAR 2

FROM THE TEAM

OF REFLECTIONS AND REINVENTIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS

My Parents Told Me, “Marry A Brahmin, Or Else We Will Cut You Into Pieces”

Oct 15, 2015 12 Comments



INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE: TOWARDS A CASTELESS SOCIETY

-Arshia Ningthoujam, 1st Year

India has had a long history of traditional restrictions transforming into the law of the land. Those revolving around the archaic system of caste still manifesting in the modern times stands as testimony. Casteism is a form of social gradation characterized by the ideas of purity and pollution, endogamy, hereditary transmission of occupation and inheritance in the hierarchy with bourgeois interaction and exclusion. Indian marriage is viewed as an inevitable destiny but only if it fits the prescribed socio-cultural standards of caste endogamy. It is a mechanism to perpetuate "caste purity" in compliance with the shastras. Strictly speaking, caste endogamy is just a fanciful term for an everyday occasion called "arranged marriage".

In fact, all endogamous groups keep watch of their own boundaries even today. In a bid to maintain the status quo, communities have consolidated and deemed endogamous marriage among themselves as acceptable. This is evident when different communities unleash organised violence against inter-faith relationships. Both men and women in inter-caste relationships are subjected to limitless anguish and coercion at the hands of their families, communities and right-wing political parties. But I'd rather go with Dr. Ambedkar's contention in his 'Annihilation of Caste System', that the best remedy to curb caste-based Hindu society is to encourage inter-caste/inter-religious marriages which would in turn destruct the belief in the sanctity of shastras-a notional amelioration to homogenize the

society, I must say. The fusion of blood can alone bring into existence the feeling of being 'kindred'. However, this notional change is not free from perils.

Today, the way that society has ramrodded half—baked ideas into the populace is simply disheartening. The idea that the reputation of a family/community is based on the behaviors and morality of its women is a clear indication that 'caste' is the evil twin of 'patriarchy'. Such fabricated ideas of honour and purity which is strongly tied to women in order to control female sexuality and procreation is an outcome of both caste and patriarchy. The cases include honor killing, kidnapping, acid attack and domestic violence. A very 'cunning' but 'genius' system is at play in favouring caste endogamy against inter-caste relationships. But the political parties have turned a blind eye to these turmoils. But do you think that the political leaders would defend inter-sectionality of oppression experienced by inter-caste couples at the expense of their own prosperity?

And so, playing with fire without fearing the consequences, the idea of 'Love Jihad' has been planted in the minds of inter-faith couples by religious activists. Ultimately, the fallacy lies in the concept based on the idea that compulsory conversion comes before love! A recent incident that occurred in Rajasthan, in which an elderly Muslim labourer from West Bengal was attacked with an axe and burnt to death for getting involved in love jihad, is a signal for all of us to reflect upon the issue of Love Jihad (a bogus concept that is spawning among inter-caste couples out of fear). It has shown that it is a national security issue owing to the fact that hooligans and murderers are justifying such barbaric crimes in the name of 'caste' and 'racial purity'.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar did mention that inter-caste marriage is the real remedy to annihilate caste but he did not particularly draw out the possible enormities of inter-caste marriages and tactics to achieve its ultimate mission. Recently, the Supreme Court has decided to lay down guidelines to protect oppressed inter-caste couples. In fact, "Dr. BR. Ambedkar scheme for social integration through inter-caste marriage" was instituted in 2013, with a target to provide monetary incentive to at least 500 such inter-caste couples per year.

Marriage to a person of your choice is a fundamental human right. Although inter-caste marriages are mostly driven by love among people, any individual, irrespective of caste or religion, has the right to love or marry whoever they please. Love is love, it cannot be an obligatory emotion bounded by caste, religion and politics. It is a personal choice, an individual's right. Whether an individual prefers to convert his/her religion is completely in their hands. There should not persist any dominant morality of caste-patriarchy where women's and men's freedom are challenged; because the Preamble to the Constitution asserts "secularism".

All in all political parties, social reformers and intelligentsia classes must take a clear stand against caste violence in favour of inter-caste marriages. This should be the "new genesis".

Nonetheless, according to a recent survey (1970—2012) only 5% of Indian marriages are inter-caste/inter-religion marriages. Inter-marriage amongst castes is still not prevalent to an extent that it could annihilate casteist notions. This shows how much the Indian society wants to preserve this endogamy.

An exception to this would be that of the North-Eastern states of India where Mizoram constitutes the highest rate of inter-caste marriages up to 55% followed by Meghalaya and Sikkim. Unlike other states, the Khasi community of Meghalaya has a matrilineal society in which patriarchal norms play the least role. Moreover, NE states are Christian-dominated where traditional barriers of caste can be seen breaking down slowly. In contemporary India, exogamy seems to be growing in urban settings more particularly due to proper education of the spouses and parents and better economic statuses. Even the Indian cinema industry has seen a rise in inter-caste marriages along the years. The marriage of Amitabh Bachchan (a Srivastava Kayastha) with Jaya Bhaduri (a Brahmin Bengal) is exemplary.

In my view, inter-caste or inter-religion or even inter-linguistic marriages should occur. What we "must" seek is to tear down the casteist wall of hostility towards the free exercise of individual rights. If spaces of intermingling and engagement between people of different communities are allowed, only then casteist society will gradually subside and favoritism towards one religion above others will ultimately melt away.

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GENDER AND THE BODY POLITIC

-Abhija Chatterjee, 1st Year

'Body Politics', do we all know what it actually stands for? It can get as 'controversial' as one may guess. "Body" in the term "body politics" refers to the site in which social constructions of differences are mapped onto human beings subjecting the body to systemic regimes such as government regulation.

To narrow it down, if one were to focus on gender and body politic in the Indian context, reflections on gendered violence would reveal a constant pattern of impunity and silence,



forged within a broader political economy of hierarchy and devaluation. The 1947 Partition accompanied with widespread gang rapes and abduction of women portrays the extent to which sexual violence was involved in the very process of 'formation' of the nation itself. In Manali Desai's paper on "Gendered violence and India's body politic", she writes on how gang rape has been used as an intermittent but powerful tactic of social control in a changing political landscape wherein lower castes have mobilized against the historic caste discrimination. The subordination of mainly the Dalit cultivators and landless labourers has been historically achieved through everyday forms of intimidation and control. Desai talks about how rape has been a "form of social performance; the ritualized violation of another sexed body."

In a country like India where most women experience a continuum of violence "from the womb to the tomb", one question that strikes one's mind is- what location does a woman's body occupy within India's system of caste, kinship and state domination? If one again reflects on the Partition of 1947, the history of which is mainly reconstructed through oral history and literature, what one would notice is that how "national honour" in the newly born state was tied to the desecration of women's bodies. The continuum of violence is indeed reproduced, even as women partially win new freedom in the context of India's ongoing development, incidents of gang rape such as the 2012 Delhi gang rape testify to the levels of sexual violence where the contradiction of unbridled masculinity and class polarization comes under explosive pressure.

The metaphor of "body politics" had been collectively created by Plato, Aristotle and Hobbes who compared the state to the human body, with different organs symbolizing different functions. The 'body' is the source as well as subject of knowledge of production- bodies shape the questions one raises as well as the realities against which one measures their answers. Seemingly "personal" issues such as rape, body hair and clothing, pregnancy, etc were not traditionally seen as "political". But currently, the 'body' is at the core of the political order as markers of status and power. Mainstream political science has generally always tended to treat bodies as an 'unproblematic' category stemming largely from a belief that bodies are a part of the 'nature- culture' dichotomy; thus pushing the category of women closer to nature, reducing women to mere bodies and portraying them as less rational as compared to men.

The rise of Second Wave Feminism in the late 1960s and early 1970s inspired many to look for critical approaches to the study of men's and women's social lives. A key influence was the French writer and philosopher Simon de Beauvoir. In her classic "The Second Sex", Beauvoir led the foundations for a feminist analysis of gender. Her famous assertion that '**one is not born, but rather becomes a woman**' emphasised the social character of womanhood as distinct from biological femaleness. According to her, bodily differences between women and men may be 'inescapable' but 'in themselves they have no significance', since they depend for their meaning on the whole context in which actual women and men live their lives.

Diana Coole in her "The Body and Politics", points out the diversity within feminist thought in relation to bodies by covering phenomenological, materialist and post structural approaches to bodies. Amy Lind's "Heteronormativity and Sexuality" interrogates the concept of sexuality as a category of political analysis and form of power. The decades of the 1960s and 1970s marked a new phase that drew attention to the body's role in the maintenance and resistance to the inequalities of gender, class, race and sexuality. For instance, the Black Movement raised consciousness of racial aesthetics and ignited the "**Black is Beautiful**" philosophy; thus extending the conception of racial politics to include the body.

If one takes an attempt to view the issue of body politic through the sociological lens, one would realise that the very fact that the social thinkers who sought to make sense of the rapid changes brought about by the rise of industrial capitalism are collectively known as "**Founding Fathers**" speaks volumes on the gender bias. Not only were they men, but they paid little attention to issues of gender and sexuality, despite the fact that the social transformations which preoccupied them entailed major shifts in family life, in relations between men and women and in the conceptualisation of masculinity and femininity.

Hence, it can be indeed said that the entry of women into the field of the study of 'gender' and the 'body' gave more meaningful insights into the inequalities between the two genders and the language of sex roles was now introduced to new concepts such as 'patriarchy' which was a means of envisioning new spaces of equality through the use of academia. This reflects the potential of gender studies in creating new insights that will embrace the multiplicities of the human body in terms of representations and help overcome the tensions that go with it.

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THE CONTINUITIES OF RACISM

-Sarangthem Sharmiza Annoly, 1st Year

"Racism is taught in our society. It is not automatic. It is learned behavior towards people with dissimilar physical characteristics" – Alex Haley

Racism is not new to India. It is something that has been existing since long ago and has assumed various forms and degrees throughout the course of India's history, which is replete with countless incidents of racism against people belonging to different ethnic, linguistic and racial backgrounds. In a survey released by the Washington Post last year, India was named the "most racist country of the world". According to a report by the Bezbaruah committee, 86% of the people who have migrated to Delhi have faced varying degrees of racial discrimination at some point of their lives. Delhi is also considered to be one of the worst offenders of racism. In India, the cases are diverse and the statistics are depressing. This awareness is not enough. We need to trace the source and understand how racism took roots in India.

Racism is, in a way, the result of internalization of the colonial discourse. The racist European association of Africa with cannibalism can be taken as an example. The mob which had attacked the Nigerian student in Noida believed that the Nigerian student had "cannibalized" an Indian student who actually died of drug overdose, a direct thought process reflecting the ideas prevailing in colonial times. This reveals practices of racism beyond that of color in the nation. This article however aims to foreground the issue of racism against the North-Eastern people of India, who have been discriminated against for their facial features, prominently "Chinki" eyes.



This practice has been manifested in the uncomfortable stares that the people of North-East are exposed to. It exists in the casual comments like, "You look Chinese" or "Do you have a Visa for coming to India?" It is revealed in the cases of Nido Tania of Arunachal Pradesh who had been killed because of his hairstyle and Reingamphy from Manipur who was found raped and murdered in her house in Delhi.

In my 18 years of existence, I too have come across this a few times, whether its weird stares in the metro or casual comments on my

character. Every person from North-East who has relocated for better education or job opportunities have faced varying degrees of racial discrimination at some point of his/her life. Speaking from personal experience, I can only tell you how absolutely infuriating and humiliating it is to be a victim of racism, even casual racism. It is an experience that one is not likely to forget. And I do remember my first encounter with this distinctly. I had decided to go see the Taj Mahal with my sister one fine day in February. That being our first trip to the Taj Mahal, we decided to take the help of a tourist guide. As he was taking our pictures, he asked me if I liked India. Genuinely surprised, I told him that there was no reason for me not to like my own country. He seemed even more surprised than I was. After staring at me for a while, mouth agape at my earlier response, he smiled and shook his head in disbelief. And then, he told me politely but firmly that I couldn't be Indian. I was apparently a "Korean". Now, it was my turn to gawk at him. Here was a stranger, a person I had never met before or talked with and it took him just a glance at my facial features to define my national identity. Apparently, my facial features were not "Indian" enough. The murder of Ramchanphy Honggray from Nagaland and the mysterious death of Loitam Richard from Manipur are some of the appalling incidents of racism against the North-East people, those which took a serious turn as opposed to the casual racism I encountered. There have been many other hate crimes as well. As many as 704 crimes were committed in the last three years. But, there are few proper investigations into their deaths and the causes of deaths are often given as suicide, natural causes or excessive alcoholic consumption.

The North-East people always live within the walls of fear and isolation that many years of discrimination has taught them to build. The Government has indeed tried to break down such walls and protect them. In 2012, the Ministry of Home Affairs had made it mandatory for all states and union territories to punish people who commit atrocities against the North-East people under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. It is now a criminal offence to call a North-Easterner "Chinki" or "Chinese" and the culprit is liable to a jail sentence of 5 years and a hefty sum of 5000 rupees. Yet, there is no guarantee that there wouldn't be another Nido Tania or Loitam Richard.

Recently, Shashi Tharoor, MP, introduced the Anti-Discrimination and Equality Bill (2016) in Lok Sabha on March 10. The provisions of the bill are against discrimination, in any form, against the Dalits, specially-abled and also the North-Eastern people. But the central government is yet to send the bill to the parliamentary standing committee.

Racism is a form of ethnocentrism which arises out of sheer ignorance and baseless belief that one's community is superior to others. India is a very diverse country with racial, ethnic, religious and cultural plurality. And each and every citizen should have knowledge about the rich heritage and culture of every single region of India, including the North-East. Ignorance shouldn't be the reason for discrimination. That is why a

private member bill "The compulsory teaching of North-East culture in educational institutions" was introduced by a member of parliament from Arunachal Pradesh, Ninong Ering. But this is not enough. The NGOs working for human rights must speak up about the discrimination faced by us. They must give legal support to the victims of racism. More anti-racist rallies and campaigns should be held to make the people aware of the racial, ethnic diversity of our country. The North-East has been isolated so much from the mainland India that people have gradually developed misconceptions and prejudices which needs to stop immediately. Otherwise, the next generation might perpetuate this practice. We wouldn't want that, would we?

It's high time we start taking racism as a serious issue. The rich cultural diversity of India should be celebrated, not used as an excuse to look down on people. Ignoring the existence of racism itself is only another form of promoting it. People of the North-East have always been stereotyped. Boys from that region with tattoos and different hairstyles have been accused of being drug addicts while girls are given the tag of being "*easily available*". So, let us do away with the stereotypes, shall we? We don't eat everything. We aren't chinkis. And some of us hate partying too. Racism runs deep in our society but with a little effort from our side and an open mind, we can surely overcome it. People should be educated about India's present and the foundations on which it has been built. India is not just a land of the Aryans, the Mongoloids or the Dravidians only. It is a fusion of cultures and races. Before being a certain race, we are Indians first. And as Rosa Parks rightly said, "*Racism is still with us. But it is up to us to prepare our children for what they have to meet, and, hopefully, we shall overcome*". And I look forward to the day when people will be judged by the "*content of their character*" rather than by "*colour of their skin*."

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FOOD ADVERTISING: AFFECTING OUR YOUTH'S HEALTH

-Shivani Sharma, 2nd Year



In the 21st century, fast food is one of the most preferred food types as it is tasty, tempting and easily available. People of every age category are fond of it, especially children since it all appeals to them so much. But there exists another important aspect that gives a boost to the fast food industry. Of course, the marketing and advertising and advertising skills play a major impact on the sales and consumption of fast food. Today, most of the advertisements we see on and off screen are about food, junk food. But it is

astonishing that there are hardly any food advertisements encouraging healthy food habits and in turn a healthy lifestyle.

The food and beverage industries use a wide range of food advertising techniques and marketing channels to foster brand awareness to encourage product sales. These food marketing channels include television advertising, the internet, celebrity endorsements, advertisement by popular cartoon characters and various other ways to cater to the masses. McDonald's, Dunkin' Donuts, Subway, Pizza Hut, KFC, Coca-Cola, and PepsiCo are just some of the few international food brands that promote their products by using these various advertisement techniques.

Online media plays a significant role in food advertising. Various food company websites and several other commercial sites advertise food to children in the most children-friendly way possible. Popular sites include Disney.com, NickJr.com, these are also television channels most kids are familiar with. Viral marketing is also used to encourage children to talk to one another about various brands' websites by sending emails to friends in the form of an e-greeting or invitation and in turn inviting them to visit the site. Different types of youth-oriented marketing techniques focus on toys and other recreational purposes to appeal to their young audience for example, in a happy meal, children are encouraged to buy happy meals to collect toys. This is how fast food advertisements promote unhealthy eating and equating it with good taste, fun and happiness.

While the advertising techniques are changing with time, television remains the most prominent method of marketing food and beverages to youth. Television is and has always

been a powerful tool of advertisement since children and adolescents spend a considerable amount of time watching television. *"It is estimated that US children view 20,000 to 40,000 commercials each year, and by the time they graduate from high school, they might have been exposed to 360,000 television advertisements"*[a]. As a result of which, they are repeatedly exposed to a large number of advertisements each day, and eventually develop taste preferences for that food acquired through this learning process. They are then, able to influence their parents to purchase a certain commodity by their pestering capacity. This is the reason why children and adolescents form a category of special audience, they are seen as a major market force. They are more vulnerable, less able to understand the persuasive technique of advertisement, and are easily influenced by them. They are the target of intense specialized food marketing and advertising efforts. Food marketers are most interested in youth as consumers because of their spending power, their purchasing influence, and as future adult consumers.

Advertising plays an important role in promoting unhealthy eating habits, influencing the children to choose a certain brand which shapes their food preferences since early childhood. Hence, they are at a risk of forming lifelong preferences for the same. There are a lot of harmful effects of excess consumption of the fast food on children's physical, mental, behavioral and psychological health, and wellbeing. Majority of the products advertised are high in calories and low in nutritional value. Thus, in the long run, children are at an increased risk of becoming overweight and a tendency to develop obesity. Although, there can be many reasons for the same, weight gain, sedentary lifestyles and lack of exercise are a few, but one of the biggest factors, of course, is fast food. *"Currently, 15% of the US youth are overweight, a prevalence nearly twice as high in children and three times as high in adolescents as compared to 1980 prevalence rates"*. [b]

They are also prone to various psychological and behavioral disorders such as eating disorders and low self-esteem. Eating disorders are usually seen among the youth. These include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating. In anorexia nervosa, the person has a distorted body image that leads him to see himself as overweight. The person refuses to eat, and even starves himself to death. In bulimia nervosa, the person may eat excessive amounts of food by consuming medicines such as laxatives or vomiting. The person often feels disgusted and ashamed when he binges and is only relieved of tension and negative emotions after purging. In binge eating, there are frequent episodes of out-of-control eating. Thus, this contributes to body dissatisfaction and weight-related concerns which have been found to coincide with depression, and suicidal thoughts and tendencies.

Family can play an active role to minimize the harmful impacts of fast food advertising on children. It is the principal institution for the socialization of children. Family can play an active role to minimize the harmful impacts of fast food advertising on children. It is the principal institution for the socialization of children. They must socialize the

children in order to help them develop healthy food habits, and try to make them understand the nutritional value and importance of healthy food. Most importantly, they should teach, and help children understand how marketing and advertising work so they are not simply passive consumers, and don't just fall prey to the vicious trap of globalization.

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GENDER, FAMILY AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH KOREA

-Koyal Sindhu, 2nd Year

Samsung, Hyundai and LG may be global household names, and South Korea's economy may be one of the largest in the world, yet it rates last in the gender equality index as well as wage gap index among the 27 OECD countries, and it has the highest suicide rates among the same list of nations. Being a woman in South Korea is a tough job. One has to struggle in the face of the challenges of unrealistic body ideals, patriarchy entrenched in the Confucian ideology, and a repression of sexuality and professional aspirations.

Korean society is conformist in nature, to the extent that whoever does not act and think according to the set norms, even in the most mundane of acts like ordering a coffee which is different from the choice of one's group, is considered a threat to the unity and peace of the group and is treated as one. With such pressure to act and think on the lines of the ideal, what arises is the need to also look like the ideal. In the case of South Korea, it is the Western aesthetic that is the universal preference. Wide eyes, a bridged nose, a narrow jaw and a baby face have become the desired look. The need for conformity has Koreans of all ages lined up at clinics for surgeries ranging from a rhinoplasty to jaw contouring and double eyelid surgery.



USA today

In fact, the latter is so common that it has become a kind of rite of passage for girls crossing the age of 16 years. It is no wonder then that the country is known as the 'world's plastic surgery capital' and that Korea has the highest number of per capita surgeries in the world. The roots of this phenomenon of looking more attractive lie deeper, into the intolerance for imperfections and difference. Job resumes in Korea require a photograph of the applicant to be attached, and it is common knowledge that among two candidates with equal qualifications, the better looking will be selected. This points out to the sad reality that looks are taken to be a part of an individual's personality, and that this trend has given rise to a whole new economy that feeds itself off the insecurities and drive for perfection among the general populace.

This phenomenon is, interestingly, not restricted to women only, as globalization and Hallyu (Korean pop culture wave) have altered existing gender and beauty ideals for men as well. While European and American beauty ideals remain the desire of a lot of Korean males, gender ideals have been shaped by Korean pop culture images of 'flower boys', who are an exquisite mixture of beauty and valor, and display behaviour closest to the modern metrosexual man. The influence of such an image can be inferred from the fact that in 2011, Korean men spent \$495.4 million, on skincare products, amounting to 21 per cent of the global sales.

The shift from a matrilineal system and female directed inheritance during the Goryeo dynasty in the eighth century to patriliney in the Joseon period and along with it primogeniture, son preference and consequent repression of women's mobility to prevent adultery and direct society along the lines of Confucian ideology, in the fourteenth century, led to a downward spiral of the status of women, and which saw a revival only with the idea of the 'New Woman' that the Japanese colonizers brought with them. They encouraged education and work among women but the women were confronted by challenges like backlash from traditionalists and the double burden of working as well as looking after the home, considered as the woman's terrain. Even today, within the Korean marriage, there is assumed to be a gendered division of labour. Women in general join the workforce in their twenties and quit in their thirties to make time for marriage and children. They re-enter the workforce in their forties, gaining employment with minimum benefits, no job security and having sacrificed the prime of their professional years for building a family. Even those who do not work outside the house are considered responsible for their family's upward mobility. This they are required to do by donning the hats of 'Manager Moms', and having to ensure that their children perform exceedingly well academically and are able to bag a seat among the prestigious universities of the nation. The pressure for these moms is tremendous, as it is for their wards, as it is getting increasingly tougher in Korean society to change the fortunes of a family, in contrast to the 1960s and 70s, where under rapid industrialisation, Korean society had witnessed an overall growth in living standards. The struggle to cope with the pressures of everyday existence and of being able to sustain even oneself is such that the institution of

marriage, which was earlier considered a given for most Koreans, especially for males, has seen a decline in recent years, and the average age of getting hitched has risen to 29.8 for women and 32 for men from around 25 in the 1990s. The average age of entering motherhood is now 31.2 as compared to 26 in the 1990s.

The institution of marriage has faced another challenge as a consequence of globalization, which has led to an increase in the number of transnational as well as multicultural families. The global nature of work in the modern era has led to an increase in the number of families where the male breadwinner works abroad while his wife and children stay back in Korea to cut back costs. Another form of transnational family is where the children are sent abroad to study in the hope of better educational and occupational prospects. Multicultural or international couples are also on the rise with the advent of globalization. With a rapid decline in the population in the countryside at the turn of the century, there was a shortage of eligible women for marriage. An active marriage migration policy was implemented by the Korean government since the 1990s, where social organizations, churches and commercial matchmakers helped get rural men married by securing a constant supply of brides from East Asian countries like China, Japan and Vietnam. Marriage migrants challenge the Korean notion of a homogenous ethnic and cultural identity. This phenomenon has also raised questions of the meaning of marriage and Korea's policy towards migrants and whether or not it supports the existence of diverse cultural groups.

Women and their sexuality are perceived in Korea in largely the same manner as that in India. Women are expected to display propriety and not indulge in sexual activity before the marriage, and their mobility is often curtailed in order to ensure this. Their existence is still seen in terms of their ability to be a good daughter, wife, and mother due to traditional ideas still dominating the whole of the Korean society.

The feminist movement in Korea began with debates on sexuality and feminism in the 1920s and 30s, and has in recent years received support from the government, although companies and a lot of men prevent change by being uncooperative by not being a part of the movement. Companies often do not follow state advice to ease recruitment for women who wish to re-enter the workforce after childbirth. Men do not share childcare and household work load. Campus feminism in the 1990s sought to bring about positive change first by using nicknames without the usual honorifics and by resisting organizational hierarchy and authoritarianism initially within the campuses. Persistent struggle by the feminists has led to certain changes that can be said to be institutional in nature. The traditional Hoju system of appointment of a male head of the family was abolished in 2005.

In South Korea, there exists a system of conscription into the military for a minimum of two years for all Korean males above 18 years of age. The extra point system, under which the conscripted Korean males received extra points over females for consideration for a

the job was abolished in 1990.

A feminist internet group by the name of Megalia emerged in 2015 and has been very popular among the youth, although it faces backlash for its practice of 'mirroring', where the group mimics male aggressors as a way to empower women. Despite setbacks, the movement continues its struggle to bring change into the system.

South Korea is lauded as a thriving democratic and capitalist states with a model other South Asian countries should emulate. In recent years, there has been a global fascination for all things Korean, and precisely because of this awe that Asian, and the developing world at large, hold for South Korea, that there exists an immediate need for Koreans to lead the way in furthering the rights of women in the Asian continent. The contemporary social and cultural changes and challenges that South Korea is grappling with are important as they present a different side of the country that the world has learned to revere, and provides an opportunity to understand that despite economic advances, there exist arenas within the society that we need to ameliorate.

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**-POONAM GHORE,
YEAR 3**

DRESS CODES: IS YOUR CHOICE REALLY YOUR CHOICE?

-Tanya Rose Rao, 2nd Year

In this article, I shall simply highlight the different stances that revolve around the presence of a dress code in the various social settings. It is a complex issue consisting of a variety of opinions. I shall only attempt to gather arguments which will finally be at the discretion of the readers.

Dressing up is a significant form of self-expression. One's identity as an individual such as their gender, class, occupation, religious, political and ethnic affiliations, marital status, attitude towards comfort, traditions, fashions, etc is made available. This freedom in choice of clothing directly or indirectly speaks volumes about a person's identity.

To begin with, most schools in India impose a dress code in the form of a uniform on their students. This is to emphasize a sense of equality on students who come from diverse backgrounds. Children are vulnerable to others' possession, and it is simply a step taken to lay groundwork towards equality. Some are also of the opinion that institutions like schools are places of growth and learning, and a uniform helps to keep distractions at bay. When this question was posed to school students, a lot of them posted comments on the web suggesting that a uniform makes a great addition to their appearances by making them look more 'serious' and they find themselves in a better setup to 'learn etiquette'.

Most schools in the West, though, especially in the US, don't have a uniform policy. Students are given the liberty to wear what they want, how they want, yet the notion of a dress code still exists. Many parents have written that their children, especially daughters, hesitate to wear tights, tank tops, crop tops, and shorts because they've been reprimanded or taunted several times by their institution, calling it 'inappropriate'. Clothes deemed 'inappropriate' also targets body shaming, making people uncomfortable with their choice of style, and instantly making a jab at one's freedom of choice.

Keeping uniformity aside, if we extend this discourse to other social settings, a dress code in workspaces is popularly arguable. Depending on the work setup, a sense of formality, professionalism or casualty is equated. Job industries that are inclined towards public relations tend to maintain a very formal dress code, and etiquettes are given higher importance as compared to those that are inclined towards the creative field. Such industries aim to achieve a certain level of professionalism because impressions intentionally or unintentionally convey a message to the market. But, work as a form of intellectual and creative synthesis does not require a structural attire. By no means can the quality of one's work or input be influenced by their attire. Participants of the institution are usually in consensus, and abide by the unsaid norms that follow.

When the question of 'appropriateness' comes into the picture, things do get tricky. Every

Every setup deems a certain sense of fashion. Schools, workplaces, interviews, weddings, clubs etc. Each of these spaces can be associated with a definitive sense of attire. But doesn't the existence of an un-written, un-said dress code directly violate our basic right of choice? Shouldn't we all be allowed to express the way we want to? When questioned at this juncture, the simple truth of such an existence is structure. Our sense of right and wrong is cultural. It is a result of human construct over time, and is embedded rigidly in this structure.

As I began the article, the way we dress is a form of our expression. This expression sends a certain message or quite a few messages. For example, Sindoor worn by a Hindu woman is an expression of her marital status, though its use isn't a norm. Many married Hindu women choose not to wear it, sending a different social message altogether. The complexity around this debate does not make it very easy to conclude. Dress codes simply provide a framework within which individuals operate. It is one's choice to maneuver within or outside it. But at the end of the day, is your choice really your choice?

ON RAPE IN INDIA: QUESTIONING IDEOLOGIES AND CULTURES

-Rajendrani Sarkar, 3rd Year



Not more than a couple of weeks ago, the nation was taken by shock as the brutal rape and murder of 8-year old minor Asifa of Kashmir was revealed. Media: print, social, electronic frenzied for the latest scoop, politicians played the same shameless blame-game, netizens hashtag-ed unapologetically, civilians protested or just sighed, religious fanatics defended rapists (!) and, all asked the same question: What is wrong with humanity?

Another incident, equally ghastly and sad, to gain coverage simultaneously was the rape of a 17-year-old woman in Unnao, Uttar Pradesh, by a Minister of Legislative Assembly belonging to the present ruling party, that had occurred almost a year ago. On launching a complaint, the victim was pressurized to not name the assailant and her father was taken into judicial custody. The victim sought justice by trying to immolate herself in front of the Chief Minister's house, soon after which her father died of torture in judicial custody. Again, the nation asked: What is wrong with us?

Rape is only a form of an outburst of an inherently patriarchal and feudal stronghold.

With the victim blaming and our democratically elected ministers opining that chowmein, mobile phones and women clad in jeans cause rape or that '*Ladko se galati ho jati hai!*' (Boys make mistakes), one is compelled to critically question the mainstream Indian mindset. Leslee Udwin, a British filmmaker, interviewed one of Nirbhaya's rapists Mukesh Singh in her documentary film 'India's Daughter'. His revelations on why women get raped were shocking. According to Singh, women's place is within the house, she is not equal to men, and an ideal woman's duties include housekeeping. Women are not of proper character if they venture out, work late, wear short clothes, or choose to enjoy at pubs and discotheques accompanied by male friends. Such women are of loose moral and must be taught a lesson. No sooner than the movie was released than the state sought to ban it on pretexts that it portrayed Indian men negatively.

Was this act guided by an earnest will to protect the image of the nation and its culture from being soiled on international media? What exactly is the image being protected? Is this image a falsely created and reproduced one, by ignorant First world elements; or is it the reality? What Singh blurted out in the video is indeed, shockingly enough the opinion of innumerable men in the country. It'd be unfair to associate such mindset to lack of resources or deprived living conditions, sections of the mainstream upper caste or upper classes are at times no different. Recorded remarks of Mr. Manohar Lal Sharma, the defense attorney in the Nirbhaya case stand evidence. The lawyer not only blamed the victim for inviting her rape but also tried to justify the act by commenting that men get excited and eagerly given a 'suitable atmosphere'.

In a recent release, a web media platform documented how normalized the rape culture still is. Elderly men and women seem to agree on the fact that it takes a pair of hands to clap and so when a girl is raped, she surely must have been at fault. Young men and women believe boys and girls should not make friends with each other and that girls must never ever wear revealing clothes, like jeans nor should they look at boys. Another younger kid has a clearer answer to rapes: women must never be allowed to venture out of the houses!

Therefore, it was not bizarre completely (though outrageous) that right-wing Hindu groups united in defense of rapists and murderers of Asifa. Controversial comments regarding her religion and ethnicity followed soon after. What was obnoxious was the fact that Asifa's name trended among top searches in a pornographic site.

The Kathua case brings forth several questions and puzzles that may seem to bear a macro-sociological bearing. Professor Dibyesh Anand writes how the rape exposes the conflict between two visions of India. He writes,

"...The perpetrators belonged to the dominant Hindu community and had political and bureaucratic backing. Her being a Muslim in a region marked by the ascendancy of Hindu nationalism meant justice would be a struggle, especially as the legal system is infamous

for its sloth. Painful details of the violence inflicted on the child have come to light and Indians have reacted with shock to efforts by the local Hindu community to shield the accused..."

Prof Anand has viewed the violence against Asifa as a part of the project of engaging in violence against minority Others, by the majoritarian chauvinistic Hindu nationalist groups. Muslims, especially in the region, is viewed with suspicion and to be posing a potential existential threat to Hindu women, Hindu society, and Hindu nation. Hindu aggressive supremacist nationalism is seen as a legitimate way to secure Hindus. Thus, Asifa's perpetrators defended themselves as custodians of the Hindu community.

Dehumanizing of Muslims and portraying the Muslim men as sexualized Other against the Hindu self, as potential rapists of Hindu women further legitimizes the act of violence against Muslim men and women: an act of revenge to defend the Hindu Self.

The amendments to statutory laws such as the IPC, Criminal Procedure Code, Evidence Act, and POCSO are nothing more than an exercise of damage limitation, in the face of nation-wide and worldwide protests.

The frequency of rape and sexual violence cases in India has resulted in an alarming apathy or indifference to the matter. One ruling party minister has been reported stating that in a diverse nation such as India rapes should not be made a 'big deal' and 'brouhaha' must not be raised, as it distracts attention from more important national issues.

But, united protests of civilians, academicians, bureaucrats, students, intelligentsia et al illustrates that this is not a Hindu versus Muslim struggle but one between supremacist, chauvinists, and perverts, and those who believe in the possibility of an India where human lives matter regardless of faith.

THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF BITCOIN

-Bhavya Gautam, 2nd Year

Bitcoin is a virtual/online/cryptocurrency. It is called a cryptocurrency as its code is encrypted. It involves a peer-to-peer payment network in which one party interacts with another without any third party mediating the interaction. In other words, bitcoin's medium of exchange is on micro-sociological interactions.

Bitcoin was not the first crypto-currency. There were other crypto-currencies, such as Ripple, that existed before bitcoin. But it was the only bitcoin which became so popular because Bitcoin was launched just after the 2008 Global Financial Meltdown. Due to the Global Financial Crisis, the people had lost their faith in government-controlled



currencies and were looking for alternate currencies to invest in. The launch of bitcoin in 2009 by Satoshi Nakamoto- a mysterious developer whose identity is still unknown- using an open-source software was thus right on time. Effects, therefore, played a major role in the rise of bitcoin as the most popular crypto-currency.

Bitcoins are generated within the network through the process of mining and their creation is strictly controlled without being governed by a central issuing authority. The total number of Bitcoins that can be generated is fixed- 21 million- and only a fixed number of Bitcoins can be generated in a unit of time: 25 Bitcoins in every 10 minutes till 2017. This number will be halved every four years after that, until 2140. In mining, the miners, that is dedicated rigs (PCs), mine for new coins by solving a mathematical puzzle which in turn helps in keeping track of all the Bitcoins transactions going around the world. In return, the miners are awarded some fresh bitcoins. As only a fixed number of bitcoins can be generated, in every four years the system reduces the number of bitcoins for reward. Mining requires enormous computer power and electricity. This has led to the formation of "mining pools" where people invest their money or computer power and share the profits accordingly. So, mining for bitcoins has led to the formation of a virtual community in which people from different cultures, status groups, education, and region come together to form local or global mining pools.

Fun fact: the reason why this process is called mining is the mining for bitcoins is compared with the mining for gold. The ultimate availability of both gold and bitcoins is fixed, and the demand for both is high. This is the reason why bitcoin is not inflationary in nature rather it is deflationary in nature as the total number of bitcoins is limited thereby preventing inflation through over-circulation.

Bitcoin is extremely secure because it depends upon BLOCKCHAIN technology. In blockchain technology, every transaction made is recorded in a "block". The information inside this block consists of only the time of the transaction and the amount transacted, not the name of transactors or the place or item of the transaction, thereby maintaining the anonymity of users and the item bought. This new block is added to the chain only after verifying all the previous blocks first. In verifying all the previous blocks, all the previous transactions are also verified. This helps in keeping track of all the bitcoins generated till date. Hence, blockchain is an extremely secure system.

One of the main reasons why Bitcoin has attracted so many supporters is because it separates money from both the banks and the state. Unlike with traditional currencies, which can only be supplied by commercial banks, bitcoins are issued by miners, that is, the people themselves. In this way bitcoin, through its decentralized feature, separates money from banks. This attribute of bitcoin appeals to those who are critical of the current monetary system in which commercial banks produce money for the purposes of credit creation thereby making loans the cornerstone of money production. In other words, it appeals to those who are critical of how the current monetary system ties production of money to the production of debt. According to Nigel Dodd, *"Bitcoin appeals to those who regard debt as morally, economically and politically problematic."* Bitcoin, through the use of the peer-to-peer system, prevents interference from any third party, including the government, in a transaction being made. Bitcoin with its encrypted code and blockchain technology offers not only anonymity to its users but also secures their data from being appropriated by anyone. In other words, bitcoin offers privacy, and freedom from the clutches of "big data" [1]. In this way, bitcoin separates money from state control. This attribute of bitcoin appeals to those who are critical about government manipulation in transactions being made and who are sympathizers of *"the profoundly ideological and overtly conspiratorial anti-Central Bank rhetoric propagated by the extremist right in the U.S..."*[a]

According to Nigel Dodd, the ability of bitcoin to separate money from both the banks and the state is the main reason for its popularity and support. If this is so, then, the popularity of Bitcoin can be seen as a social movement[b] a protest against the state or the bank is the crucial factor which sustains and nurtures Bitcoin.

However, the very same features which have led to the humungous popularity of Bitcoin also hold the potential to be extremely detrimental[c] to society. As Bitcoin transactions are encrypted and no third party is involved it can be used to fund illegal activities like smuggling and cross-border terror-financing. Since both the source and destination is unknown, bitcoins become impossible to tax. And without levying taxes government cannot

run social development schemes as most of the social services and benefits provided by the government is funded by taxes levied against the citizenry. Moreover, Bitcoin is completely decentralized. This means that in case of a Financial Depression there will be no central authority to regulate the currency according to the economic climate and formulate policies to safeguard citizens from the devastating effects of a fiscal crisis.

As such, it appears improbable that any big economy will depend on Bitcoin in near future as its value fluctuates very sharply. This sharp fluctuation can have adverse effects on the economy thereby severely disrupting the society.

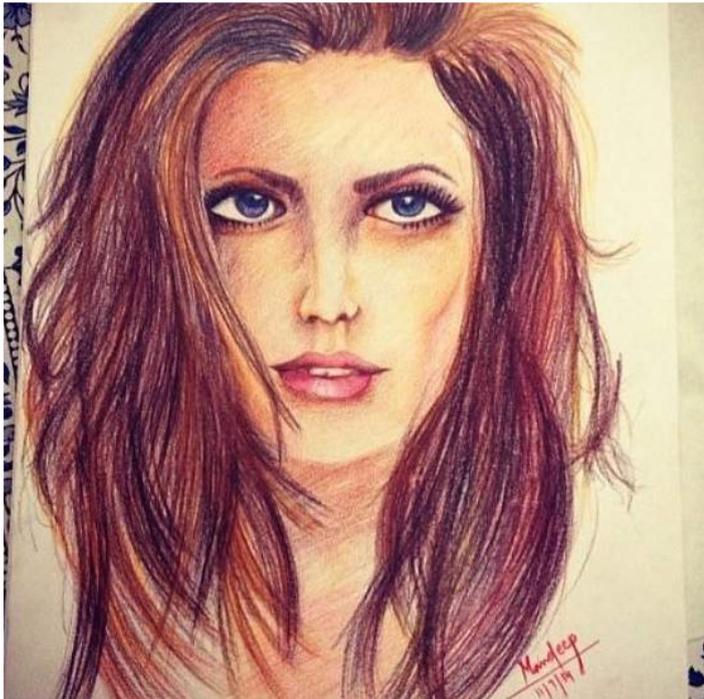
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[1] Big data refers to extremely large data sets that may be analysed computationally to reveal patterns, trends, and associations, especially relating to human behaviour and interactions.[d]

[a], [b] Dodd, Nigel.(2017) The social life of Bitcoin. Theory, Culture & Society. ISSN 0263-2764.

[c] Zoldan, Ari (2013) Bitcoin:Society's Boon or Bane. Huffpost.

[d] Google Dictionary.



AMMA

-Mandeep Kaur, 3rd Year

Having grown up in an orthodox family, Amma is a true example of how people pave their way to grow out of misery. She had always been surrounded by people who didn't let her study and never encouraged girls to do what they wanted to. The only world the girls were exposed to was their home. Their home was their world. This was what they were taught.

Her life changed after marriage. Contrary to her expectations she found a partner

who let her complete her studies. She was finally free from the clutches of her natal family. Her husband was the brightest ray of hope that she'd come across. Today she stands tall at 56 and is a part of an NGO run by both her sons. She goes around encouraging young women to never let go of their dreams. She aims at bringing up gentlemen and not men.

She says, '*we have begun to raise our daughters like girls: but only a few have the courage to raise their sons more like their daughters.*'

ANOTHER MALE DOMINATED

PLACE?

-Mandeep Kaur, 3rd Year

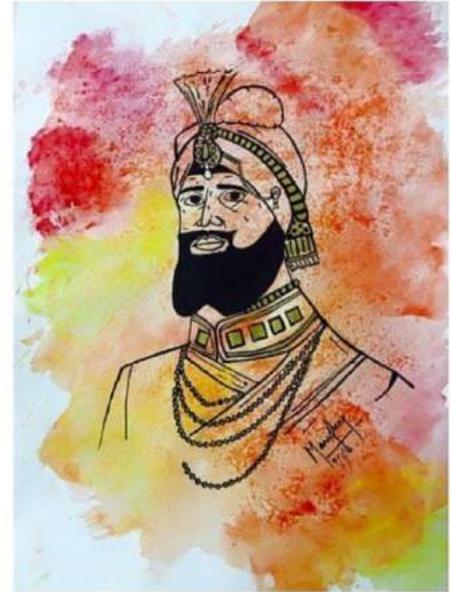
In today's world filled with different kinds of people, all we see is a place, space merely reduced to male domination.

Chandni Chowk, a very strategically built Arc-shaped city treasures the Fatehpuri Masjid at its heart, It too is a place with hardly any sight of women. From Tea vendors to owners of Megastores, everyone can be spotted here during the

praying hours. They try and heal their hearts with the holy words spoken aloud as it is something that never really expires. But does this place of healing welcome any women to offer the same peace as it offers to men?

This place was built in 1650 by Fatehpuri Begum, one of emperor Shah Jahan's wives who was from Fatehpur Sikri, the mosque at Taj Mahal is also named after her. The very irony of this place is indeed that it's named after a woman when the only group of people not allowed to pray here are women.

Just like the peace one discovers while doing something noble, the same sort of peace can be discovered here too, You know. The mosque is prayer-conditioned, that I know. But is it gender conditioned too? Does God too favor men?



IS IT BETTER TO SPEAK (TO EXPRESS, TO BE) OR TO DIE?

-Asmaani Kumar, 2nd Year

The 16th-century essayist Montaigne had written in celebration of his friendship with La Boétie: "*Parce que c'était lui: parce que c'était moi*" (because it was he: because it was I). I haven't read something so profound in so long a time and I only encountered this line last year as I was devouring a tale that spoke of the human tendency to push the boundaries drawn, not always in solitude.

The intricacies of the human heart are A space that has been overlooked time and again. The capacity to feel with a depth never before imagined, to endure, to fight against restrains may perhaps be the work of artists to make the common man understand but it is not an understanding of the emotions that one yearns for but it is also its impact for

liberation, for growth and for self-actualization. Sexuality as has been talked of till date spoke in categories and while categories are essential indeed for the purpose of recognition, what of being in a space where you refuse to be defined? Or perhaps are unable to be defined? What then?

One of the most haunting accounts of this has been provided by the unexpurgated journal entries of Anais Nin detailing her relationship with the acclaimed author Henry Miller and the emotional conflicts that she undergoes when she has to give it a name and space in the unrelenting tendencies of her heart to feel for her husband and Henry's wife June while keeping up an affair with not only her cousin but also her psychiatrist Dr. Allendy. Nin is a woman who has been torn down by generations for veering towards the dark path, for talking of unacceptable love affairs and sexual encounters. But one cannot deny that all that she did to liberate herself, she did it courageously and she did it honestly if not to anyone else but to herself. *"The impetus to grow and live intensely is so powerful in me I cannot resist,"* these are the words she penned down in her journal the time before she yielded herself to the unknown, bared her heart and her body to a man she rebuked for his brutalities in emotion. And I do wonder if this intensity that we seek in our lives is manifested within us or within the space, we chose to share with another person. Is our liberation tied to the vulnerability that we expose at the hands of another willingly? Is it in the acceptance of the fears that have engulfed us for so long, in the incapacities in understanding ourselves? And is the acceptance only reached when we have another to share the tumultuous ride with? Relationships are not just a means by which we exist, a supplement to the lives we will lead, human connections are the fuel for the entirety of the change that we will encounter within ourselves and it is this change that will reverberate on and outward as we participate and make sense of the unending tandem around. And one of those questions is indeed, "who must we love?" Philip Jackson wrote of



Nin and Miller, *"The heat of their constrained, furtive affair were incendiary; the art of each begun during this period was rarely surpassed in their later careers. They were under each other's spell: soulmates, flesh makes, unique contributors to one writers. They were almost collaborators in art, as they were in life."* They were people moving ahead of the strains of the past; while Nin develops from an adolescent seeking a father's lost love to a woman ought to be taken seriously, Henry moves from his commitment to the harshness of life to a tenderness which he hadn't found in himself before. Collaborators

in life, in liberation, in exposing their vulnerabilities and their dynamic sexualities which refused to be contained within the threshold of monogamy.

In fiction, it is André Aciman's heartbreaking novel *Call Me By Your Name*. The first line is the one I encountered in this novel. Aciman's work is imperative to be talked of and so is his Oscar-winning adapted screenplay by James Ivory. It is known to detail the lives of two young men enjoying a summer in the 80s in Italy where they explore their emotions for one another, in silence and then in sensualities. There is this line which repeats in the novel before the narrator Elio Perlman engages in his bold confession to Oliver, "Is it better to speak or die?" This in itself is a powerful revelation of how dangerous it can be to expose who you are and you find this fear showing itself time and again as they make quiet love and speak of the realities of how terminal what they share ought to be. But it is not just this realization that makes up the bulk of the novel, it is also about the concept of desire and how to seek it you need a helping hand. For Elio, to yield himself to another man was thrilling but brought forth a compulsion to adhere to the laws of nature and it is Oliver who at this juncture stands by his side and lets him make his own choices while encouraging him to embrace the dualities of emotion he feels, the ease with which his body can yield to both him and a woman. Sexuality in here is an expression of vulnerability, of love, of comradeship, of trust, perhaps of friendship. The path is not trudging alone and that is the most beautiful part of human relationships, it is a space to expose, to be accepted and then transform in ways you couldn't imagine. Luca Guadagnino talks about how it is that the other person makes you beautiful and elevates you and enlightens you. That is the significance of the human connections we make, it offers us a chance to become who we wish to be, it gives us this tiny ray of hope that everything will be okay and you're not alone. The end of Elio and Oliver's dalliance may perhaps stand testimony to how the world responded to those who deviated from the norms but at the heart of it, it is not just about two men but about two people who fell in love and left a lasting imprint on each other's lives by offering the simplest gift: a space to be who you are and to be safe, in art, in love, in the pleasures of the body.

"When I'm with you and we're all together, there is nothing more I want. You make me like who I am, who I become when you're with me, Oliver."

It is in these spaces of confessions and trust, of fear and courage, of the trysts we make with the people we love that we embrace who we are and the complexities of who we are to become. Because it was he because it was I. Because we chose each other and found in it, our sense of freedom.

YAADEIN (MEMORY)

-Ahana Ray, 3rd Year

"It's not the memory that weighs you down, it's often the emotion you associate it with, the person you associate it with. It's how your heart felt when the moment was passing and you were oblivious to it becoming a memory..

This little poem here depicts just that.. the bittersweet feeling I'd call memory..

The fleeting emotion that makes you yearn for that moment, that feeling, that memory that touches, that heals.."

Kabhi kuch aise satati hain,
Purane pannon ki khushboo dil ko choo jati hain //

Zehn ki kisi kone mein chipe,
Jaane kaise jee jaati hain,
Yaadein, kabhi kuch aise satati hain //

Wahi muskaan,
Uss hasi ki gilgilahat,
Woh aansu,
Uss jhapki ki garmahat..

Dil ko yaad aati hai,
Teri woh har aadat..
Yaadein, kabhi kuch aise satati hain //

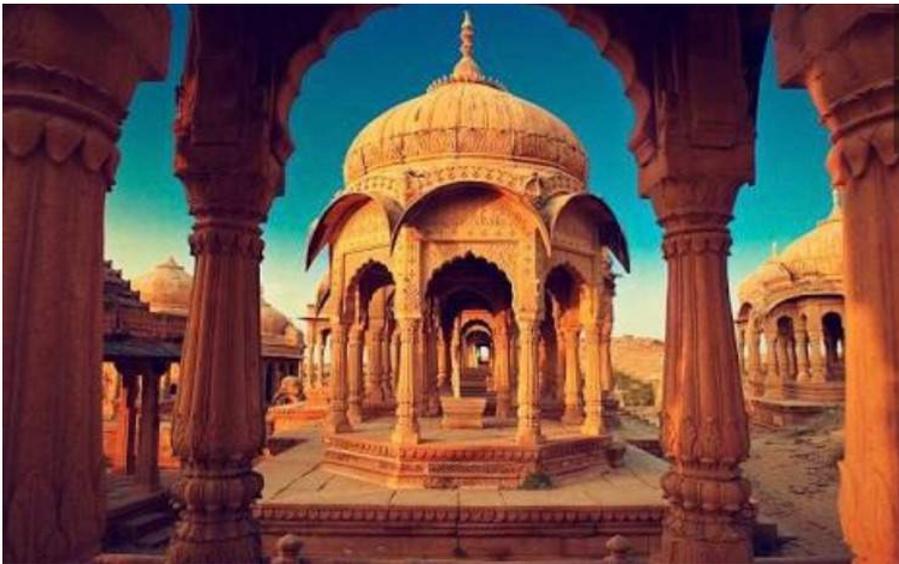
Dhoondti hain aankhe,
Betaab hokar, teri ekk nazar ..
Chahti hain bahein,
Tere sadiq baahon mein khona ..
Yaadein, kabhi kuch aise satati hain //

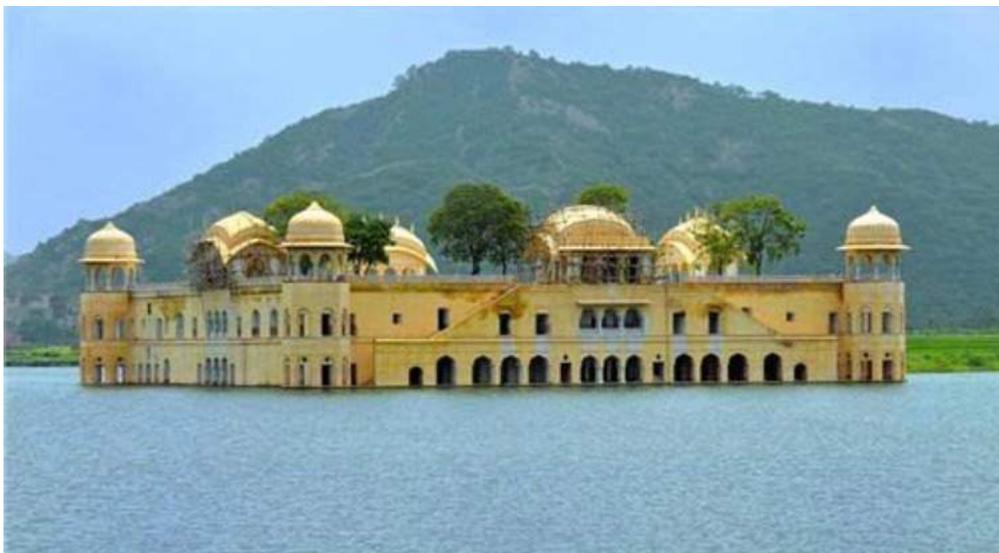
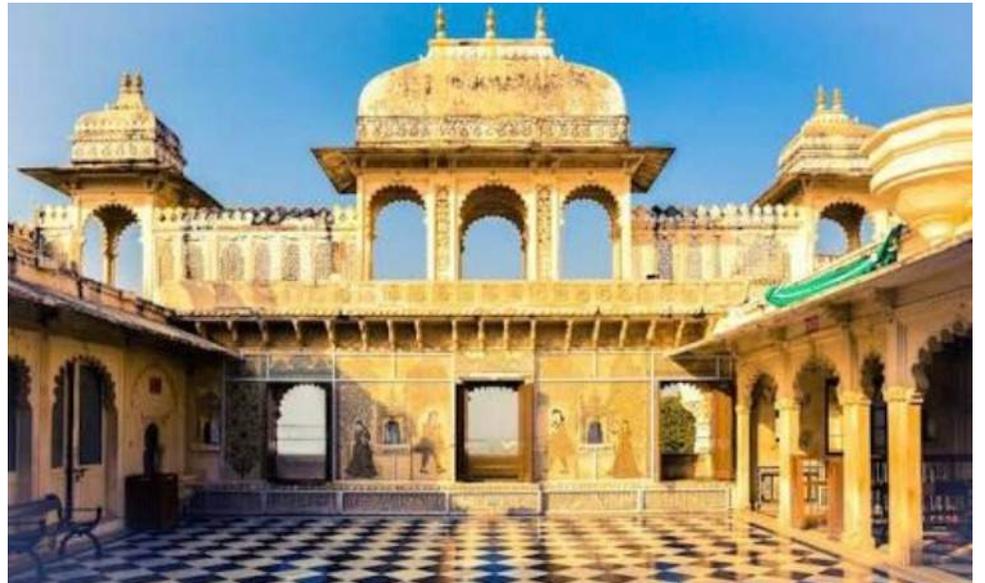
Roye bahut hain,
Tere inn yaadon mein jeekar..
Chaar diwar mere kamre ke,
Iss sachhai ka karz na ada kar paye..

Beh hi gaye aansu mere,
Char logon ke saamne..
Par sehlane wala ab koi na tha,

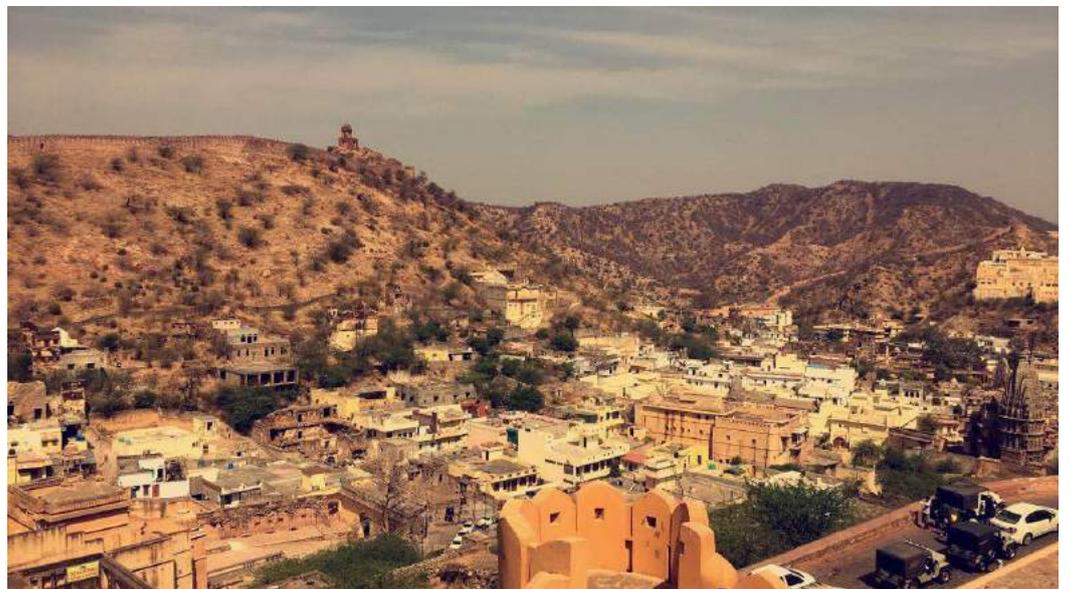
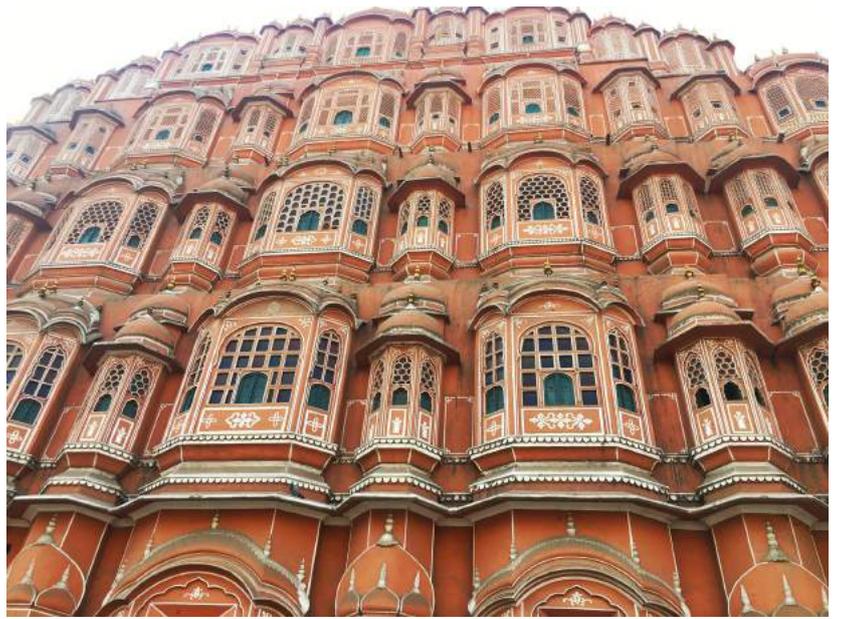
Aakhir jiske liye roye the,
Wahi mera sahaara tha ..

Yaadein, kabhi kuch aise satati hain //





**ASMITA KASHIKAR,
YEAR 2**





**MARIA RAHMAN,
YEAR 2**

THE NIGHTINGALES

A TRIBUTE TO THE BATCH OF 2015-2018 BY OUR DEAR FACULTY MEMBER, DR. BINU SUNDAS



Time just flies. When I joined Miranda House, Department of Sociology, these sweet nightingales were in their second semester of the Bachelor of Arts Programme. On the first day of my class, they were smiling and all students were ready to welcome the newly appointed teacher. The first semester was a short association with them as I was appointed for only a two-and-a-half-month period. But it was an association of lasting impression. These two and a half months introduced me to a batch of very sweet and adorable bunch of students. The memories are still fresh and I can vividly recall their expressions of apprehension as well as excitement at the beginning of each class. The pattern of my class has always been



revising the previous class by raising questions to students. Those who had attended the class and had paid attention would be excited to answer and those who had not done either would be apprehensive. Some of them would give answers that were straight from the lecture delivered in the class and some would have their own interpretation of the lecture leading to an atmosphere of debate and discussion. Such a milieu also provided me with an opportunity to rethink what I had understood or how I had interpreted the text. In a nutshell, it was a learning experience for me as well.

It was also an opportunity for me to know my students more closely. As days passed, it was clear that the class was enthusiastic to learn and a kind of 'mechanical solidarity' existed in the class and there were few who possessed the sociological imagination. They were

actors with the same goal: to excel in their studies but their situational conditions were different. It also made me think of how sensitive they were to the issues which were close to their heart. Each one of them was different in their own peculiar manner yet showing signs of common denominator which led me to confront an ethical question, should I treat them in a manner that they are alike? So even in this limited period, I tried to harness their latent talent, some were interested in dance, some in debating and some in diverse fields, some to bring in more information of their region and some the prejudice they experience on the basis of their gender and region. However, within this diversity, there was a unity of the willingness to be an active actor in the process of learning. Such a situation was a challenge for me and I did my best to live up to the expectations. My short tenure came to a sudden end but all of us accepted the situation and with hope in our hearts to meet again, we departed.

As fate would have it, I joined Miranda House again the next semester. But I was not to teach them. So, the association was limited to interaction outside of the class. But I was witness to the evolution that was taking place in them. They were growing as individuals as well as students of sociology. They were introduced to more varied papers of sociology, broadening the disciplinary understanding of the everyday lives. Subsequent interaction with them made me realize that they were growing together with the courses. They were not just evolving as students of sociology but also as responsible citizens taking responsibilities in the affairs of the department as well as the college. It was so heartening to see them becoming who they were, enjoying life and being happy in the midst of the stress of examination, assignments, attendance and the situation of inequality, based on gender that they were experiencing outside the boundaries of the college.

As they were coming to an end of their programme of study, I was fortunate again to be involved in their growing process. So, in the third year of their programme, I had the privilege to teach them the research papers which would have us together for a year. It provided me with the opportunity to understand the other facets of their lives. I realized very soon that they had chalked out the future walks of their lives. Some were interested in continuing with sociology and some with the law, some with theatre while a few other in areas like journalism and caricature. Therefore, the discussion in the class became vibrant and had a multiplicity of perspectives. In the process, all of us were learning and more than them was I.

By now the organic solidarity had made way in the class and the carefree, fun loving, stress free students had transformed into more focused matured individuals talking about their rights, showing their concern about the socio-political and economic trajectories the country is taking, sharing their perspectives and opinions with confidence and depth in their arguments and at the same time guiding the juniors. The discrimination, some had confronted outside the college, on the basis of gender, had made them convinced of the need to change the understanding of the way of life and challenge the patriarchal

of the society. With their concerns about these issues, it made me introspect too and, in the process, I became more sensitive to the demands of the students and to treat them in different ways which resulted into the whole being greater than the sum of its parts.

The continuous contemplation of Soumya, which sometimes made me think she is not in the class, the omnipresence of Yashika, Richa, Ruchi, Mayabeti, Monica, Maheswori, Chime, Unique, the responsibility of representing the class of Chayanika, the willingness to debate of Rajendrani and Shrestha, the beautiful dance performances of Ahana and her responsibility of being the President of the 'Sociology Cabinet' and the timely conducting of special lectures and making sure that all the students are informed of the notices and information sent by teachers, the occasional jokes of Chime, the ever present smile of Sanjna and the constant questions raised by her, the traits of NCC of Sanjana Singh, the sleepiness of Shefali, the constant absence of some, and a sigh of relief of Noarem in securing employment with one of the leading airlines, and enthusiasm of all will be missed. The confused expression of Ishani when asked a question but always ended up being right, Dindi's reply to me, "I came from home today" when asked, "Why are you so late?" are few things of the many memorable moments I have experienced with them.

I have learned many things in life from all of them, and I hope I have been able to give something in return. Each and every one of them is special in their own ways. I take this opportunity to wish the very best in their future endeavors.

IN GRATITUDE

FOR ALL THOSE WHO HELPED CREATE AND GUIDE THE VISION OF THE LIGHTHOUSE

The Lighthouse, 2017-2018 is much more than the annual magazine of the Department of Sociology, it's a diversity of opinions that run across castes, creeds, ethnicities, and age. We bring to you only a small slice of the vast array of discourses, perspectives, and experiences that make sociology the immensely rich discipline that it is.

This edition of The Lighthouse wouldn't have been possible without the constant support of our esteemed HOD Dr. Reema Bhatia, and Professor Dr. Binu Sundas, the very hard-working Asmaani Kumar, who is also the editor of The Lighthouse Magazine for the year 2018-2019, and Trivedi, who has helped us out at all times and has helped build the blog anew. A big thank you to Chandan Maisnam for sharing with us her art and help create the beautiful front cover. Maria Rahman and Shaily Aggarwal have never failed to astonish us with their prepossessing photography skills, and if you look around, you'll always find them with their cameras, which has been a great asset to the department in general. And finally, I'd like to thank all the contributors of the magazine who have enlightened us with their strong arguments, their explorations into the myriad social realities, their urgent questions and with their poetry of expression.

Every beginning comes from some other beginning's end, so I'd like to sign off with one of my favorite quotes from 'To the Lighthouse' :

"When matches strike, we enkindle little daily miracles, illuminations, and a new vision"

Until next time,
Team Lighthouse

Editor-In-Chief,
Ishani Chakrabarti