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CENTRE FOR
RESEARCH IN
SOCIAL SCIENCES
AND EDUCATION

THE SOCIAL SCIENCE
PERSPECTIVE

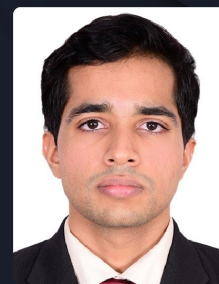## NEWSLETTER FROM THE CENTRE FOR RESEARCH
IN SOCIAL SCIENCES AND EDUCATION

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EDITOR'S DESK

The 2024 General Elections in India saw Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) return to power in the Lok Sabha for the third consecutive time. However, as the BJP fell short of the majority for the first time since 2014, it had to turn to its allies in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) to acquire the 272 seats in order to stake claim to form the next government. Along with the Congress party, nearly 26 other opposition parties came together as the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) and performed much better than what the exit polls predicted.

When all of the 640 million votes cast in the six-week long elections were counted, the BJP, along with NDA emerged victorious, despite a sharp reduction in its seat tally compared with its performance in the 2019 general elections. The biggest loss for the party was the seat of Ayodhya, in Uttar Pradesh, where just recently the 'Ram Mandir' had been inaugurated with much fan-fare. Our current issue analyses this loss. Also, despite this election being fought just after the approval of the Women's Reservation Bill, the number of women Members of Parliament elected in 2024 fell by 0.7 percentage points compared to 2019. The Gender column here also looks deeper into the women in higher politics.

On the global stage, the 2024 European Parliamentary elections witnessed a resurgence of right-wing power across Europe, reflecting the complex dynamics of electing representatives at both transnational and regional levels. We address the significance of these elections that extends beyond national borders, highlighting the intricate political landscape of the European Union.

Moving away from electoral politics, we focus on the pertinent issue of climate change. It is painfully obvious that India has to prioritise climate concerns along with economic growth and development. The country needs an inclusive policy involving regional, state, national and international efforts which are imperative not only for India, but for others as well, to build a sustainable future.

For the committed bibliophile, our book reviews feature insightful critiques of various publications that explore social science themes. Reviews of The Mahatma and the Ism by E.M.S. Namboodiripad and Fatal Accidents of Birth: Stories of Oppression and Struggle by Harsh Mander bring about a pertinent interplay of history as well as violence and discrimination.

Covering the period of February to June 2024, TSSP also provides a recap of significant events and activities organised by the Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education (CeRSSE). Notable highlights include events such as the Panel Discussion on The Gendered Impact of War in Gaza, Right to Vote Campaign, and the Student Seminar commemorating World Refugee Day.

As we present this latest edition of TSSP, we are left marvelling at what has been dubbed the year of democracy, where over half the world's population is casting its vote over several months. As billions around the globe practiced their franchise, we are constantly reminded that elections are won and lost on the basis of a number of social, economic, personal, and political issues that constantly weave and shift. In this newsletter, we hope that we gave a small taste of this along with the multitude of issues that shape our world. It is our wish that this newsletter inspires meaningful discussions and encourages our readers to engage deeply with the topics presented.

Welcome to the latest issue of TSSP. Please do send us your comments and feedback,

— **Priyanca, Amrita, Sneha and Gautam**
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THE WORLD PERSPECTIVE
European Parliamentary Elections 2024: An Analysis

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The two largest democratic exercises in the year 2024 with Indian general elections and the European Parliamentary elections witnessed the resurgence of right-wing power in the political scenario. However, the elections of the European Union are much more than that and it reflects the complexities of electing 705 representatives at a transnational and regional level from a bloc of 450 million people. The entire process of the election went on for four days from the 6th of June to 9th of June deciding the fate for a total of eight political groups and a group of "Non- Inscrits", the members of which are independent and do not belong to any political groups.

The European Parliamentary Elections although are second order elections, the dependency of the national governments have aligned with the supranational umbrella of the European community even with the recent surge of populism and Euroscepticism among the citizens of the member states. This could be observed with the rising number of voters for the Parliamentary elections in recent times despite the number being less than the national elections (Ehin and Talving 2021). The European political landscape at the regional level has five major political groups, each represented by multiple political parties. These groups have the traditional political positioning of left, right and centre along with the liberals and the greens (a political force advocating for environment sustainability). The voting methods are varied and differ from country to country which ranges from voting in booths to postal ballots to e-voting. The electoral age is not uniform and includes the minimum limit from 16 (Germany, Belgium), 17 (Greece) and the more common age of 18 (Singla 2024).

The 2024 Parliamentary elections of the European Union saw a shift in the political landscape of the region as the result brought joy to some while others who held ground for years have lost. Looking at the wins, it can be observed that the biggest shift, although not unpredictable was the dominance of the right-wing parties which was the result of the persistence of a general attitude of Euroscepticism and ethnocentrism which has given rise to radical far-right parties in the region (Joannin 2023). While right wing parties are a part of a broad spectrum of political ideologies from centre-right to conservatism and far-right parties, the far-right groups remain the strongest group with regards to the electoral gains. Popular faces whose parties have won include Marine Le Pen's National Rally and Meloni's Brother's of Italy who challenged the mainstream parties of the Union on the ideas of immigration to national identity and EU integration (Banerjee 2024). Reference can also be made to that of Alternative für Deutschland (AFD), a far- right party of Germany which has also witnessed huge wins in the recent municipal elections, has beaten Chancellor Olaf Scholz's party namely the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) in the recent EU parliamentary elections.

However, despite the surge of the far-right parties, the dominance of the centrist parties remains as the European People's Party (EPP) led by Ursula von der Leyen has once again swept the parliamentary elections with 189 seats gaining 13 more seats than the 2019 elections (Pietromarchi 2024). The second biggest bloc that emerged as the winner is the centre left party namely the Socialist and Democrats (SD) who despite losing some seats compared to the last elections has managed to hold their fort with a total of 135 votes (Banerjee 2024).

The election outcomes represented a significant disappointment for liberal and Green parties. The liberals and the greens had a varying level of success as they have a good presence in some of the countries while in some, they have struggled to become visible. The European region has seen multiple protests and policies as the liberals and the greens have tried to advocate for new laws pushing for sustainability have provoked the farmers that have brought changes by the new laws. The non-inscrits gained a minuscule fragment of only 45 seats as they saw a loss as they lost 17 seats compared to the 2019 elections.

Perhaps the most shocking outcome was the defeat of President Macron losing against Le Pen's party which resulted in the President taking a drastic step of dissolving the French parliament after the announcement. President Macron did not run as a candidate for the EU elections but the humbling results pushed him to take the sudden decision of an immediate snap poll keeping a faith in the democratic faith in the brief of the people's voice. Similarly, Olaf Scholz losing against the AFD party of Germany is another shocker this election but unlike President Macron, Germany is not counting on snap polls.

As the results of such a complicated election process have not shown the dominance of any single party throughout the region, it can be safely said that a coalition is the answer for the regional governance of the Union. As such, alliances will be formed and formal decisions will be taken in a meeting that will be held by June 20th. However, it can be observed with certainty that governance with a coalition body might not see the best results for the region in the next five years.

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INDIA MATTERS
The Uttar Pradesh Paradox: Insights on Indian Electoral Politics

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Indian elections have long been a cornerstone of the nation's political landscape. The recently concluded 18th Lok Sabha Elections have proven to be one of the most intriguing and transformative events in the history of Indian politics. These elections marked a substantial shift and a turning point in political developments as they progressed. The results were particularly striking and notable within the context of Indian politics. While the outcome was a shock for some, it was a relief for the majority. This relief stemmed from the affirmation that democracy in India remains vibrant and robust, providing the much-needed confidence that had been sought for a long time.

As the world's largest democratic exercise culminated with the announcement of the 2024 Lok Sabha election results, the noteworthy outcomes which provided a significant boost to the INDIA opposition bloc in both vote share and seats signaled a marked departure from the BJP's previous hegemonic dominance and scale of victory as seen in 2019 and 2014.

In the recent parliamentary elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged as the clear leader securing 240 seats, significantly ahead of its closest competitor, the Indian National Congress (INC), which won 99 seats. This result underscores the BJP's dominant position and effective campaign strategies. The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Janata Dal (United) (JD(U)) gained modest representation with 16 and 12 seats respectively. Meanwhile, the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Trinamool Congress (TMC) also made notable impacts, securing 37 and 29 seats respectively. Additionally, 109 seats were distributed among various regional parties and independents, reflecting the diverse political landscape and significant regional influences. Overall, the BJP's decisive win positions them as the leading force in parliament, while the INC, despite trailing significantly, remains a key player. The election results highlight the varied political dynamics across the country, with regional parties continuing to play a crucial role.

Uttar Pradesh (UP) has long been regarded as the heart of Indian politics due to its substantial share of Lok Sabha seats—80 out of 543. The state's electoral outcomes are often a barometer for national trends, making it pivotal in determining the composition of the central government. In the 2024 general elections, the shift in voter dynamics within UP was a major factor in the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) failing to secure a majority on its own.

The situation in Uttar Pradesh highlights several critical issues that contributed to the lack of trust and faith in the existing government, as reflected in the electoral outcomes. Uttar Pradesh, being a significant region in terms of electoral politics due to its substantial number of seats, saw a shift in voter sentiment that the BJP could not counteract to secure a majority. The result was disheartening for the party, and it is attributed to a combination of administrative shortcomings, ignorance, and overconfidence. Two primary factors that adversely affected the region were the escalating unemployment rates and the lack of substantial groundwork, overshadowed by mere superficial measures.

The events in Ayodhya and Faizabad exemplify these issues. The significant financial investment in the Ayodhya Ram Mandir inauguration, while symbolically important, failed to resonate positively with many locals. The people affected by displacement and demolition to make way for the temple did not feel their hardships were acknowledged or mitigated by the government. This insensitivity towards the displaced communities eroded trust and amplified discontent.

Moreover, the administration's inability to address the core issues such as unemployment and proper governance further alienated the electorate. The government's focus on grandiose projects without ensuring the welfare of the affected populace created a perception of neglect and mismanagement.

The culmination of these factors resulted in a noticeable decline in support for the BJP, indicating that the electorate's priorities were not aligned with the government's actions. The lack of trust and faith was not just a momentary reaction but a reflection of deeper systemic issues that need addressing to restore confidence in the leadership.

The electoral outcome in Uttar Pradesh was a direct consequence of administrative failures, insensitivity towards displaced communities, and a lack of focus on essential issues like unemployment. The government's inability to connect with and address the real concerns of the people significantly contributed to the loss of trust and faith, ultimately affecting their electoral performance. It also showcases the slight awareness for the not-so-assumed Uttar Pradesh region to be a region that showed it's not about 'glitters and gold' but 'roti', 'kapda', and 'makan'.

The BJP's performance in the 2024 elections was significantly impacted by several factors:

- The BJP struggled with balancing caste equations in Uttar Pradesh. The non-Yadav OBC and non-Jatav Dalit voters shifted their support to the opposition, weakening BJP's stronghold in this crucial state. The INDIA bloc, an alliance of opposition parties, capitalized on this shift, winning 43 of the 80 seats in UP.
- The opposition's campaign that the BJP would change the Constitution if re-elected resonated with voters. The BJP's inability to effectively counter these allegations contributed to its diminished support. Statements from BJP members about potential constitutional amendments further fueled these concerns.
- The Agnipath scheme for military recruitment, criticized by opposition leaders, did not gain traction with voters, particularly in states like Rajasthan and Haryana. These regions, which traditionally send many youths to defense forces, showed a notable decline in BJP support.
- The BJP faced internal issues, including lack of coordination between the government and party members. The decision to field incumbent MPs in most seats, along with the inclusion of turncoat candidates, was not well-received by the electorate. Additionally, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) showed indifference towards the BJP's campaign efforts, further weakening the party's performance.

Conclusion

The implications of these results for the BJP are profound and multifaceted. The party must reassess its approach to caste dynamics, striving to rebuild its coalition among OBCs and Dalits through more inclusive policies and better engagement with these communities. Additionally, the success of the opposition's grassroots campaign strategy suggests that the BJP might need to pivot towards more community-centric campaigning, focusing on localized and personalized voter engagement rather than large-scale rallies.

The electoral outcomes in Uttar Pradesh have also significantly altered the political landscape, underscoring the need for the BJP to recalibrate its strategies. By addressing the highlighted issues and adapting to evolving voter expectations, the BJP can work towards regaining its political foothold in future elections. The lessons learned from UP's voter dynamics will be instrumental in shaping the party's approach across India, potentially influencing its overall electoral strategy and policy focus.

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CLIMATE MATTERS
India's Climate Change Policy and Climate Justice: An Overview

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Introduction

Climate change has become a global threat driven by both nature and anthropogenic activities like fossil fuel burning, industrial activities, deforestation, releasing greenhouse gases like CO_2 and methane. The global impact of climate change is far reaching and multifaceted, especially the increase in global temperature. According to the report by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2021), average global temperature has increased by 1.1 degree celsius due to human activities. These trends can be witnessed in the form of severe weather events such as heatwaves, droughts, hurricanes, sea level rise, melting of glaciers etc. This could possibly threaten the coastal communities and ecosystem, ocean acidification due to increased CO_2 absorption. Biodiversity loss is another major impact of climate change and this could have the risk of extinction of species if the temperature rises by 2-degree pre-industrial level. Highlighting on India, it is vulnerable to climate change due to geographical diversity, dependence on agriculture and population density. It has already been experiencing the brunt of climate change in the form of heatwave and health hazards associated with it, altered monsoon patterns, rising sea level and sea erosion, and impact on agricultural output and food security among others.

The need for strong climate policy has become more important than ever as the globe comes to terms with climate change and climate justice. Most of the climate policies evade the concern of climate justice in the domestic arena while formulating climate policies. At the International negotiations on climate change, developing countries/global south prioritises economic development over climate concerns in the pretext of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities.

India's role in combating Climate Change

Given the vulnerability of climate change, India, through its domestic policies have taken certain environmental action like protecting regional glaciers, greening the railway station, emphasising on clean cooking fuel, etc. (Choudhary 2022). India, over the time has developed its policy response through various programmes to reduce emission and adapting to sustainability. Some of the major initiatives taken by India at the domestic level to reduce emissions and towards sustainability. Some of them are:

1. Renewable energy initiatives- substantial investments in renewable energy have been made so that the dependence on fossil fuels are reduced to decrease emission of greenhouse gases. Achieving 450 GW capacity of renewable energy by 2030 is the aim, focussing more on solar and wind power (Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, 2020).
2. In 2008, the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), was launched and it states the country's strategy to tackle climate change. The NAPCC consists of several programmes highlighting different areas of climate change like solar energy, sustainable agriculture, conserving water, and ecosystem protection.

At the global level, India is committed to several global climate negotiations and several agreements. It has updated its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) for the achievement of the Paris Agreement to reach net Zero by 2070. India's first NDC was surfaced in CoP 21- Paris agreement (2015) wherein India released its "Nationally Determined Contribution- working towards Climate Justice" (PIB 2016) which comprised two important targets that can be quantified. Those were: "to reduce emissions of its Gross Domestic Product to 35 percent from 33 percent by 2030; and to achieve around 40 percent electric power

capacity from non-fossil fuel energy resources by 2030" (Press Information Bureau 2023).

Presenting the concerns of the developing countries at the CoP 26, held in Glasgow, 2021, India presented 'Panchamrit'- 5 nectar elements (Press Information Bureau 2022) which are: to raise 500 GW electricity generation capacity using non-fossil fuel, to achieve its energy requirements 50 percent from renewable energy, reducing carbon emissions by one billion metric tons, and to reduce the intensity of carbon emission approximately by 45 percent– all by 2030, and to achieve a net-zero target by 2070. Focus was also made on "LIFE- Lifestyle for Environment to combat climate change" emphasising on the efficient and mindful utilisation of resources over destructive consumption (Press Information Bureau 2022).

At the 27th Conferences of Parties, India repeated all of the commitments made in CoP 26 (Dev and Kohli 2022). The document also stressed on "Mission LiFE '' emphasising on sustainable lifestyle (Dev and Kohli 2022). The goal of achieving net-zero by 2070 that it had announced in Glasgow was formally stated by India in its national statement (Dev and Kohli 2022).

India at COP 28, held in Dubai, 2023 unveiled the Green Credit Initiative and pitched for world's countries to join this initiative that caters for non-commercial effort to reduce emission (Koshy 2023).

India, now topping the list of the world's largest population (UN 2023) and an economy predicted to be 7 trillion dollars by 2030 (D'Souza, Shenoy and Nair 2023), the country would be needing more resources which would also raise its carbon footprint. The prediction is that India would consume more energy with an increase of 30 percent by 2030 and by 2050, it would increase by 90 percent (International Energy Agency 2023). Given this prediction data, how would India attain its ambitious NDC target is the real test for it to carry carbon sink mechanisms and work towards net zero.

India's Climate Policy in Vain

India is viewed as a voice for developing countries, therefore, it has a responsibility to mitigate and push the developed nations to speed up effort towards climate action (Roy 2022). However, it also has a responsibility towards its own country to act for climate resilience and sustainability. When it comes to policy, the economy and growth aspect of climate action is given precedence over development and sustainability and moreso, over climate justice.

There is hardly any comprehensive policy-roadmap at domestic level to achieve the commitments made at various CoPs. With a claim that India is making progress towards commitments made in its NDC announcement in 2016 (Deb and Kholi 2022), it is uncertain on how India has addressed climate justice. Large scale displacement has been witnessed due to sea level rise, land and forest vulnerability due to non-renewable energy generation, crop failure due to altered monsoon patterns, deaths and droughts, and many more. The effects of climate change are felt by those who normally do not contribute to it. Hence, the question of climate justice needs to be taken seriously when making any mitigation efforts and formulating climate policies. Any climate policies- international or domestic must take into consideration the issue of carbon injustice by making the richer countries take responsibility and contribute more towards technology transfer to the vulnerable countries and commit to emitting low carbon. Domestically, there has to be a clearly defined policy that works towards climate resilience prioritising climate justice.

India, at the domestic level has tried to formulate and implement multiple climate related policies however, it is in vain with no proper implementation strategy. The policies have failed to address the most critical issue of phasing out fossil fuel despite prioritising transition to renewable energy. It has been witnessed that the normative aspect of climate change mitigation has been ignored– in order to internalise the cost, it is required that those who emit greenhouse gases should also pay the social and environmental costs of it; working towards climate justice requires that those who are harmed due to climate change and the transition efforts, needs to be compensated (Kalaiyarasan and Sahu 2023). Though at the international level, these negotiations are well articulated, they often falter at the domestic level especially in the developing countries which prioritises economic growth over climate negotiations. Hence, it is essential that these policies related to climate action vis-a-vis climate justice are given utmost importance and materialise even at the domestic level.

Conclusion

India's historically lower emission has led it to focus on economic growth over climate issues. However, India should focus more on alternative ways of prioritising climate concerns along with economic growth and development. Since energy use constitutes 75% of GHG emission, industrial waste and agriculture, targets on emission intensity that India have committed could have been more goal driven towards climate action and climate justice. Regulating fossil fuel is a must to shift towards green energy and to also help India achieve its goal of renewable energy conversion. Government should make collaborative efforts with local communities (and vice-versa) for sustainable management of forests which act as natural carbon sinks. Most importantly as Sharma (2023) also highlights that in order for sustainable climate policy, financial, political, and policy leadership are mandatory and also effective climate policy for India. Government should consider collaborating with carbon footprinting companies or climate technology to design and plan implementing green policies. An inclusive policy involving regional, state, national and international efforts are imperative not only for India but also for all other countries to build a climate resilient earth sustainable future.

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GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Gendered Representation: Women's Participation and Parity in Karnataka's Politics

And

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Introduction and Theoretical Framework

Parliament is the theatre of Indian democracy. Given the limitations of electoral democracy, it is questionable to what extent these institutions in India, like the National Parliament and State Assemblies, include all its citizens or adequately represent its diversity (Rai and Spary, 2019; Jayal, 2013). It's imperative to address the gaps in political science literature on the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies as the sites of gendered representation in India's electoral democracy. How this fulcrum of power at the state level continues to keep most women out by making it a majorly male-playing arena only and goes on to flout the central premise on which it was created- to be a democratic place for representation. By refusing to allow more women to enter its corridors of power is it reinforcing the political norm of gender inequality already existing in society and in politics? Are parliaments and assemblies, the symbols of democracy and representativeness, becoming sites that are perpetrating and recreating gender inequality?

Feminist Theorising of Political Representation

It needs to be critiqued how the persistent underrepresentation of women in Parliament affects our reception of the performance of representation and the claims of being a strong democracy in the broader politics of the country? (Rai and Spary, 2019) Can we still call Parliament and Legislative Assembly a 'gendered institution' given the percentage of women who get to step inside it is such a small percentage compared to women? How does this connect, if at all it does impact the circulation of ideas and the consequences of this circulation in terms of discursive and policy shifts in India?

Institutional Approach

Institutions cannot be understood as unrelated to or not impacted by the broader socio-economic-political context of the society within which they are embedded. How functional they are as institutions, symbolic, enmeshed in networks of power that are socio-economic, as well as performative? Gender, today is caught at the crossroads of the intersectionality of the politics of identity and representation. More women in politics, in political arenas like parliaments simply mean fewer men. The prospect of increasing 'presence' of women thus threatens already fragile masculinity. While feminists have argued for gender quotas on the pretext of increasing women's representation, it cannot deny that the identity here gets juxtaposed with caste. Very often lower caste men do not favour the increasing presence of women in political arenas as that would lessen the chances of their own representation. Thus, unwillingly, gender 'representation' gets fraught with caste as a 'collective identity'. Today the argument for 'a politics of presence' (Philips, 1995) makes it imperative to reconceptualise what it means to act politically in the interests of women (Dhanda, 2000).

The word leader today is losing its gender reference point. Is gender, institutional structure, role, environment, or some other variable key to understanding executive performance? When it comes to women as political leaders certain critical questions from all across the world stare at our faces, why are Americans reluctant to support a woman as President – "the dystopian presidential narrative of the world's oldest surviving democracy" as Genovese and Steckendeir point out, while Norway's Gro Harlem Bruntland won a plethora of groundbreaking policies to promote gender equality (ranging from political leadership to child care and parental leave policies), Margaret Thatcher in UK had rejected and even vilified the women's movement and firmly denounced policies aimed at women's equality. (2013)

Karnataka and Women in Politics

Women's participation is a milestone in the history of the South-Indian state of Karnataka. It was way back in 1930 that, for the first time in the history of the old Mysore state, Smt. Sakamma and Smt. Kamalamma Dasappa, two women, entered the Mysore representative assembly. The next year, a significant first step was taken to amend the Hindu law regarding the rights of women, and the widow's ability to adopt children, all progressive steps towards expanding the gambit of rights for women. Karnataka had its first woman speaker in its Legislative Assembly in K.S. Nagarathnamma from 1972-78, a lady who was elected from the star Gundlupet Constituency, with only a single break in 1978.

Karnataka is a state where some amazing women have held leadership positions. Leeladevi R Prasad, applauded the then Chief Minister of Karnataka, Shri Ramakrishna Hegde for addressing this situation and bringing about reservation for women in the State local bodies and also in the cooperative movement. (2003:16) Hegde, considered a champion of democratic decentralisation, passed the Karnataka Zilla Panchayat, Taluk Panchayat, Mandal Panchayat, and Nyaya Panchayat Act in 1983, reduced the age of voting to these elective bodies to 18, and reserved thirty per cent of seats in these bodies for women. This Act served as a model for the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act enacted by the Central Government in 1993. Many opine that if not for 50 per cent reservation at the local level that was introduced by Ramakrishna Hegde in the state way back in the early 1980s the state would not have seen such representation of women that it does today. In fact, this Karnataka model of reservation for women was later adopted by others, including the late Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi in the 64th Amendment to the Constitution of India.

1962 remains the only year when 18 women legislators won seats into the Karnataka State Assembly. In 1967, K. S. Nagarathanamma became the first female candidate to become an MLA in Karnataka after defeating K. B. Jayadevappa. But post 1963, this number has declined steadily and has been in single digits, except in 1989, when 10 women MLAs were elected. Karnataka's 14th Legislative Assembly had less than 3 per cent women with only six elected women and one nominated in its entire strength of 225. There were a total of 175 female candidates of the 2945 candidates. The Congress gave tickets to 8; the BJP had 7 contestants and JD(S) scored high among the parties with 12 candidates in the fray. Sixty-seven of the women were independents.

In Karnataka's 15th Assembly election, seven out of 222, or 3.1 percent of the winners were women. That is the one more than in the previous election in 2013. The number of women, who threw their hats into the ring and contested elections was 219 or 7 per cent of the total and was higher in 2018 than in 2013 (175 out of a total of 2,945). Besides while the number of women voters rose by 0.11 crore as in 2013 it was 2.13 crore, in 2018 it rose to 2.44 crore, comprising 49 per cent of the total number of voters. But where did it and does this slight increase in women coming out to vote translate into women winning more seats?

Women Members of Parliament (MPs) from Karnataka

In the 18th Lok Sabha, elected in 2024, women constitute 13.6 per cent of the members, a slight decrease from the 14.3 per cent representation of the 17th Lok Sabha elected in 2019 which saw the highest-ever number of women MPs. Specifically, the 18th Lok Sabha includes 74 women MPs out of a total of 543 seats, marking a minor decline from the 78 women MPs previously. Ironically, 2023 saw the passage of the historic women's reservation bill in Parliament, mandating that women occupy at least 33 per cent of the seats in state legislative assemblies and the Lok Sabha. This modest decrease in women's representation highlights the persistent challenges in achieving gender parity in Indian politics, emphasising the need for stronger measures and reforms to foster a more equitable and inclusive political environment. In 2019, after a gap of fifteen years, two women from Karnataka made it to the Lok Sabha. They were Smt. Shobha Karandlaje from Udupi-Chikkamagaluru whose political career saw a pivotal moment in 2014 when she secured the Udupi-Chikmagalur Lok Sabha seat with a margin of 1.81 lakh votes, catapulting her into national politics and Smt. Sumalatha from Mandya constituency. In the 2024 parliamentary elections in Karnataka, Dr. Prabha Mallikarjun and Priyanka Jarkiholi emerged victorious from the Davangere and Chikkodi constituencies, respectively. BJP's Shobha Karandlaje has emerged victorious from Bangalore North constituency making her one of the few women who have represented Karnataka in the parliament for three consecutive terms.

Their predecessors way back in 2004 were Tejaswini Gowda (who had won as a Congress candidate from the then Kanakapura constituency against JD(S) supremo H.D. Deve Gowda) and Manorama Madhwaraj (who had won from Udupi on a BJP ticket). While the highest number of women from the state at the Lok Sabha was in 1991 when three women Basavarajeshwari, D.K. Taradevi and Chandraprabha Urs were elected as MPs, the 16th and 15th Lok Sabha had only one woman from Karnataka namely Shobha Karandlaje in 2014 (who that year was the only woman to win out of 20 women in the fray that year) and J. Shantha from the BJP in 2009. No women got representation in 1990 and 1998. Way back in 1962, Smt Sarojini Mahishi became the first woman MP to be elected to the LS from Karnataka was in 1962 when she contested and won from the Dharwad North Lok Sabha constituency.

Finally commenting parallelly, the Karnataka Panchayat Raj (Amendment) Bill, 2010, which reserves 50 per cent seats at local government level in Karnataka, remains paradoxical where women at the grassroots of governance act as mere proxies for their husbands. The sarpanch-pati culture is prevalent all over the nation thus stripping women of their political and decision-making powers. In India, women hold 15 per cent of seats in national parliaments, which is lower than the global average of 27 per cent. "Typically, achieving a critical mass of 30 per cent representation by women in Parliament is known to yield positive outcomes for women's empowerment", says Susan Ferguson, UN Women's India Country Representative.

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BOOK REVIEWS

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The Mahatma and the Ism
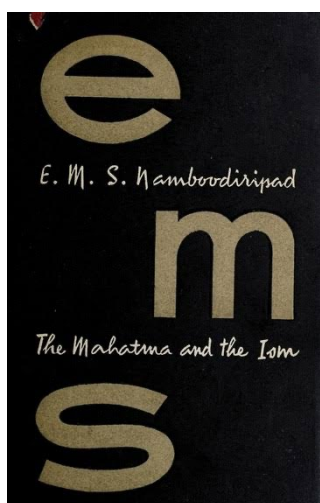
The Mahatma and the Ism
E.M.S. Namboodiripad

Left Word Books
E Book First Published in 2019

The Mahatma and the Ism (1958) by E.M.S. Namboodiripad is recognised as an attempt by a Marxist to evaluate Gandhi's role in India's freedom struggle. Being an ardent Gandhian himself, Namboodiripad has analysed Gandhi's part in the many phases of the national movement. The Mahatma and the Ism is a work that sheds light on the key question: "How did Gandhi become the undisputed leader of the anti-colonial national liberation movement?" In the task of answering this question, Namboodiripad positions Gandhi in the unique contribution that he (Gandhi) made as an individual to developing the national movement. The writer also takes into account the social and historical forces that shaped Gandhi and his worldview.

Namboodiripad's discourse borrows anecdotes and excerpts from the eighth-volume biography of Gandhi titled Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, written by D.G. Tendulkar. The primary aim of the work, although is to direct us to an understanding of Gandhi's role in the epochal struggle of Indian Independence, it also orients itself to yield an understanding of similarities and differences between Gandhism and Marxism-Leninism. A reading of Namboodiripad's work in the 21st century is necessary for it offers a dialogue with that national leader without stamping his thoughts and philosophy as either cryptic or crass, instead as a comprehensive and unapologetically contemporary.

It is imperative to learn about the writer and his sentiments towards Gandhi before absorbing his analytical notes on Gandhi. In the 1959 edition of the text, Prakash Karat, the Indian communist politician, writes in "EMS on Gandhi" that Namboodiripad's evaluation of Gandhi differs from that of Prof. Habib (Irfan Habib), the Indian historian; where Prof. Habib had a different analysis, and Namboodiripad held firm to his views on:

First, Gandhi, as the undisputed leader of the national movement, represented the broad interests of the national bourgeoisie, which led the freedom struggle. Secondly, the Gandhian programme had no anti-landlord component with which to mobilize the peasantry, a feature of the programme that itself stemmed from a class viewpoint.

While both, Namboodiripad and Habib, acknowledge that it was Gandhi who could identify with the peasant masses and speak in the tongue that could garner more participants in the national movement, Namboodiripad professed a slightly different opinion. He was "consistent in holding that Gandhism hampered the development of a powerful agrarian movement against feudalism and landlordism".

It is with this preamble that The Mahatma and the Ism is strategically structured – beginning with Gandhi's early years to 'Gandhism' as an ideology and concluding in 'Gandhism after Gandhi'. Building on biographical notes borrowed from Tendulkar's work, Namboodiripad critically examines Gandhi's take and approach to social and political reforms. Commencing with Gandhi's attraction towards vegetarianism while he was in London, the writer elaborates on the deep-seated psychology of 'change from within'. Soon, vegetarianism was going to become the characteristic of the future Mahatma:

In one of his wanderings in the town in search of vegetarian dishes, Gandhi came across a queer restaurant which not only served vegetarian diet but propagated it through literature. He bought here Salt's Plea for Vegetarianism which created in him an interest in dietetics. He came in contact with those who were

regarded as pillars of vegetarianism. […] He joined London Vegetarian Society and soon found himself on its executive committee. He helped to design its badge. Full of zeal, he started a vegetarian club in his locality, Bayswater. He became its secretary. […] He contributed nine articles on Hindu customs and diet to the magazine, Vegetarian.

The promotion of vegetarianism which seemed crankish at that moment was only later seen to have been the driving vehicle of a "philosophy of action which was to be decisive in the history of India" in the times that followed. Gandhi as an adherent of vegetarian diet perfected his technique of satyagraha which was tried on a nationwide scale in India in 1921, 1930, 1932 and 1942. In the anti-colonial movements that followed later enabled Gandhi to further develop and perfect the technique of satyagraha. However, it is in these first movements that Gandhi's experiments are to be seen as an outline of that philosophy and practice which is now come to be known as Gandhism.

Gandhi's practice and promotion of vegetarianism gradually led him to understand the plight of the indentured Indian labourers held in South Africa. In fighting cases for the benefit of the labourers, he procured for himself a considerable number of followers. Along with the preachings on vegetarianism, Gandhi invested himself in bringing up boys and girls, who were taken as inmates of the Settlement and the Farm, on the lines of:
Vows and Truth – ahimsa, celibacy, non-stealing, non-possession and control of the palate. Having the utmost contempt for the ideological and intellectual molding of the young generation, he tried to substitute uncritical faith for independent thinking.

This also speaks of those followers who flocked towards Gandhi's preachings overlooking the obscurantist content of his methods and of his social outlook of "the idealist willingness to undergo suffering in struggle against evil". We also see how the contempt that Gandhi had for modern civilisation is articulated in his practices and teachings. His Hind Swaraj resonates the principal thought of the Manifesto of the Communist Party, the well-known work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels:
This school of socialism dissected with great acuteness the contradictions in the conditions of modern production. It laid bare the hypocritical apologies of economists. It proved, incontrovertibly, the disastrous effects of machinery and division of labour; the concentration of capital and land in a few hands; over-production and crises; it pointed out the inevitable ruin of the petty bourgeois and peasant, the misery of the proletariat, the anarchy in production, the crying inequalities in the distribution of wealth, the industrial war of extermination between nations, the dissolution of old moral bonds, of the old family relations, of the old nationalities.

In the context of witnessing and understanding the plight of the workers, Gandhi had charted out for himself a thorough plan. Namboodiripad narrates and analyses Gandhi's decision of making a tour of India, travelling third class, in order that "he might acquaint himself with the wretched condition of the lower class passengers". His observational study of the conditions of the workers across India led him to argue the opposition of foreign products and justify their production as exploitative of native labourers and oriental resources. This concept gradually roused the entire country and gave rise to the movement of Swadeshi – "the first nationwide movement for the economic emancipation of the country".

The Swadeshi movement obtained its strength in the Gandhian technique, that was formed through Gandhi's approach towards learning of the conditions of the workers and masses:
Gandhi associated himself with the masses of the people, their lives, problems, sentiments and aspirations. Politics for him was not a matter of high-level debate among erudite politicians; it was a matter of selfless service in defence of people's interests and identifying oneself with everything that is of the people. This characteristic feature of Gandhism in action was already visible in the South African struggle in which, … Gandhi drew inspiration and sustenance from the simple and devoted action of the common people.

It was this close association with the common people that allowed Gandhi to familiarise himself with the living conditions and problems of the people. This acquaintance also enabled him to evolve a unique technique of political work that was different from the extremist method and varied from the moderate approach.

Gandhi and his followers now concentrated on a "constructive programme", and it was in the pursuance of this programme that Gandhi organised the All-India Khadi Board. He toured the country extensively and at every opportunity, "he popularized the programme of Khadi, argued against the untouchability, and championed the programme of a lingua fanca". Many question the relation of all these aspects to the larger political struggle of fighting against the British. But Gandhi's strategy was different, his speeches seldom discussed political questions – rather almost all his speeches were concerned with "social and spiritual questions".

He was rousing the people, not against the political and economic system under which they were living, but against certain social evils and for certain spiritual values. […] He spoke of the miseries of the people, the inequality that existed in the country, the necessity of redressing the grievances of the people. There was not one section of the people whose problems he did not study, whose miserable conditions he did not bring out, for

whose comfort and solace he did not plead with his audience. It was this that enabled him to attract the various sections of the poor and downtrodden masses. […] the khadi programme was a programme of organizing labour-capital coordination and the 'purification' of the British connection.

The strategy of the khadi was to create in people a sense of pursuing an activity, and this was a necessary method of preparation for the struggle for Swaraj. "Behind all the separate items of the constructive programme was the message of resistance to imperialism." Namboodiripad continues to elaborate on the Gandhian technique deployed in the roles that Gandhi played as a political leader or as just a leader. This encapsules the Non-Cooperation Movement, Poorna Swaraj, Quit India Movement and Salt Satyagraha Phase. In all the movements ahimsa or non-violence was given utmost importance. Peace movements were practiced and preached, and 'mob violence' was absolutely abhorred.

What then is the significance of the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi? How did Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi metamorphose as the "Father of the Nation"? Namboodiripad proposes a strong voice demanding scholars and common readers to make "serious attempts to assess the role and significance of Gandhi and his teachings", and that the new analysis should yield to the right and further development of the democratic movement. Namboodiripad offers the following conclusions, these points are neither over-simplified nor one-sided attributes, instead they are the resultant points derived from an empirical approach to Gandhism:

» Gandhi was an idealist – idealist not only in the sense that the world-outlook which guided him was opposed to philosophical materialism, but also in the sense that he kept before him certain ideals to which he clung till the end of his life.
» His idealism played a big role in rousing the hitherto slumbering millions of the rural poor.
» Though he played a vital role in drawing the mass of the rural poor into the national movement, it would be wrong to ascribe to him personally the tremendous awakening which people showed in the years after the First World War.
» While Gandhi thus deserves praise for his role in overcoming the major weaknesses of the national-democratic movement – making the movement really national and all-class by bringing in the large masses of the hitherto unorganised rural poor – it should not be forgotten that he had always been and continued till his death to be afraid of the rural poor acting as an independent force. While he was all for mobilising them in the struggle for freedom and democracy, he was keen that they should act under the leadership of his own class, the bourgeoisie.

» Not only in relation to the rural poor, but also in relation to the working class and other sections of the working people, his was an approach which, in actual practice, helped the bourgeoisie.
» Gandhi's role in history as the foremost leader of the bourgeoisie should not be taken to mean that he was always, and on every issue, at one with the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, it is characteristic of him, and the class of which he was the friend, philosopher, and guide, that, on several occasions and on several issues, his was a minority voice, if not a lone voice.

The evolution of Gandhi to the 'Father of the Nation' happened perhaps because of the idealism that he adhered to in the years of anti-imperialist struggle. It "became a practically useful political weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie: furthermore, that he became more or less isolated from the bourgeoisie in the latter days of his life, because his idealism did in the post-independence years became a hindrance to the self-interest of the bourgeoisie."

Namboodiripad raises a critical question in the penultimate chapter, 'Gandhism after Gandhi', the question being – "Where does the Gandhian school of thought stand today?" Stating the various conflicts that are present in imbibing or rejecting the Gandhian essence, Namboodiripad writes:

[…] it is necessary to understand what is the essence of Gandhism. The answer usually given is that the essence of Gandhism consists in the application of the moral principles of truth and non-violence to the current problems of society. This would, of course, be a correct answer, but it would immediately raise another question: Is there something like absolute truth or absolute morality; are there unalterable ways of applying this absolute truth and absolute morality to the current problems of life?

The Mahatma and the Ism is Namboodiripad's careful assessment of Gandhism. The work is rich in its content and Namboodiripad has sensitively handled a great personality while subjecting the ideology and politics of that personality to incisive critical appraisal.

BOOK REVIEWS

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Fatal Accidents of Birth: Stories of Oppression and Struggle
Harsh Mander

Speaking Tiger, 2016; Revised Edition 2024
Pp – 272. Price - 499

An unsettling query: What defines the trajectory of an individual's life in contemporary India—merit, virtue, or the capriciousness of birth? Traversing through the poignant pages of Harsh Mander's Fatal Accidents of Birth, one is drawn toward the compelling narratives that illuminate the intricate intersections of societal injustices. Harsh Mander, one of India's foremost social justice and human rights activists, in this revised 2024 edition of the book, delves deeply into the lives of individuals subjected to systemic violence and social wrongs purely due to the circumstances of their birth. The title, derived from Rohith Vemula's heart-wrenching final words that shook the nation's conscience, encapsulates the essence of the book: the harsh, often brutal realities faced by the marginalized in contemporary India. Through twenty-one meticulously detailed stories, Mander paints a vivid and distressing picture of a nation that, in many respects, has failed to uphold the promises of justice and equality made to its most vulnerable citizens.

The dynamics of peripheralization and exclusion causing violence—physical, socio-psychological, and economic—is underscored throughout, which, while evoking sympathy, calls for urgent systemic change. Through the lens of personal narratives, Mander critiques the socio-political structures that perpetuate systemic discrimination, humiliation, indignity, and neglect. The story of Mohammed Kasim Shaikh, for instance, tells the tale of a homeless rickshaw puller in Old Delhi who succumbed to a hit-and-run. "I own nothing. I am nothing." Lines of Bengali poetry that he had recited underscores the invisibility experienced by the homeless, further exemplified by the bureaucratic apathy that left his body unclaimed in a morgue. Shaikh's life, captured in a moving video before his demise, reflect the intersection of poverty and callousness that Mander meticulously explores. The book's intention is unequivocal: to bring the stories of the oppressed to the forefront of public consciousness and to challenge readers to reflect on their roles in perpetuating or combating these injustices.

The book is well-organized, with each chapter dedicated to a different individual's story, creating a coherent and engaging narrative flow. Mander's writing style is straightforward yet evocative, effectively conveying the emotional and psychological impacts of the injustices faced by the subjects. The exploration of these stories is not merely descriptive but deeply analytical, probing the socio-political contexts that allow such injustices to thrive. The moral and ethical fabric of a society that remains indifferent to the suffering of its fellow beings by "looking away" is questioned time and again. This critical approach is evident, for instance, in his examination of the juvenile convict from the 2012 Delhi rape case, where Mander provocatively asks whether society should share the blame for creating conditions that lead individuals to commit heinous acts. Yet, some chapters, like that of Ishrat Jahan, Rohith Vemula, and Pehlu Khan, which are well-known public cases, might have benefitted from more intimate insights to further humanize the stories. Despite this, the book's overall use of evidence is compelling and serves its purpose well.

Mander employs a variety of sources, including personal interviews, media reports, and his extensive fieldwork, to construct the narratives in the book. Firsthand experiences and direct interactions with the subjects lend authenticity and depth to the stories. The intricate nexus of intersectional challenges faced by women like Sushila who, coming from lower socio-economic strata, face compounded vulnerabilities—abusive marriage, venereal disease, social stigma, impoverishment—is worthily encapsulated. Her battle against stigma and her ultimate reliance on an NGO for survival highlights the gaps in state support systems and the crucial role of civil society organizations. Yet, a deeper exploration of the institutional reforms required to address these circumstances could have added a valuable dimension to the book. The book's intense focus on suffering may be overwhelming for some readers, and incorporating more instances of positive change and successful intervention shall appeal to them.

Geeta Devi's story of manual scavenging in Fatehpur Sikri reveals the entrenched caste-based occupational segregation that persists despite legislative measures. Her daily ordeal, performed for mere survival, starkly illustrates the socio-economic marginalization and dehumanization faced by Dalits. This narrative is a powerful reminder of the deep-seated caste hierarchies that continue to dictate the lives of millions. The tale of Naseebbahen Mohammedbhai Sheikh, who lost twenty-six family members in the Gujarat riots, highlights the profound strength amidst communal violence. Her transformation into a peace worker, despite immense personal loss, symbolizes hope and defiance against systemic hatred and violence. "You have to now make two hearts beat in your breasts, one that of a mother, the other of a father", she told other widowed women. These are thus not merely tales of suffering but of resilience. Varied hues of oppression that stem from fractured understandings and beliefs of gender, caste, religion, ethnicity, identity, and the like are thus presented which is particularly relevant for understanding and addressing contemporary social issues, making it a significant contribution to the discourse on social justice.

In conclusion, Fatal Accidents of Birth is a critical, thought-provoking work that challenges readers to confront the harsh realities of social injustice in India. The resilience of people like Thangboi Singset, whose forgiveness amidst hate exemplifies human dignity amidst adversity. Harsh Mander's dedication to illuminating the lives of the oppressed and advocating for systemic change makes this book an indispensable resource for anyone committed to the cause of social equity. The book's emotional depth and urgent call to action ensure its lasting impact on readers and its important place in contemporary literature on social justice. "From shadows to the stars," Mander's work beckons us to imagine a world where justice and compassion reign supreme, where every individual's dignity and humanity are cherished, upheld, and honored. In realization of the professed commitment of the nation to equality and justice, "a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice."

EVENT REPORTS

The Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education (CeRSSE) conducted a virtual panel discussion session on the topic of "The Gendered Impact of War in Gaza" focusing on the plight of women and children in the ongoing war in Gaza along with the added challenges that war in general brings to these groups.

The session had three distinguished speakers, namely Dr. Debangana Chatterjee, Assistant Professor of National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Dr. Aradhana Talwar, Assistant Professor at Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences and Ms. Samhita Arni, a renowned Indian author and illustrator.

JGi JAIN
DEEMED-TO-BE UNIVERSITY

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN SOCIAL SCIENCES AND EDUCATION

HOSTS

Panel Discussion on

THE GENDERED IMPACT OF THE WAR ON GAZA

CHAIRPERSON

Prof. Manoharan N

Professor and Director,
Centre for East Asian Studies,
Department of International Studies, Political
Science & History, Christ University

PANELISTS

Ms Neena Gopal
Writer and Commentator,
South and West Asia

Dr. Debangana Chatterjee
Assistant Professor,
National Law School
of India University

Dr. Aradhana Talwar
Assistant Professor,
Ramaiah University
of Applied Sciences

Webinar Coordinator: Dr. Amrita Purkayastha (Assistant Professor, CeRSSE)

📅 17 APRIL, 2024

🕐 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

REGISTER NOW   https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfggflx286Btx1PmsEm cl9ygTE_8jqvWNzZu6Zu3FXQeCznLQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

ZOOM LINK   https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJIqc OqrqT8pHdGFDNeOSdY_9BHF9nlx_og8

Meeting details will be sent upon successful registration. E-certificates will be provided to all the participants.

The webinar had a total of 274 registrations and total participants who attended were around 106. The session began with the introductory note by Dr. Priyanca Mathur, Head and Associate Professor, CeRSSE who began the session by highlighting the current sorry state in Gaza with statistical figures before giving it to Dr. Amrita Purkayastha who introduced the esteemed chair of the session, Prof. Manoharan N, Director, Centre for East Asian Studies, Department of International Studies, Political Science and History, CHRIST (Deemed-to-be University) who conducted the session with extreme gracefulness and perfection.

The panel began with the first speaker Dr. Debanagana Chatterjee who focused on the intersectionality of history and colonialism with gender. She connected the historical past starting from the Balfour Declaration of 1917 with the present and the implications that the past has with the current situation. She also highlighted how gender and oppression is connected with the power structure with the powerful subjugating the marginalised sections.
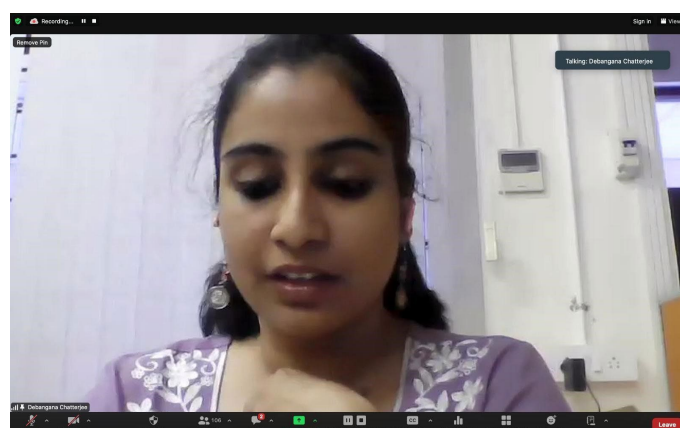
The second speaker, Dr. Aradhana Talwar started with how discourses in international relations has traditionally a masculine perspective and focused on bringing gender on the map. She also highlighted the complicated challenges associated during and after war and how globally we lack a feminine infrastructure and a universal mechanism to counter the challenges. She specifically spoke about West Asia, a region of perpetual conflict where only six countries have provided legislative rights to women. She also emphasised on the existing hierarchical power structure and cited the example of bombing of hospitals an act against gender.

The third speaker, Ms Samhita Arni has focused on the psychological trauma associated with the war. She began by highlighting the resilience of women during the war. To further strengthen her argument, she gave the example of how women traditionally had sent their sons to war because they could not feed them anymore. Ms. Arni throughout her lecture brought personal yet powerful anecdotes from her work in the conflict zones of Afghanistan and connected it to prove how psychological scars take generations to come off in a society and it takes years in building the society to its original form.

The three lectures were followed by engaging sets of questions and discussions from the audience on different ideas that were relevant to the topic of the webinar. The session was later concluded with a virtual photograph.

The session was beautifully covered in the Deccan Herald newspaper by a journalist who was present during the session.
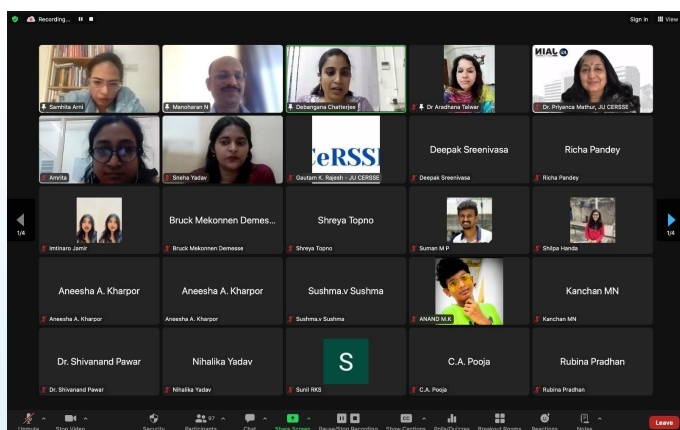
Voter Awareness Campaign: Empowering Every Vote

Date: April 22, 2024

Time: 12:30PM to 1:30PM

Venue: Auditorium, Ground Floor, JP Nagar Campus

A Voter Awareness Campaign was organised by MA students of Political Science and International Relations of Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) at the JP Nagar Campus on April 22, 2024. The event was entirely an initiative by the students to emphasise the importance of voter participation and create awareness among citizens, particularly focusing on the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in Bengaluru under the faculty coordination of Ms. Sneha Yadav, (UGC Activity Co-ordinator and Assistant Professor, CeRSSE). The campaign included a series of activities designed to educate, motivate, and engage participants on the theme of democratic participation and voting rights.

Students of Masters in Political Science and IR (MAPSIR) commencing the event

The event was taken forward by the M.A students with a compelling speech by Suman and Sowmyashree as the emcees of the event (Students of M.A Political Science and IR) in English and Kannada language respectively to reach a larger number of audience present including teaching, non-teaching staff highlighting the significance of India's democratic process. They emphasised the role of each citizen in shaping the nation's future through active participation in the electoral process.

A highlight of the campaign was the unveiling of a poignant song titled "Mein Bharat Hoon- Bharat hain Mujhme" (I am India - India is within me). This musical rendition beautifully depicted India's geographical diversity, rich cultural and spiritual heritage, and religious plurality. Sung by renowned legends of India's music industry, the song served as a powerful reminder of the significance of exercising the fundamental right to vote. Various short films/ videos were showcased to educate people on the importance of voting.
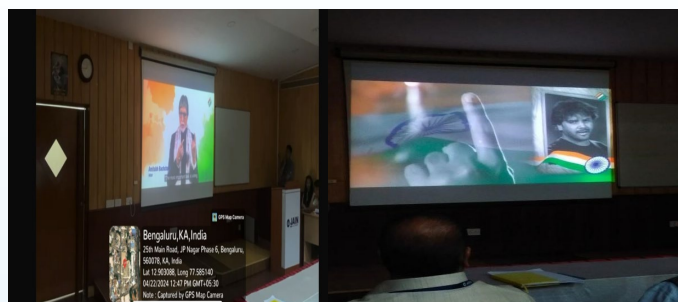
Poster: Voter Awareness Campaign: Empowering Every Vote

The event commenced with a warm welcome extended to all attendees, emphasising the importance of their presence in advocating for voter awareness. Directors, deputy directors, heads, and professors of all departments, along with students and non-teaching staff, were acknowledged for their crucial role in promoting civic engagement

Songs, Short films/Videos were presented to educate people on importance of Vote

In addressing the issue of low voter turnout in Bengaluru, statistics from the 2019 Lok Sabha elections were presented. Despite numerous campaigns and initiatives aimed at improving voter participation, Bengaluru witnessed a continued trend of low turnout. All four parliamentary constituencies in the city recorded a decrease in voter turnout compared to the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Bengaluru Rural, known for its relatively higher turnout, maintained its distinction with a turnout of 64.09 per cent. However, among the urban constituencies, Bengaluru South led with 54.2 per cent turnout, albeit experiencing a decrease of 2.36 per cent from 2014. Bengaluru Central recorded the lowest voter turnout at just 50.84 per cent, marking a significant decrease of 5.27 percentage points compared to the previous elections.

An insight was led into how Bengaluru, being India's Silicon Valley and an IT Hub, has grown in terms of infrastructure, population, economy, employment opportunities and also its important to understand the problems that city is facing including water scarcity, drainage issues, lake encroachments and many more. Thus it is very important for Bengaluru citizens to elect candidates who they think can work for "developing silicon valley" while retaining its title of being "Garden city". The students urged everyone to encourage people to vote on the 26th of April without fail. The presentation also aimed to shed light on the challenges of low voter participation in urban areas and the importance of increasing voter turnout. Another main highlight of the event was 'Every Vote Counts Campaign'.

The MA students shared insights into their on-going "Every Vote Counts" campaign. The campaign has been extensively taken out through social media everyday using hashtags such as #everyvotecounts, #govoteon26april, #ECISVEEP, #UGC_India to spread awareness as much possible. They discussed the campaign's objectives, which included gathering opinions from faculties and administrators of various centres across JAIN (Deemed-To-Be University) gathered in a span of 20 days campaign. Students queued up with posters highlighting questions why is it important to vote? What is the biggest challenge this election? And what will you advice the future government? Students read out views of different Professors, Academicians from various centres on the above questions. Every student highlighted comments given by various professors, heads and directors of the institution gathered during the 24 days every vote counts campaign in points thus educating on the importance of voting.

Poster: Every Vote Count Campaign

Students highlighting comments from various opinions on why it is important to vote

Poster: Posters from Every Vote Counts Campaign
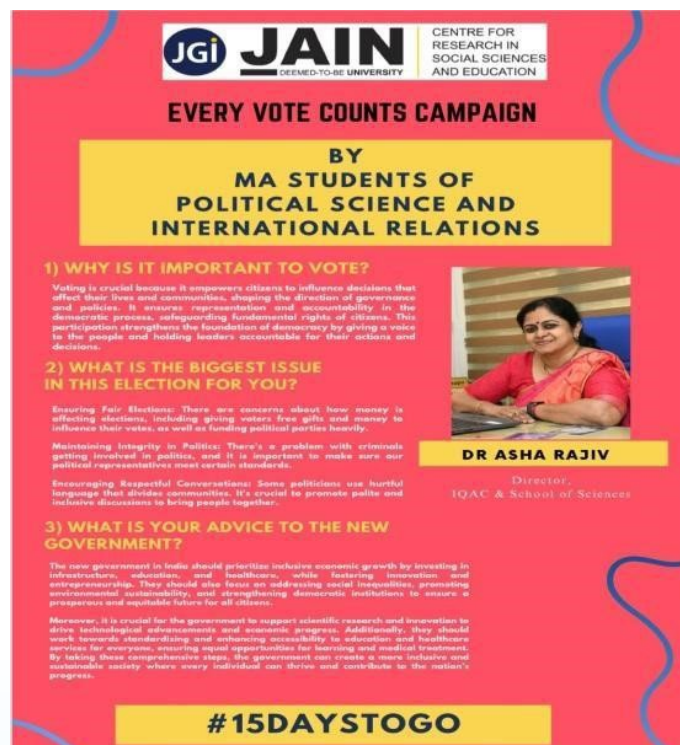
Poster: Campaign run by students 24 days to go for elections through social media

The awareness campaign was then followed by a solemn pledge ceremony both in English and Kannada it was a significant highlight of the event. The head of Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education- Dr. Priyanca Mathur requested everyone to arise and take the pledge of voting fearlessly. The Pledge was taken in English and Kannada language, participants, including students, faculty members, and staff, took a pledge given by University Grants Commission official handle. The idea was to make people aware and reaffirming their commitment to democratic values, free and fair elections, and unbiased voting practices.

Voters Pledge:

"We, the citizens of India, having abiding faith in democracy, hereby pledge to uphold the

democratic traditions of our country and the dignity of free, fair and peaceful elections, and to vote in every election fearlessly and without being influenced by considerations of religion, race, caste, community, language or any inducement".

The event further addressed the pressing issue of low voter turnout in Bengaluru and aimed to encourage active participation in the democratic process. The campaign saw the participation of directors, deputy directors, heads, professors, students, and non-teaching staff from JP Nagar campus.

Faculties, students, teaching and Non-teaching staff taking voters pledge

Inclusive Program: Event was attended by Faculties, Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff

Vote of Thanks: M.A. Political Science and IR Students Angel Roshni and Kanchan delivered a vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to all participants, faculty members, and organisers for their contributions to the event's success. They also encouraged everyone to continue promoting voter awareness beyond the event. The campaign concluded with a call to action, urging all attendees to actively engage in voter awareness efforts and to mobilize fellow citizens to exercise their democratic right. Participants were encouraged to become ambassadors of change, promoting voter awareness within their respective communities and workplaces.

The event lastly concluded with everyone singing the National Anthem together that instilled a sense of proud citizenship amongst all. Overall, the Voter Awareness Campaign, "Empowering Every Vote" successfully engaged participants through informative presentations, multimedia content, interactive discussions, and a symbolic pledge ceremony. The event effectively conveyed the importance of democratic participation and encouraged citizens to exercise their voting rights responsibly. It served as a platform for fostering civic responsibility and strengthening democratic values among the community.

Group Photo: M.A Political Science and IR Students
and Faculties of Centre for Research in
Social Sciences and Education (CeRSSE),
JAIN (Deemed-to-be) University, Bengaluru.

Guest Lecture on Feminism in International Relations: Role of Women in India's Foreign Policy Making

On the 25th of April 2024, Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education, JAIN (Deemed- to- be University) organised an insightful guest lecture on the topic "Feminism in International Relations: Role of Women in India's Foreign Policy Making." The lecture aimed to explore the intersection of gender and foreign policy, shedding light on the contributions and challenges faced by women in this domain. Dr. Shrabana Barua, a distinguished Research Fellow at ICWA Sapru House, New Delhi, served as the resource person for the guest lecture. With expertise in international relations and gender studies, Dr. Barua brought valuable insights into the subject matter.

Dr. Barua's lecture encompassed a comprehensive overview of feminism in international relations. She delved into various theories, debates, and strands of feminism, providing a nuanced understanding of its relevance in the realm of foreign policy. Drawing from her research and experience, she elucidated the specific role of women in shaping India's foreign policy landscape. Through compelling examples, Dr. Barua highlighted the significant contributions made by women and underscored the challenges they encounter in navigating this male-dominated sphere.

Following the lecture, participants engaged in an interactive session, where they had the opportunity to pose questions and share insights. Discussions revolved around the limited scope of women's contributions to India's foreign policy beyond mere opinions, prompting reflections on structural barriers and societal norms that hinder women's substantive involvement in decision-making processes. The guest lecture attracted a diverse audience comprising 30 participants, including students, researchers, and teachers. Their varied backgrounds enriched the discourse, fostering a multidimensional understanding of the subject matter.

The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Ms. Sneha Yadav, the faculty coordinator, expressing gratitude to Dr. Shrabana Barua for her enlightening discourse and to the participants for their active engagement. The guest lecture served as a platform for critical inquiry and dialogue, contributing to a deeper appreciation of the intersection between feminism and India's foreign policy. Overall, the event was a resounding success, leaving participants with valuable insights and igniting further exploration into the role of gender in international relations.
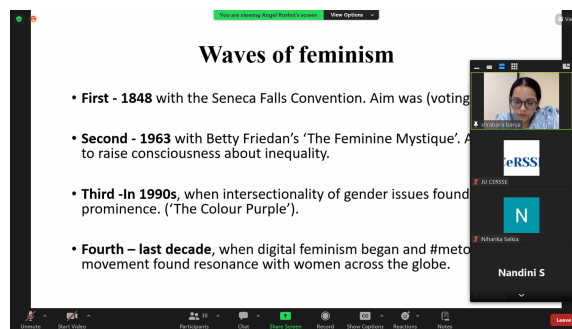
Career Guidance Workshop

The Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education (CeRSSE) conducted a virtual online career guidance workshop on the topic of "Understanding and Acing UGC NET-SET Exams" focusing on the nature and importance of competitive exams like UGC NET and SET exams for the students who wish to appear for the same. The resource person Mr. Viswapramod C, being the 2023 KSET topper, was the perfect person to guide the students of both the current students and the batch which has just passed out from the University for their future. The resource person vividly explained the syllabus in parts and then guided the students with the necessary books and materials to be used for acing such competitive exams. The students found the session insightful and asked several questions on last minute strategies for the upcoming exam in June. The session ended with a virtual photograph.
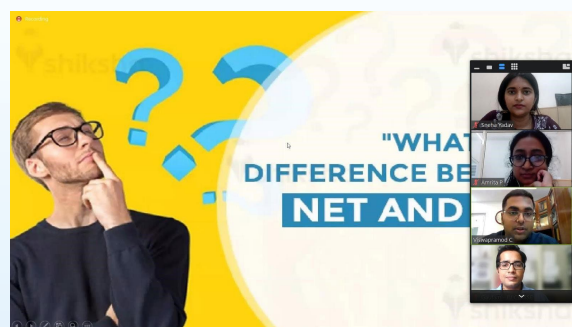
The resource person explaining the two exams- NET and SET

Understanding and Acing UGC NET-SET Exams

During the session
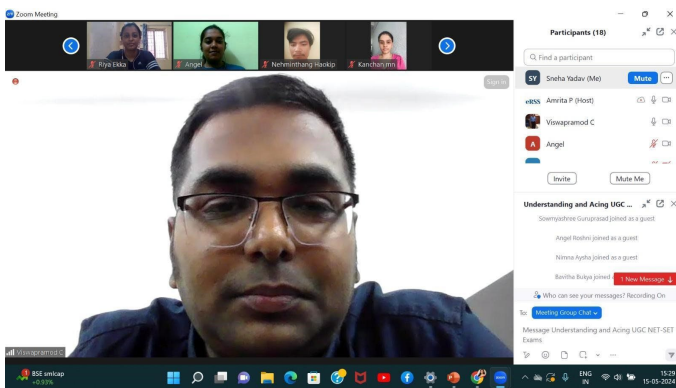
The resource person Viswapramod C explaining the strategies of UGC NET
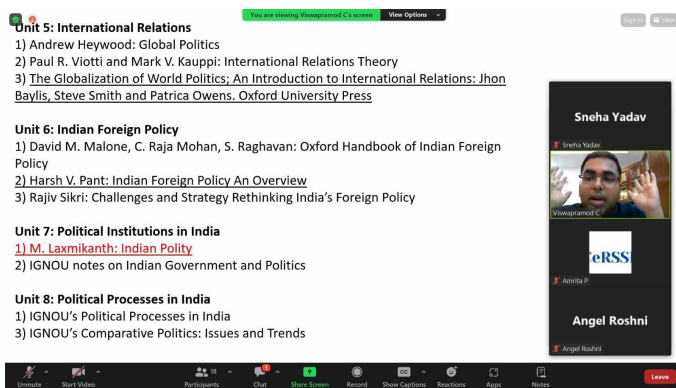
The important materials and readings that were highlighted by the resource person

CeRSSE Conversations: Panel Discussion 2024-3
From Green to Greed: Understanding the Impact of Climate Change

The Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education (CeRSSE) conducted a virtual panel discussion session on the topic of "From Green to Greed: Understanding the Impact of Climate Change" focusing on the most burning topic of the world- climate change. The session had three distinguished speakers, namely Ms. Vinuta Gopal, the director and co-founder of Asar Social Impact Pvt Limited, an organisation dedicated to fighting the effects of climate change, Dr. Deepti Ganapathy, Chairperson, Centre for Management Communication and visiting Assistant Professor, Indian Institute of Management - Bangalore (IIMB) and Dr. Rubina Pradhan, Assistant Professor, Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education (CeRSSE).

The session began with the introductory note by Dr. Priyanca Mathur, Head and Associate Professor, CeRSSE who began the session by highlighting the tremendous amount of change that the world as well as our own city of Bangalore is going through. before giving it to Dr. Amrita Purkayastha who introduced the esteemed chair and the distinguished speakers of the session. The session was then handed over to Dr. A. Ravindra who conducted the session with extreme gracefulness and perfection. The panel began with the first speaker, Ms. Vinuta Gopal who gave an overall panoramic view of the concept of climate change and how it impacts every aspect of society including human beings. The second speaker Dr. Deepti Ganapathy in her session connected the impact of communication and associated it with media and climate change. The final speaker, Dr. Rubina Pradhan focused on the Indian perspective with regard to climate change by highlighting it with statistical analysis.

The three lectures were followed by engaging sets of questions and discussions from the audience on different ideas that were relevant to the topic of the webinar. The session was later concluded with a virtual photograph.

Live Streaming Event of the 18th Lok Sabha Election Results

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The Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education (CeRSSE) at JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) successfully organised a live streaming event for the 18th Lok Sabha election results on 4th June 2024. The event was open to all, inviting students, teachers, faculty members, and staff to witness this significant political event together.

The live streaming commenced at 10 AM in the JP Nagar Campus Auditorium. The atmosphere was charged with anticipation and enthusiasm as participants gathered to observe the unfolding election results. The event aimed to provide an engaging platform for the university community to experience the democratic process in real-time and to foster a deeper understanding of the political landscape in India.

The event was highly interactive, emphasising the importance of youth participation in the political process. Students actively engaged in discussions, sharing their opinions and insights on the election results. This interactive format not only enhanced their political understanding but also encouraged analytical thinking and informed debates.

Faculty members and staff facilitated the discussions, providing context to the election outcomes. This blend of live updates and thoughtful discourse created a dynamic learning environment where theoretical knowledge and practical observations converged. The live streaming event was a resounding success, with robust participation from the university community. It highlighted the significance of active involvement in political processes and underscored the role of educational institutions in promoting civic awareness and engagement.

In conclusion, the Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education (CeRSSE) at JAIN (Deemed-to be University) provided a valuable opportunity for students and faculty alike to witness and discuss the 18th Lok Sabha election results, fostering a richer understanding of India's democratic process.

World Refugee Day and CeRSSE's Student Seminar

World Refugee Day, observed annually on June 20th, is dedicated to raising awareness about the plight of refugees worldwide. It is a day to honor the strength, courage, and resilience of millions of refugees forced to flee their homes due to conflict, persecution, and natural disasters. The day calls for global solidarity and support to ensure that refugees are treated with dignity, have access to their basic rights, and are given the opportunity to rebuild their lives.
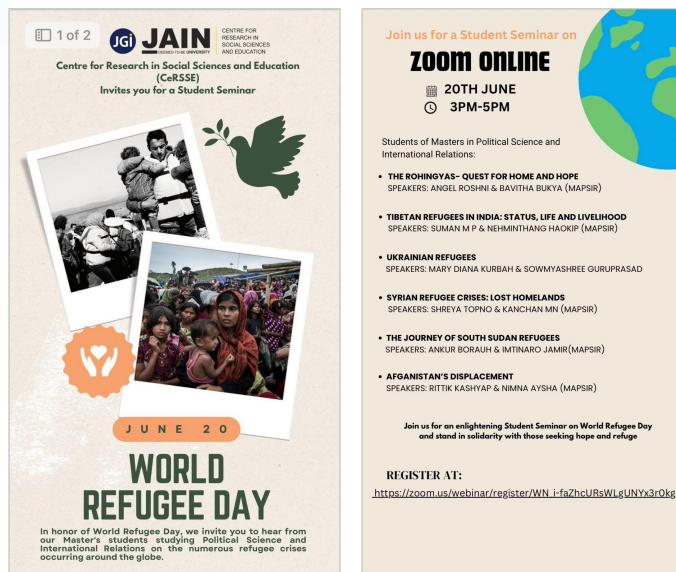
CeRSSE's Initiative at JAIN (Deemed-to-be University)

In observance of World Refugee Day, the Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education (CeRSSE) at JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) organised a thought-provoking student seminar. The event brought together Master's students from the Political Science and International Relations program to present their end-term projects on various refugee crises across the globe.
The Student Seminar: Highlighting Global Refugee Issues
The seminar featured a series of presentations that delved into the experiences and challenges faced by refugees from different regions. Topics covered included:

- The Rohingyas: Quest for Home and Hope
- Tibetan Refugees in India: Status, Life and Livelihood
- Ukrainian Refugees
- Syrian Refugee Crisis: Lost Homelands
- The Journey of South Sudan Refugees
- Afghanistan's Displacement

Each presentation provided detailed insights into the historical context, current conditions, and international responses to these crises. The students efforts were widely applauded for their depth of research and engaging delivery. This event aimed to raise awareness about various refugee crises and to stand in solidarity with those seeking hope and refuge.

POSTER

The event witnessed an impressive registration of 301 participants, with over more than 100 participants attending from across the globe. This diverse audience included migrants and refugee community members, whose active participation and questions added valuable perspectives to the discussions.

Presentations Overview

1. The Rohingyas: Quest for Home and Hope
   - **Speakers**: Angel Roshni & Bavitha Bukya (MAPSIR)
   - The speakers delved into the plight of the Rohingya refugees, who have faced severe persecution and displacement. The presentation covered the historical context, the current living conditions in refugee camps, and the international response to their crisis. It highlighted the ongoing struggle of the Rohingyas to find safety and stability.

Presentation by M.A Political Science and IR Student
Angel Roshni and Bukya Bavitha
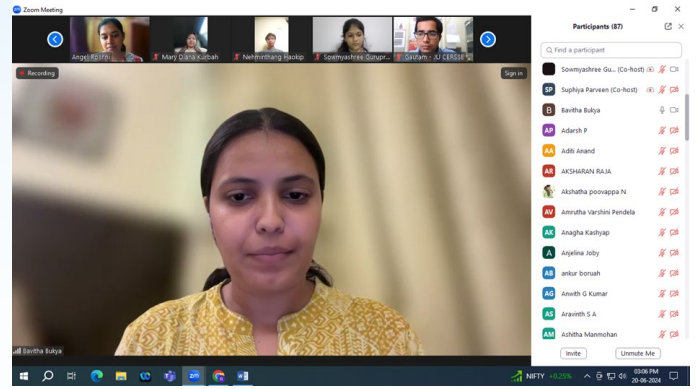
Presentation by M.A Political Science and IR Student
Angel Roshni and Bukya Bavitha

2. Tibetan Refugees in India: Status, Life and Livelihood
   • **Speakers**: Suman M P & Nehminthang Haokip (MAPSIR)
   • This presentation focused on the Tibetan refugee community in India. The speakers discussed the socio-economic status of Tibetan refugees, their cultural preservation efforts, and the challenges they face in maintaining their livelihoods. Personal stories and statistical data were used to illustrate the resilience and determination of the Tibetan people.
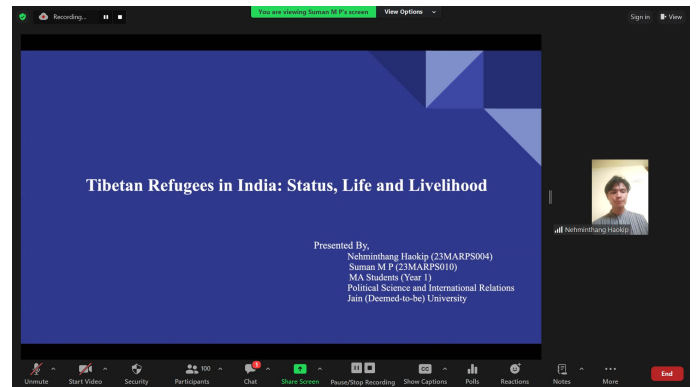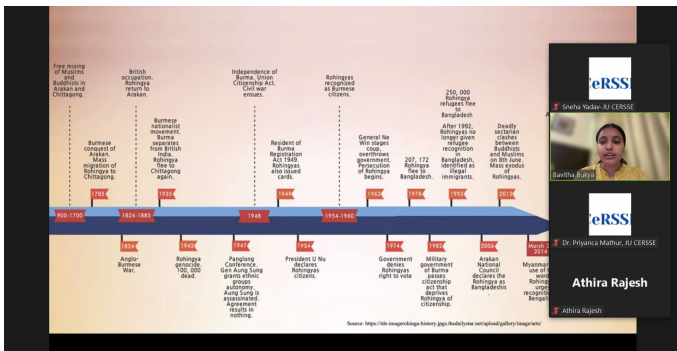
Presentation by M.A Political Science and IR Student-
Suman M.P and Nehmin

Tibetan Parliament in Exile

Bylakuppe Tibetan Settlement, Karnataka
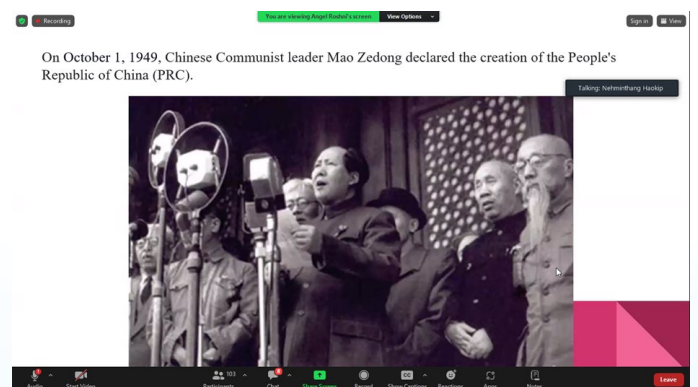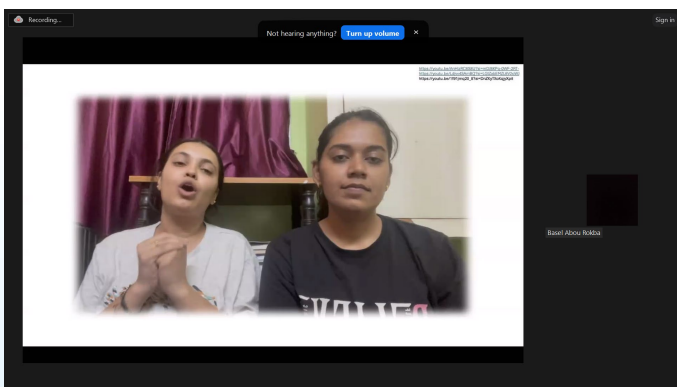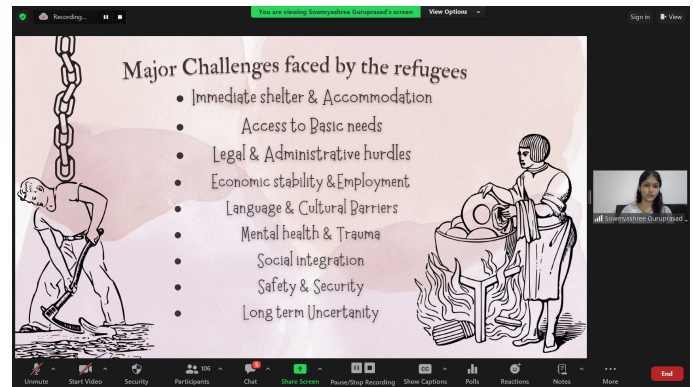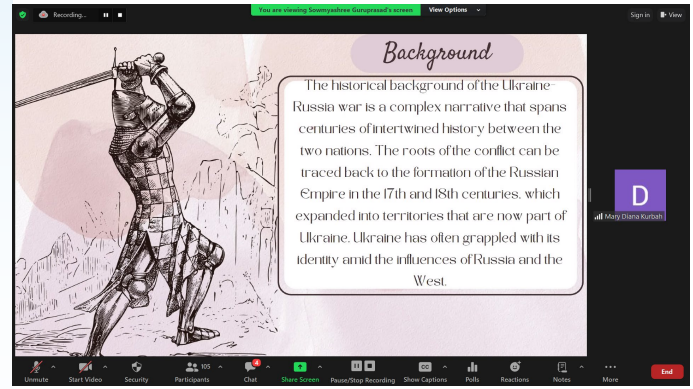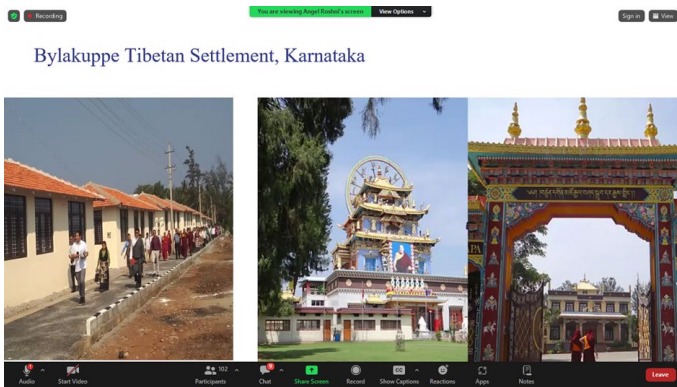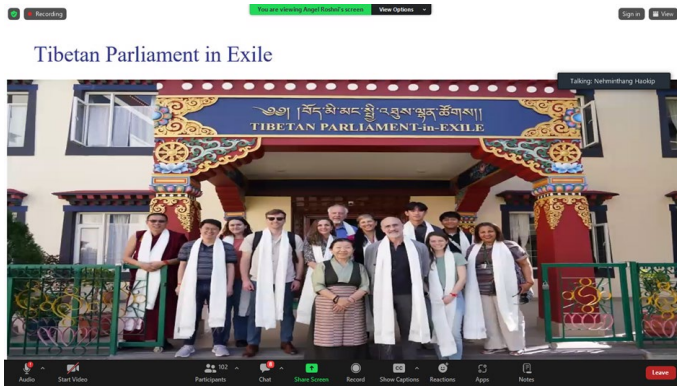
3. Ukrainian Refugees

- **Speakers**: Mary Diana Kurbah & Sowmyashree Guruprasad
- This session provided a comprehensive overview of the Ukrainian refugee crisis, triggered by the recent conflict in Ukraine. The presentation examined the displacement patterns, the international humanitarian response, and the personal narratives of Ukrainian refugees. The speakers emphasised the need for sustained support and solidarity from the global community.

4. Syrian Refugee Crisis: Lost Homelands

- **Speakers**: Shreya Topno & Kanchan MN (MAPSIR)
- The speakers addressed the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis, which has resulted in millions of Syrians fleeing their homeland. The presentation covered the historical background, the impact of the crisis on neighboring countries, and the long-term challenges faced by Syrian refugees. The speakers called for more comprehensive solutions to address this prolonged humanitarian disaster.
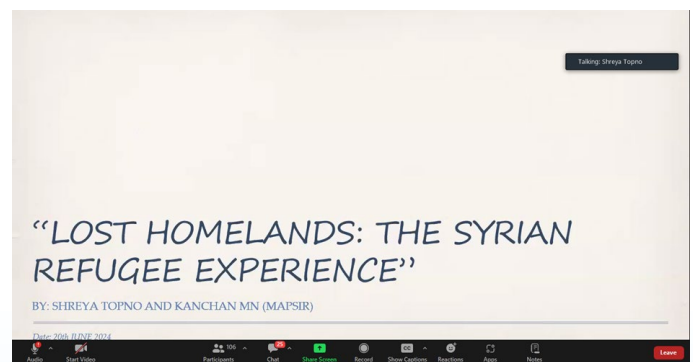
Presentation by M.A Political Science and IR Student- Sowmyashree and Mary Diana
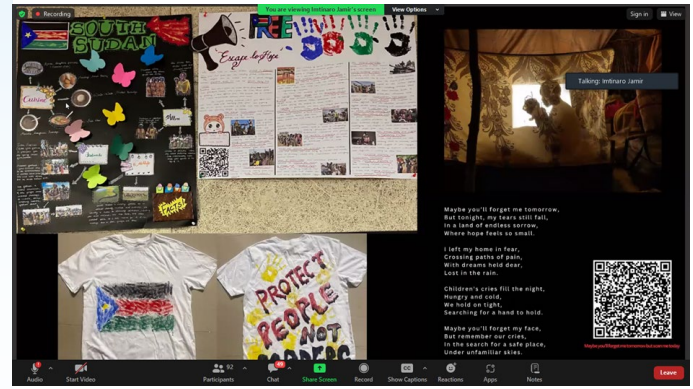
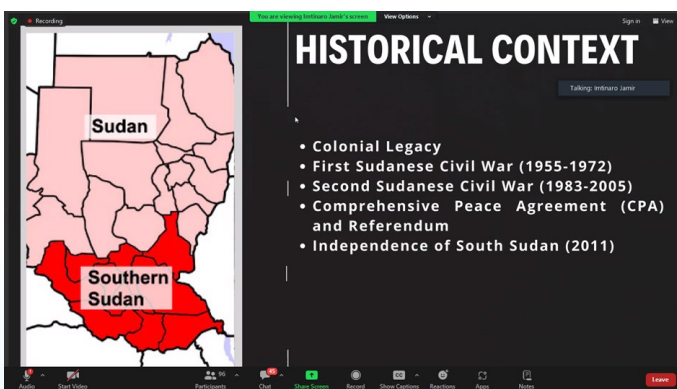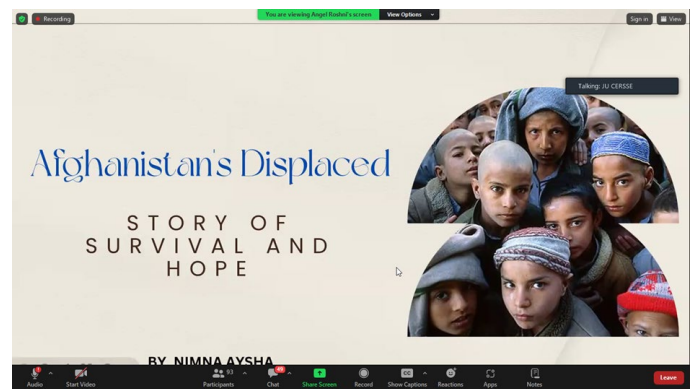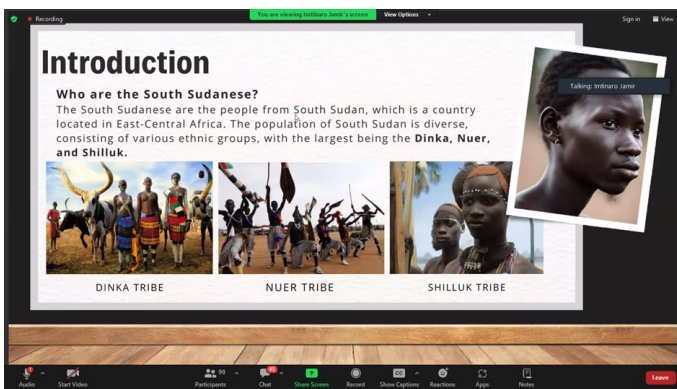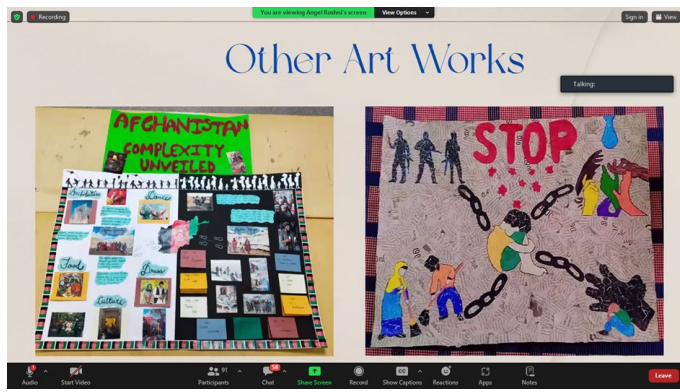### Presentation by M.A Political Science and IR Student- Shreya Topno and Kanchan

5. The Journey of South Sudan Refugees
    - **Speakers**: Ankur Borauh & Imtinaro Jamir (MAPSIR)
    - This talk highlighted the harrowing experiences of South Sudanese refugees. The speakers discussed the factors driving displacement, the conditions in refugee camps, and the international efforts to assist these refugees. Personal testimonies and detailed accounts of the refugees' journeys were shared, shedding light on their resilience and courage.


Presentation by M.A Political Science and IR Student- Imtinaro and Ankur Baruah

6. Afghanistan's Displacement
    - **Speaker**: Nimna Aysha (MAPSIR)
    - The final presentation focused on the displacement issues in Afghanistan. The speaker examined the historical and political context of Afghan displacement, the current state of Afghan refugees, and the challenges they face in host countries. The presentation called for increased international support and attention to the needs of Afghan refugees.

Presentation by M.A Political Science and IR Student-Nimna Aysha
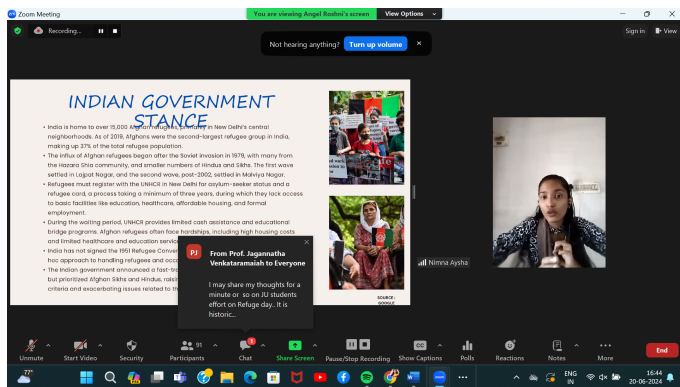

Event Highlights

- **Interactive Sessions:** The seminar was highly interactive, with participants posing insightful questions that enriched the discussions. Questions from migrant participants provided real-world perspectives that enhanced the understanding of refugee experiences.
- **Student Efforts Applauded:** The Master's students received widespread applause for their well-researched and engaging presentations. Their dedication and hard work in preparing for the seminar were evident and appreciated by all attendees.
- **Concluding Remarks:** The event concluded on a positive note, emphasising the importance of World Refugee Day and the need for continued global solidarity with refugees. The seminar succeeded in fostering a deeper understanding of the refugee crises and the collective responsibility to support those in need.

Interaction-Q/A
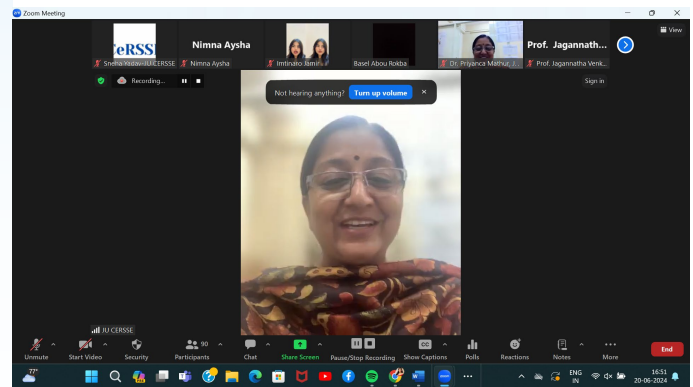
The World Refugee Day Student Seminar hosted by CeRSSE was a resounding success. It provided a valuable platform for discussing critical issues faced by refugees and highlighted the importance of solidarity and support. The event not only educated the participants but also inspired them to take action and contribute to alleviating the suffering of refugees worldwide.

Group Photo
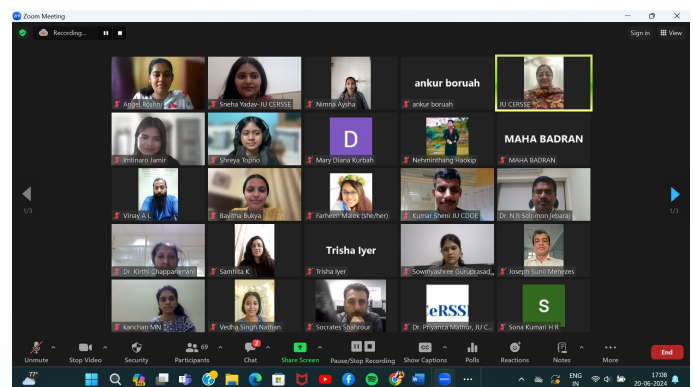
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