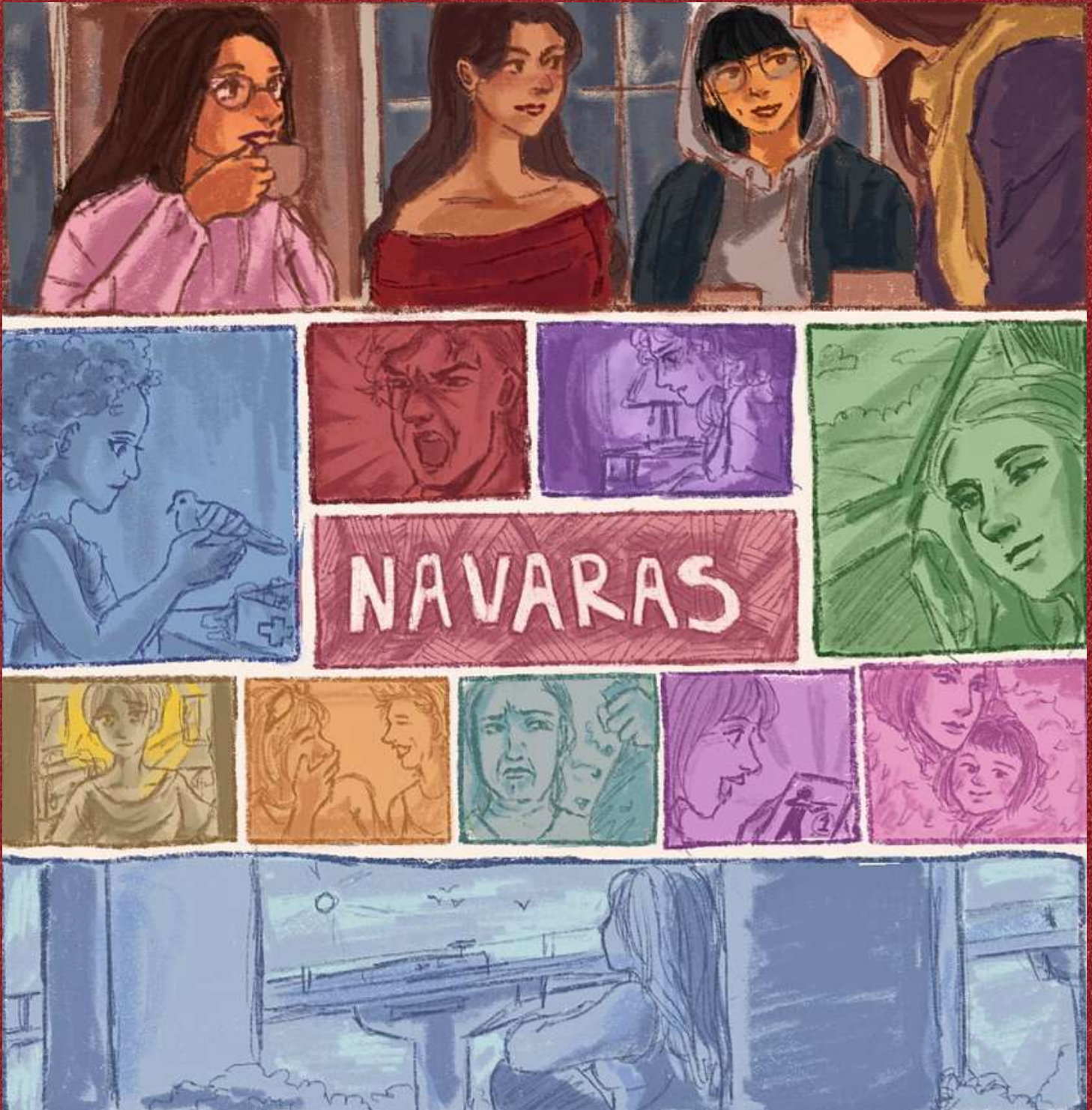


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ZEITGEIST



DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

LADY SHRI RAM COLLEGE FOR WOMEN

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NAVARAS

Navaras as constituted in the rasa theory, suggests that emotions are not irrational passions overpowering an individual, and the embodiment and expression of which are heavily influenced by the social and cultural underpinnings encompassing the individual. The term rasa has been a frequent occurrence in Vedic literature and connotes various meanings such as an offering to the Divine and “an essence”. Rasa also denotes well-being, deriving its foundation from the Vedic statement “Raso Vai Sah”. The statement implies that a realized self obtains “ananda”. In Indian context, the rasa theory conceptualizes well-being through transformations in emotions rather than through intellectual enquiry or behavioral practice. It is only in this relational context that the presentation of an emotion becomes a pathway in understanding emotions and their transformations.

As presented in early texts, rasa moves beyond the performative element on stage, and delves inward, to reflect and facilitate self-recognition or realization, leading towards deeper understanding of Self. Navaras - Śṛṅgāra (love/romance), Hāsyā (joy/comedy), Karuṇā (compassion/mercy), Raudra (fury), Vīra (bravery), Bhayānaka (terror), Bībhatsa (disgust), Adbhuta (awe/wonder), and Śānta (peace) - sets the stage for an exploration of emotions and the Self in Indian context.

Under this broad theme, we have offered three subthemes. Affective Synchrony explores the dynamic interplay of emotions, enabling co-regulation that fosters connection, eases distress, and shapes meaningful relationships. Linguistic Gems explores how language shapes emotional expression, inviting students to uncover culturally embedded words that capture deep emotional nuances and enrich our understanding of heritage. Enculturation & Acculturation explores how emotions evolve as individuals navigate cultural transitions, highlighting the balance between preserving heritage and adapting to new emotional landscapes. In this regard, our cover page is a vivid depiction of emotions, in their most shared yet nuanced embodiment in everyday life.

Editors' Note



Priyanka Hembram
Team Head

The cessation of the first six months of this academic year, witnessing change of seasons, and the commencement of spring as I'm writing this note, have brought me closer to the realization that, like seasons, I shall witness cycles with people too, and with every successive rhythm, I shall experience them differently. Thus with much rejoice and anticipation for the next half of the year, we bring to you "Navaras". This edition of Zeitgeist, is a profoundly experiential culmination of the choice of careful reflection on emotions and its relation to self and everything that intertwines it.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Bhawna Devi, for her stepping guidance and supervision, my co-team heads for their consistent and reciprocal support, the volunteers for their unwavering dedication towards the team and the students for their much appreciated submissions.



Jamie C. Hongray
Team Head

Dear Readers,

The theme for this edition of Zeitgeist was inspired by the importance of looking within. With this edition, we aimed to celebrate the cultural forces and emotions that colour an individual's way of living while also recognising how both intertwine to influence the way we experience the world.

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to Dr. Bhawna Devi for her guidance and supervision, and all those whose submissions have brought this edition of Zeitgeist to life. Most importantly I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to each and every member of the Press and Photography Team for their commitment and dedication to the success of this magazine.



Janya Goyal
Team Head

Emotions not only shape our perceptions, attributes, and interactions but also serve as both the foundation and expression of creativity. When woven into culture, they give rise to something profound—often beyond the understanding of language. Through these pages, we celebrate the beautiful relationship between emotions and culture, inviting readers to reflect on the often unnoticed currents that shape our emotional experiences.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Bhawna Devi for her invaluable guidance, to all our contributors for their enriching expressions, and, most importantly, to all the dedicated members of the Press and Photography Team—without whom this magazine would not have been possible.

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATION

Dr. Bhawna Devi

The title “Navaras” of the current issue of the magazine is reminding me of colourful brushstrokes on the canvas of our existence, painting our experiences, decisions, and interactions, using colour palette of our inner and outer world and shaping who we are at our core. Absolutely, these intangible forces have profound impact on our lives.

As emotions influence our actions, reactions, and interactions every moment, this topic in psychology holds higher significance. Throughout the day, we are constantly making decisions—some trivial, and others more significant. In India and Indian psychology, “Navaras” holds immense importance as it represents the nine fundamental human emotions, serving as a core element of behaviour which primarily operates effectively in indigenous context.

I am delighted to share that students are coming up with such intriguing topics for the magazine. It is indicating that it will serve them to hone their skills to understand how emotions act as a compass to guide choices, how do they aid in survival, also in interpersonal relationships, creativity and self-awareness etc.



Let's allow the EMOTIONS to take the lead in life which can evoke love, joy, empathy, courage, calmness, and serenity as well.

My Best wishes to the entire team!

FROM THE TIC'S DESK

Dr. Sentisungla Longchar



I am pleased to present this edition of ZEITGEIST, the Bi-Annual Magazine of the Department of Psychology, themed Navaras. This issue is a testament to the dedication and intellectual curiosity of our students, who have explored the profound interplay between culture and emotions.

Rooted in Indian philosophy, *Rasa* is not just an expression but a pathway to self-awareness and well-being. The Navaras—love, joy, compassion, fury, bravery, terror, disgust, wonder, and peace—offer a lens through which we understand human emotions as deeply embedded in social and cultural contexts. As the Vedic statement *Raso Vai Sah* suggests, emotions are not fleeting states but transformative experiences that shape our

inner and outer worlds. Through insightful writings and creative expressions, this edition invites you to reflect on the depth of emotions that define our shared human experience. May it inspire a deeper appreciation of the intricate relationship between culture and emotion.

A tête-à-tête

Interview with Dr. Megha Dhillon



Priyanka: We would like to begin by debunking a few myths around emotions. We've heard this several times, and we believe, particularly in our age group, where there is a constant discussion around topics like hustle culture and productivity. Where do you stand with the notion around emotions being thought as distracting, useless and not helpful?

Dr. Dhillon: I don't agree with that at all. I think it's been very well established through research that positive emotions, for sure, can foster a lot of creativity, productivity and zest. I don't see how we can be productive in the absence of positive emotions. As far as negative emotions are concerned, they have their own relevance in life. Interestingly, if you ask people, and you all must have read this in positive psychology, "if you would just like to be happy in life forever and ever, at every moment?",

most people say no. They like some kind of negative emotions once in a while so that they learn to value positive emotions. So first and foremost, we see negative emotions and understand them as another color of life that is very natural to have. And I think all of us like to experience it to some degree so that we can appreciate it even more when we feel good. Artists, and creative people, will also claim that some of their creativity has stemmed from negative emotions. We know negative emotions, when they are overcome, can result in a lot of personal growth, so I think emotions have a lot to do with living a good life, and must be given due recognition for the various ways in which they serve us.

Jamie: When we speak about a mother's affection for her children or a partner's love for their "soulmate", we often reference the existence of an unconditional love. So ma'am, in your opinion, is this realistic, or is it an idealised myth? And if it is the latter, an idealised myth, how can you work towards a more realistic and healthier alternative?

Dr. Dhillon: I think the whole concept of unconditional love, as Rogers proposed, is an exciting idea, per se, but it can also become burdensome, because I often question myself as to whether I have ever received unconditional love, or whether I have ever given unconditional love. I don't think in the purest sense of the term, either has happened. I do think that I have received love in which I have felt secure. That means it was the kind of love

where I knew if I would make mistakes, perhaps the other person may get upset, they may get distressed for a while, but they will give me the space to compensate. They will forgive me and we will be able to move on. If you call that kind of situation unconditional love, yes, I would believe in it. But if unconditional love means that the person in front of me can never get upset with me, never get judgmental, never get angry, I think that's a bit unrealistic. In fact, we need to have the space for mothers or partners to get chased off with us once in a while but we must be secure that that will pass, and we will come back to a good place again. So I have, hopefully, given and received love with security but I don't know if it was unconditional in the sense that Rogers meant it.

Jamie: And ma'am, within the same light of affection towards others, while Indian culture does foster a tight knit bond between family members, a vast majority of Indian families are not habituated with showing affection openly in conventionally Western ways, such as saying "I love you" or hugging one another, but they display their affection in other ways. So can India benefit more from conforming to such ways of affection, or is the Indian expression a form of cultural relativism?

Dr. Dhillon: In my family, for instance, nobody keeps saying "I love you" on the phone or in person. I also come from a family where there is no hugging, per se, but affection is expressed through food very often. For instance, there is always food when you want to eat it, they will always make what you want to eat when you want to eat it. That's their expression of love and then it will be ensured that nobody will be sitting at the dining table and eating food alone. Also, if you need someone emotionally, they will always be available. So if you want to cry your heart out in front of someone, someone will be there to listen to you, someone will tell you that it will be okay, be optimistic. Those are the expressions of love that have really worked well in my family, and have nothing to do with hugging, or articulating three words like "I love you" but the love is communicated through the other ways in which I mentioned and they seem to be equally effective as hugs and other things. So I think there are many ways in which you communicate your intent. As long as it is communicated, that is what matters, not the specific form, per se. I also know that on a day I need a hug, somehow I feel and I know that it will be provided to me by my family. That assurance is enough. So I don't see the Indian way being better or the Western way being better. It is really what works in each family, and how the intent of being there for each other is communicating.

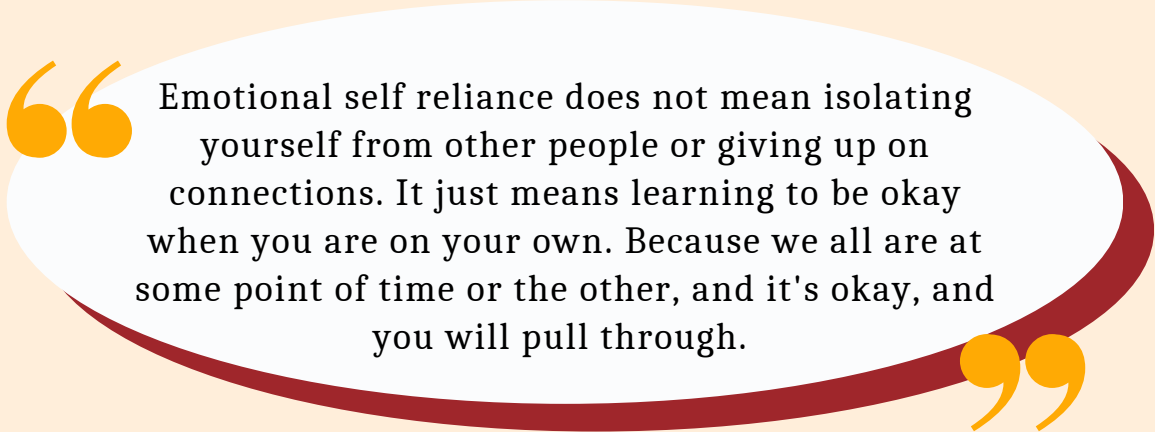
Priyanka: As humans, all of us tend to see connections that give us a sense of security and acceptance. However, it's not always easy to find the right kind of people that fit one's needs. So, as a professor having regular interactions with students within the college, whether it's during the lectures or after the lectures, are there any concerns which students particularly struggle with while connecting to people and they have presented it to you, and what have been some common emotional experiences that students face during such distress?

Dr. Dhillon: Yes, well, a lot of the concerns that students share come from their families. Unfortunately, several concerns stem from parental conflict, mom and dad not getting along but belonging in a culture where you are supposed to maintain your marriage no matter what. Some kids have also expressed that it's been difficult for

them to make friends, or that they had good friendships and those friendships got ruptured very, very quickly. So things were going fine, and something happened that a friendship that was really close to you got ruptured and now that other person seems to have moved on in life while the student who is talking to me is not quite able to move on that quickly. So I think there have been, in these cases, feelings of both abandonment and frustration and this internal conflict about this friend that I lost. "Should I be making any efforts to bring them back into my life or should I just forget it and let things be?" Because you're not sure if your friend wants to come back. So this is what you would call an approach-avoidance conflict. You want to make up with that friend but then you don't want to make up with that friend because the hurt has been deep. So a lot of vacillation between "I should do this" or "I should do that".

Priyanka: Right, ma'am. So how does one resolve it then? What would be the usual approach that the student takes?

Dr. Dhillon: Well, I first of all tell the student that I really appreciate the fact that they're talking to me. I think talking does make a huge difference for a lot of us. Sometimes the thoughts are so jumbled up in our head, but when we share them, especially with an older person who's quite neutral and is not bringing their own emotional baggage into the situation, talking to such a person helps you air out and clear out, and separate lots of jumbled up thoughts. And then I really ask them what their inner voice is telling them to do. Do they want the friendship back? So while they are telling me so many times, "no, I don't want that friend, no, I don't want that friend". When I ultimately ask them the question, "do you miss them?", the answer turns out to be yes. Then the question is, do you miss them enough to want to bring them back? Then also, if the answer is yes, then we explore, what are some of the most amiable ways to approach that person and check in with them to see if they want to resume the friendship. If they want to, then you start healing them, healing yourself, and building that friendship again. If they don't want to, then one thing that always comes to the rescue is your ability to be self-sufficient by understanding that all people will always come and go. Ultimately, you have to be able to take care of yourself on your own. So honestly, whether the friend comes back or doesn't come back, your emotional self-reliance is something you should always work on, and even more so if that friend doesn't want to come back.



“ Emotional self reliance does not mean isolating yourself from other people or giving up on connections. It just means learning to be okay when you are on your own. Because we all are at some point of time or the other, and it's okay, and you will pull through. ”

Priyanka: Yes, I think that's very true. Being able to first of all regulate oneself and also think through and then eventually learn how to self-rely is something that's very important, regardless of whether the friendship is revived or not.

Dr. Dhillon: Yes. And I also think one very important advice to give young people is not to take impulsive decisions. Normally, friendships and relationships are broken and then fixed, very, very impulsively, without asking yourself the tough questions about what you really feel and you really want. Till you had that conversation with yourself or maybe with a professor or a counselor and asked those tough questions, try not to take any very strong actions, because those actions will hurt you and the other person, and It's difficult to come back from them. So if impulsivity can be replaced by reflection followed by action, you are likely to end up making those decisions.

Janya: Ma'am, we'd like to know how we can identify or sustain a good relationship. What role should emotional intelligence play in that relationship?

Dr. Dhillon: So if I talk about the good friendships that I have had in my life, I realized that first of all, in those friendships, I can always be myself. I am never wearing a mask where I have to hide my vulnerabilities. So good friendships seem to be the ones where I can be my authentic self and I'm never hurt when I show my vulnerabilities. So I'm never mocked and I'm never told to get over it. I can be vulnerable in front of them and not have to pay a price for it. I've also realized that talking with those friends, at the end of the conversation, I've always left with a positive feeling of some kind. So there's contentment, or there's joy, or there's gratitude, or there is an excitement to meet them again. For me, these seem to be the green flags that, yes, this friendship works for me. In a friendship where it didn't work for me, none of these things would be present, or one of these things would be missing, like either I couldn't be myself, or I could be myself thoda bauhut but I couldn't really show my vulnerabilities. I've also realized that good friendships are those where both people can speak and both people can hear. In some friendships which were problematic for me, I was expected to only be the listener. If I started to talk, that person would just zone out. So, I mean, the whole friendship was really about them, them telling their story, them telling their emotions. I had to be a passive observer. In a good friendship, the give-and-take is a lot more equal so it doesn't drain you. You're able to maintain your energy and your vibe where it naturally tends to be. So I think those are some of the signs.

Priyanka: Yes, right. That is very true, ma'am. And because there are times when one comes from a dysfunctional family where they don't have good relations with their parents, let's say where they also lack that social support. In such cases, ma'am, how do you think would be the way the person can maybe try to cope, and what are the important notes to self in such situations where they don't have such social support?

Dr. Dhillon: I think that if you don't have social support from anywhere, it does make things very, very difficult, Priyanka, I mean, imagine you can't talk to your parents, don't have a friend you can speak to.

That is the reason why we need to strengthen mental health services in this country. Because, how much can you do alone? You do need social support, and if it is not available in your personal network, there should be professionals who can provide that support for you, but there has to be someone you can reach out to when you're feeling bad. I mean, if you are alone and there is no one to guide you, um, then, I mean, there is only that much that you can do on your own. You take really good care of yourself, you read the kind of books that can motivate you and help you through a difficult time. Meditate if you need to, and go for walks, try to write down if writing helps. But it's very difficult for me to say that and then just give up on social support. That's when I think professional social support really needs to be available.

Priyanka: Yes, ma'am, even I think I also agree, because I think a lot of the times, majorly, it's the social support that pushes one or is one of the big reasons why one is able to cope. And I think we have also discussed this so much in health psychology, as you're teaching us, where a lot of the time, even lifestyle changes are required to be backed by social support. That's very true.

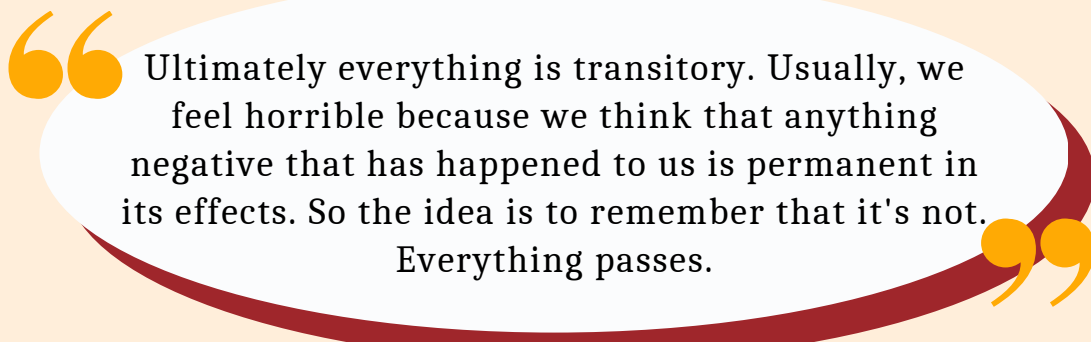
Dr. Dhillon: Given that some students don't have the social support they want at home, Dr Dhawan and I started this platform called Raahat, where our numbers are there on the website and people can contact us. So once in a while, when students outside of the department contact me for conversations, I think they get my number from the website. And program Raahat was set up because we realized that students in our college don't always have access to the mental health support that they need. Yeah, there is the college counsellor, but sometimes you want options, and if your concerns are primarily academic tensions with maybe someone in your own department. This platform was created, and I don't know how many students know about it, it's there on the website.

Janya: Ma'am, the next question also stems from family dysfunction. There are situations when, some individuals, despite sharing similar life circumstances and available resources, might experience varying outcomes from dysfunctional family backgrounds, where some individuals might face adverse effects out of them, and others might emerge out more resilient. So what are the underlying psychological factors that distinguish these two groups in terms of coping mechanisms and emotional development?

Dr. Dhillon: I think that the literature on this is very well developed, so there is a lot of study on young people who demonstrate resilience versus those who don't. So if you're talking about one internal feature which is very important, resilience is optimism. People who are optimistic tend to bounce back from their difficulties. Then on the outside, having one supportive person you can come to, or having one safe space, maybe that safe space is not within your family, that also contributes to resilience. So there's a lot of literature on this, and just having one caring adult who monitors you can really help young people bounce back. So again, that brings us to the whole idea of peer support and Raahat, that if we can just provide that safe space if we can just be that one person in that person's life, who's there for them when nothing else is working out, it could go a long way bouncing back facing adversity.

Janya: Yes, ma'am, you talked about one internal quality - having positivity in oneself - that helps a lot in bouncing back. So is there any way one can develop optimism over the course of time?

Dr. Dhillon: So they say in positive psychology that developing optimism is possible. After all, being optimistic is also a learned skill. And the person who said this the most often is Martin Seligman. Basically, he says that if you change your attributional style, the way you are explaining the negative and the positive things that are happening to you, you can actually feel more optimistic about the future. That's one aspect, of Seligman's whole attributional theory, the way you explain particularly the negative things that happen to you, try to attribute them to something that's changeable, something that's temporary, then they won't feel so burdensome. The other thing is that philosophy and spirituality provide you with a lot of ways of being optimistic. So if you say that, good karma always comes back to you. My good karma will come back to me, that enables you to feel optimistic. I am a Dharma-following person. My duty will pay its benefits that will make you optimistic. I don't have to be attached to anything, that also lightens your emotions. So you could either follow a theory from psychology and retrain your mind, or you could connect yourself more with some of the spiritual systems that allow you to be optimistic, those choices you can explore as an individual.



“Ultimately everything is transitory. Usually, we feel horrible because we think that anything negative that has happened to us is permanent in its effects. So the idea is to remember that it's not. Everything passes.”

Jamie: And speaking of bouncing back from adversities, in case of a major friction or breaking of a romantic relationship, one of the major differences in men and women is how they regulate their emotions and it's often colored with a lot of gendered experience, endorsed by society. So now, in the current landscape of relationships on social media, there is a popular notion promoted towards young women, which is, “if he wanted to, he would”. And it's used when women feel that their partner is not putting in enough effort. And now for such women, this phrase has become an emotional clutch, which provides an explanation for this perceived lack of effort from the other person. So ma'am, what is your opinion on this advice? Do you think it's a healthy way of coping with one's emotions, or is it too reductionist in nature, which fails to recognize other factors?

Dr. Dhillon: I don't think it's completely off the mark, Jamie. People do in a relationship, to a large extent, the things that they want to do and the things that resonate with them. When you feel that your partner is being one-sided, like you're having to put in all the effort, the thing that is on social media, is on social media, but if genuinely you feel that your relationship is one-sided, the question arises, what do you want to do? Is this person

worth it for you to remain in this relationship and try to nudge them to put in more of an effort or change your perceptions about what a relationship should look like? If the person is perhaps not that worth it, you will move on. I don't know whether it is an effective coping mechanism or not. All I know is that when you are in a one-sided relationship, there needs to be a huge moment of reflection about whether this partner is, in themselves, worthy enough for you to stay, wait longer, and see if some changes can be made, or whether you are beginning to feel that this is a door shut, and perhaps you should be looking for other people who can satisfy your needs better. More than anything else, I look at it as a tough, tough moment of reflection.

Jamie: So how would you help young girls try to come to this moment of reflection? Because I think that many of my friends tend to stay in bad relationships because they keep thinking that, “oh, he’ll change, I’ll wait for him.” So how can they come to that point of reflection?

Dr. Dhillon: I think we need to instil in young women and also in young men, very early on in their lives, the meaning of a healthy relationship. So when people are young, it's all about making a boyfriend. It's never about what a healthy relationship looks like, or what a healthy relationship makes you feel like. We always teach young girls to worry about, “what does he think of me?” Instead of thinking about, “does he like me?” That's for later. How does he make you feel? Does he make you feel secure, content, worthy, respected? Does he make you feel like an object? Does he make you feel like an outsider? So we have to teach our young people to, first of all, ask the right questions and also first define what a healthy relationship means for them before they get into one. And if we do that, I think we will protect our kids from a lot of the heartburn that they feel later.

Priyanka: The last question touches upon your experiences around emotions in life as an adult. What are a few things you would like to share with the readers, many of whom are yet to set foot into adulthood?

Dr Dhillon: Honestly, I would say that emotions are very, very tied. I've seen to my ability to set boundaries, which I have become very particular about only as I have entered proper adulthood. I realised that I would be too afraid to set boundaries, and I would always give my power to someone else. Now, I set my own boundaries, and I make sure that I hold on to my power, and that gives me the ability to feel a lot more emotionally stable. Also, I used to always base my emotions on how much validation I was getting from other people. Now, I have stopped seeking validation, and it has stopped being my basis for feeling anything; validation from others. I always ask myself, once I've done something, how did I feel about it? The fact that the whole world didn't praise me, or nobody praised me, which is fairly common, is okay. But how did I feel about it? So I think I've gone a lot more inside than outside, and that has helped me manage to feel more positive emotions. Also, my emotional states have a lot to do with my ability to voice my opinions. When I can voice my opinions, I realise that I feel more positive emotions. When I have to suppress my voice, then I feel negative emotions. I am now making a concerted effort to make sure that my voice is heard. So I think all of these things, like not being able to speak up, not setting boundaries, giving my power up to other people, were creating a lot of negativity in my emotional state for several years when I was younger. But I recognised these problems. I actively started to change these

trends, and that's brought me in a more positive emotional state now, and whenever I do feel a negative emotional state, I go back to that idea that difficult things are also temporary. This will pass, have the patience to wait it out. Then I've also seen that there are situations in which I need to act, and sometimes there are situations in which I need to sit back and rest. Differentiating between the two, and then moving ahead accordingly, is also something that has helped me manage my emotions better.





"My grandfather's 79th birthday – the last one he celebrated at home. My grandmother holds his hand to cut his birthday cake with him, and looking at the slight tremor in their hands, for a second, I am overcome by the weight of time passing. I don't remember how the cake tasted. But I remember their hands—how the knife slid down shakily through the layers of cream—and how I wished for time to slow down, to let the seconds linger a little longer."

"My grandmother laments that she cannot do much for my grandfather; she too, is frail with old age and bones weary. But I watch her delicate hands steer his wheelchair into their bedroom in steady effort, and in doing this, I realise that she is giving her everything."



"I took this photograph exactly one month before my grandfather passed away. I remember the chill in the air that night and the way her fingers tapped against his arm with a quiet rhythm—calm, reverent and kind—in a language known to them alone. I look at this photograph now, and I regret not straightening the sheets for him one last time. Looking back, I think I was already grieving him way before he left. Perhaps, I always knew that these photographs would soon be the closest I could hold him."



Photographs by Ruth Lalremruati, 2nd year

AFFECTIVE SYNCHRONY

“Closeness Through Shared Emotions”

Affective synchrony as a sub-theme highlights the dynamic interplay of emotional states between people, enabling co-regulation of feelings and responses during interactions. This phenomenon not only allows individuals to foster context-appropriate emotional states, such as calming each other, but it also enhances the efficiency of processing social challenges. According to Social Baseline Theory, this emotional co-regulation reduces the metabolic costs associated with navigating social environments. While sharing positive emotions can strengthen bonds, sharing negative emotions can also be adaptive, as evidenced by a mother transmitting stress to her infant, thus alerting them to environmental threats. The ease of processing these synchronous interactions can create a rewarding experience, leading to feelings of closeness, compassion, and prosocial behaviour among people. Submissions on this theme, illustrate the meaningful relationships and bonds which the writer shares, describing personal accounts involving an interaction, words, action in relation to these relationships which played a role, for instance, in bringing ease to a distress, making one feel the warmth of love or even holding space for someone to express their anger.

Rekindled

Aarushi Bhayana, 2nd Year

My coat of armour did me good
By protecting me from indifference
'Til it turned my heart to wood
A fortress built on past offence.

Needed it after all the hurt
Invisible to watching eyes
After all, not all pain is overt
Being cared for is a prize.

In this darkness I would have been lost
Had she not held me in an embrace
Reminding me of the cost
That comes from closing off your space.

Her affection within
Burned my armour apart
And the warmth from her grin
Softened my wooden heart.

Embrace

Janya Goyal, 2nd Year

I fell down on the floor
with wet lashes making my glasses blur
when this whole-loaded truck in my head
lost its control
spilling all those screaming journal papers
that once I tore.

My mother heard the cry
of the hurt papers
and I heard her footsteps
drawing closer.
Her heart-warming hug is something
I always long for
yet the hardest part was
not telling her why those papers screamed,
why I must keep their cries hidden,
locked away forever.

So I started clearing the clutter
discarding the papers' physical form.
But then I realized that I live away
and could only feel her steps across.
I could only feel her hug reassuring me
that I cannot stop the phantom from echoing
but come at ease with it
to face the approaching storms.

Closeness through Shared Emotions

Ishita Tanwar, 2nd year

This is a small world, and it is connected. This is not just a line, but a real fact into play. If we think deeply, we realise that we are not always alone, and we are directly or indirectly connected to the people around us, not just our family members but also the unknown people, like someone we might bump into on a crowded street. This is easily seen in collectivistic cultures, where people live in joint families with 3 generations living together under a roof, every member learning something new from the other, because each member has their own experience for a similar situation. This connection is also visible in individualistic cultures, where people have individualistic goals, that goals are also the result of their life experiences which include the people around them.

A display of this connection is Culture, which not only keeps people together, but also helps them adapt to their social surroundings and survival. And a very beautiful projection of culture is visible in the festivals. For me, Festivals are when we all have to come together to have a great time full of love, laughter and stories, with our loved ones and which make us more familiar with our culture. I believe all the rituals made for the festivals are designed in such a manner that it requires a group effort which also includes a pinch of emotion and family drama, which make these gatherings more memorable, to fulfil it.

Recently, during the festival of Lohri, a harvest festival, celebrated to mark the beginning of the new harvest season. It is celebrated in many states but with different names. So, being from Himachal Pradesh we celebrate Lohri to pay our respects to Mother Nature. During the celebration I realised that things which seemed boring in childhood are the essence of these festivals, like the preparations we do for celebration, the cooking and most importantly the chit-chat session we have with our loved ones. As the years have passed I realise that it is like a break that is given to us from our monotonous lives to have a time which can remain memorable. Maybe that is the reason why we don't feel like celebrating when we are away from home.

This connection reminds us of the lovely time we spent with our family members, and with the people who are a part of our lives. This connection is a shared emotion, an emotion which ties us with our society, with the members of our family and which reminds us that we are not alone, we have people who also feel the same. The best part about festivals is they bring people close, due to which people don't hesitate to help each other, and they share the grief during low times together which make it much easier to cope with that time.

Connections are beautiful, because they are a reminder that tell us, that, even if we try to isolate ourselves and even if we run away from our groups, there always going to be one or the other thing which is going to remind us that we are not alone, and it is not necessary to be at our own all the time, to handle all situations by ourselves and to suffer alone.

Affectionate Nexus

Manya Jain, 2nd year

Whistling through the intricacies of creation,
I tumbled upon the paddle of the soul,
That soon dawned on me the beauty.
I glimpsed, oh I observed!

Oh, I beheld the chuckle, reliving childhood through a
cycle ride with her brother. Oh, I beheld the modest
smile, she holds, adorning her hair with the affectionate
jasmine.

Oh, I beheld the engraved nails in her hand,
a reminder of the outrageous betrayal of friendship.

Oh, I beheld the watery eyes,
condemning herself for the vocals raised before her
mother. Oh, I beheld the desperate fear, of losing the
warmth of her grandfather's admiring hand.

Oh, I beheld her revulsion, reading the paper headlined
with a monstrosity. Oh, I beheld the flying wings, beyond
the peaks, arresting her attention to peace. Oh, I beheld
the pride, of her dutiful hands, volunteering in a relief
camp.

Oh, I beheld the surprising shine in her eyes,
commending the support of her silent shadow. Admiring
the graceful intertwining of emotions,
I glimpsed, oh I observed!

The nexus of emotions and relations in a single mortal
being. Whilst whistling through the intricacies of
creation, I tumbled upon the paddle of the soul,
That dawned on me the sacred beauty of existence itself.



“Hasya (Joy):

Beneath the weathered walls of Sassoon Hall,
Two souls share a moment of joy
An old bench,
Where smiles bloom like untamed flowers,
And the world pauses to watch joy unfold.”

Photograph by Parvathy
2nd year, Sociology

Papa

Bulbul Singh, 2nd year

Papa, your efforts to nurture us are failing,
Though you longed to gift us the world unending.
You walked in worn shoes, never seeking new,
So we could chase dreams and dine as we choose.

You poured yourself empty, never a care,
For your own well-being—it was always us there.
I'm angry you didn't take care of you,
But how can I fault the love so true?

Papa, I don't crave a life of ease,
I just want you, your presence, your peace.
A life without you feels hollow and bare,
A world I can't face, too heavy to bear.

You shielded me from my mother's pain,
Her words like storms, you held the rain.
But am I strong enough to stand alone?
Without your light, this house is no home.

I was a child, helpless and small,
Shaped by her hands, yet not at all.
The clay I'm made of wasn't hers to define,
I grew against her wishes, a life all mine.

I remember your absence, the late nights missed,
Birthdays you spent in a tired abyss.
Showing you gifts, your eyes tried to shine,
But your weary soul couldn't align.

Still, there were moments of love and grace,
You served us meals with a tender embrace.
But pressure consumed you, and love turned to
yells,
Beatings and threats became the stories we'd tell.

"We love you," you'd say, in anger's disguise,
Yet in your chaos, I'd see through the lies.
Your stress became mine, an inherited storm,
Shaping my world, my thoughts, my form.

You calmed me, though rage was your tool in hand,
A shared rhythm of love I tried to understand.
Your burdens passed through in the weight of your
tone,
But it taught me I was never alone.

In the warmth of your presence, even fractured
and flawed,
I felt a synchrony, a connection to applaud.
For love, though jagged, was still a thread,
Binding us tightly through words unsaid.

Now I see how you carried my fears,
Held space for my anger, absorbed my tears.
Though broken, we danced in this emotional
stream,
Affecting each other in a tender dream.

To have us was your choice, to give us the best,
And though you succeeded, it left scars to confess.
I've grown, but the wounds still ache,
A shape I didn't choose, a life to remake.

Yet now, as an adult, I hold the clay,
To mold myself in my own way.
Though some parts have hardened, refusing to
bend,
I'll try to reshape, to heal and mend.

Papa, I carry your love and your strife,
Both shaping the steps I take in this life.
And while I can't change all that's been done,
I'll honor the love where it had begun.

An Ode to the Lost Cricket Lessons

Aksa Merin Abraham, 3rd year

8 years earlier, as they laid down his coffin into the grave, emotions engulfed the 12-year-old girl, who stood by her mother with her eyes all welled up, knowing nothing as on how to fathom them. Death, I assume, is a strange phenomenon. It envelopes one with emotions-grief, sorrow, anger, hope and even peace, which they would fall short of fathoming, no matter what age or maturity they may boast for themselves.

Post the funeral, she walked back into her maternal home, where she had spent her childhood with her grandfather, her Appachan, which, now laid grim and silent with no traces of the widest grin with which she was welcomed every summer she rang its bell. Appachan, could never be quoted as an epitome of wellness but could surely be credited for the good figure and health he possessed at his late 70's, however, not for long. Did he leave the world peacefully? Did he harbor any last wishes? Did he wish to tell her something more? The questions weighed her heart as she watched people walking by, paying condolences to the family. She tried fathoming the emotions that rushed into her, as she laid to sleep that night, next to the room which her Appachan used all this while. Was she angry at the universe? Did she feel sheer hatred towards herself for refusing his call the previous week? Did she miss her best companion for summers who wished to teach her everything he knew, who fed her everything she loved and got her everything she wished for?

Appachan was full of love and glee and a man of discipline and principles. More than anything, he was a man of dreams and wishes. She owes a lot of her lessons to her grandfather. Her summer holidays were filled with lessons of all kinds- Mathematics, English, Malayalam, Physics, Cricket, Badminton, Stock Market, Politics, and much more. But the one lesson she forever hated was cricket. When Appachan watched cricket, the TV stopped playing cartoons. The child in her begrudged every ball bowled, barely tuning in to the rules he passionately tried to explain. Eventually, the feud ended—not with her understanding cricket, but with her winning her cartoons back. But little did the child in her know, that she would later crave for those lessons to be narrated once again. Little did she know, that sometime later, she'd ache not for the cartoons she fought for, but for the fleeting moments she could have shared with him instead.

Almost a decade down the line, this whirlpool of emotions had ached, wounded, and mended her heart umpteen number of times. They come rushing back to her, in flavours of grief, as she walks into her Appachan's home to find his large strange portrait hanging on the walls of the living room. For some reason, the portrait never really felt like him. For the young girl in her, all she wanted to remember her Appachan was with his wide grin and his old coarse but gleeful voice with which he called out to her.

They rush back into her with even the faintest scent of “Volini” balm which feels like a portal to her childhood summers, where it was a constant companion for her grandfather’s aching back. The memory gracing her lips at the thought of his reassuring presence, while a single tear would roll down, mourning the quiet void he left behind.

Years later, every time she watched a cricket match, a sport she had grown clear affinity for, she found herself longing for his presence, as if every crack of the bat and the roar of the crowd, she now loves, were somehow incomplete. She still tries to mend the wounds of her heart, hoping that their shared love for cricket could bridge the chasm between them, stitching together the distance with every memory-laden cheer, even if only in her soul.

These days, she drifts to sleep in Appachan’s room, cocooned in the blankets he once used, and in the tender embrace of memories the space quietly cradles. Her grief has now evolved itself into gentle peace as she reflects on what it means to have been—and still be—cherished by someone so wonderfully unforgettable.



Karuna Ras

“As I sat down observing the group of children playing at the banks of Ganga in Rishikesh, I was ironically overwhelmed by sorrow at that blissful sight. As they led each other on adventurous trails, made up games and whispered secrets into each-other’s ears, their grandmother sat quietly on a bench nearby. I was reminded of the days I spent playing there while my grandfather stood somewhere in the background and I was unaware that someday I will not be able to feel his presence in the corner of my sight.

Once again, I could not gather the courage to capture the serene old woman in the background and chose to look at the happy children, quietly hoping that one day I could be strong enough to capture the background and accept that he is not there in mine anymore.”

Photographs by Molli Sharma, 2nd year

LINGUISTIC GEMS

“The Interlingual Expressions of Emotions”

Language is more than a tool for communication - it is a window into a culture's psyche, revealing what emotions are considered meaningful and how they are expressed. This sub-theme invites students to delve into their native languages to uncover unique words or phrases that hold significant cultural and emotional value but are difficult to translate into other languages without losing their essence. Drawing from the Dialect Theory of Emotions, which posits that emotions act as a universal language with distinct regional dialects, this sub-theme explores how language shapes emotional expression and understanding.

Research highlights that emotional experiences are often more profound in one's native language compared to a second language, with phrases like “I love you” or childhood reprimands evoking stronger emotional responses when heard in the language of one's upbringing. Students are encouraged to send write-ups about culturally embedded words - such as terms of endearment, expressions of grief, or metaphors for joy - that reflect their heritage. For example, the Punjabi word Niyana conveys affection for a child with nuances tied to Punjabi culture, while the Assamese term Jajabor captures the spirit of a wandering soul in a way no single English word can. Through these explorations, we aim to celebrate the interplay of language and emotion, highlighting how linguistic diversity enriches emotional experiences and deepens our understanding of cultural heritage. These entries will allow readers to reflect on the richness of their own linguistic traditions while fostering an appreciation for the emotional worlds embedded in other languages.

Ninglum

/ning-lum/

(noun) the warmth of the mind.

Origin: Tangkhul

Jamie C. Hongray, 3rd Year



For as long as I've known the word, "ninglum" has been the *mot juste** for describing the emotion that it symbolizes. The word is made up of two parts: "ning", which refers to the mind, and "lum" signifying warmth.

With this simplified deconstruction, ninglum paints the experience of a warm, fuzzy feeling on the canvas of the mind accompanied by a sense of security and reassurance.

It is difficult to reduce the significance of ninglum to a single English word or phrase, but the feeling it encapsulates is no stranger to the human experience. For those who do not know the word, I believe that their minds yearn for an apt expression such as that, in the same way we try to remember the name of a tune dancing at the tip of our tongues.

Ninglum is the gradual confidence that fills us when we feel protected by someone we consider reliable. It is in this trust that a small part of us reverts to a state of childlike dependency, allowing us to be guided and cared for without fear. It can trickle into our hearts when we meet a set of kind, familiar eyes in a blur of forgettable faces.

In the same light, many find themselves in this sanctuary in their profound spiritual connection with a benevolent God, while for others it may be the comfort found in a family gathering. The experience of ninglum is not restricted to the reassurance of being cared for. It can also be unraveled within a parent who is reminded that their child, though beyond their reach, is protected and out of harm's way.

Ninglum is the release of a sigh that was unknowingly held by someone in anticipation when the stakes hung on a string of uncertainty. It is a witness to the perpetual cycle of tension and release, which is core to Heraclitus'* unity of opposites where change and contradiction embody the nature of reality.

However, it should not be mistaken for happiness. Unlike ninglum, the feeling of joy is not contingent upon our relationships with others. Ninglum weaves itself into the fabric of a social self, thus drawing its significance from a network of interdependence characteristic of Tangkhul culture.

The experience of ninglum, with all its concomitant reassurance, is a gentle breeze that carries us home.

*Mot juste- a French phrase referring to the most right or exact word.

*Heraclitus- an ancient Greek Pre-Socratic philosopher known for his doctrines on the universal flux and the unity of opposites.



Artwork by Nasir Doom

Translation of “Ka Riam Khasi” by Jenny Lyngdoh

**Deiphisha Lyngdoh Talang, 3rd Year
Mass Media, St. Anthony’s College**

Jenny Lyngdoh is a mother of two from Shillong, Meghalaya, in Northeast India. In the late 90s and early 2000s, she compiled all the poems she had written in her life to publish a full Khasi poetry book. As her daughter, I was always fascinated by her work. The poem I chose to translate from her book is called “Ka Riam Khasi.”

The female traditional attire of the Khasi women, or “Jaiñsem,” is one that has evolved through time and is unique to our people. We even have a special word for how we wear it. In the Khasi language, the word for “wear” is “phong,” but we do not say “phong Jaiñsem”; instead, we say “sem jaiñsem.” This gives special significance to the different styles of traditional wear, as there are many, such as the “Jaiñkyrshah,” “Dhara,” and “Muka.” The Khasi language itself is incredibly unique, with words that cannot be directly translated into English and “Ktien Kynnoh,” which are synonyms that add deeper meaning to simple words. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to analyze my mother’s poem and share a piece of my culture.

“Ka Riam Khasi” by Kong Jenny Lyngdoh is a nine-stanza poem about the traditional outfits of the Khasi women of Meghalaya. It is one of the compiled poems taken from her book *Haba Puson Bha*, which roughly translates to “Deep Contemplation” and was released in 2002.

In the first stanza, she explains how there is nothing like the traditional clothes of the Khasi people, emphasizing how they are completely unique to our race.

In the second and third stanzas, she talks about the traditional daily wear of Khasi women called the “Jaiñkyrshah.” We wear the “Jaiñkyrshah” in our daily lives—to work in the house, shop for groceries, or even work in the fields. It is used almost like an apron, protecting the clothes underneath. It is also a practical and modest garment, covering the woman’s body. Not only does it make her unostentatious, but it also shields her body from harsh winds, the sun, and other elements as a front barrier.

In the second stanza, the last line, “Ba ka iashongkun shongkhia,” does not have a direct translation into English, but a rough meaning would be, “It is unique and classy.” It is one of the many ktien kynnoh of the Khasi language. Further, in the third stanza, she describes the chequered pattern and the variety of colors the garment can have.

In the fourth stanza, she speaks about the different types of traditional wear, as there is more than just the “Jaiñkyrshah.” She especially mentions the Muka and the Dhara, which are worn by women for special and important events due to their grandeur, material, and designs. She elaborates on their beauty and the impressiveness of the attire.

The fifth stanza introduces “Thohriaw Stem,” the significant name for the traditional chequered Khasi shawl in gold and red, worn mainly during festivals. “Thohriaw Stem” is usually draped over the shoulder in modern times. Older women wear a shawl called the “Tapmoh,” tied around the neck and covering the head. Additionally, a robe called the “Jaiñkup” is tied at the chest to cover the body. Together, these two shawls are referred to as “ka Tapmoh bad ka Jaiñkup.” The author mentions that older women love to match the “Tapmoh” (head covering) and the “Jaiñkup” (body covering). The whole outfit is topped off with the “Knup,” a type of headshade made from a kind of cane called “Thri.”



Image source: Screenshots from Pashat la Tynrai 2013 | Traditional Fashion Show by SNGAP, 2022

The sixth stanza discusses the different types of jewelry worn with the clothes during festival dances. “Ha lypung” refers to a field designated for cultural dances. “Ka khor ka Khriam” is another ktien kynnoh, describing the crown (made of gold or silver), necklaces and bracelets (made of gold), armwear (made of silver), and the golden Dhara.

The seventh stanza highlights how important accessories are to the overall beauty and significance of the cultural attire. They connect us to our ancestors, who may have worn the same outfit, bridging generations through tribal celebrations.

The seventh stanza highlights how important accessories are to the overall beauty and significance of the cultural attire. They connect us to our ancestors, who may have worn the same outfit, bridging generations through tribal celebrations.

The eighth and ninth stanzas reflect on how clothing evolves over time. However, the responsibility lies with us to ensure that, regardless of changing times, we never forget the traditions that define our culture.

Kong Jenny Lyngdoh delves into the rich cultural heritage of Khasi women's traditional attire. Across nine stanzas, she celebrates the uniqueness and practicality of these garments, from the everyday Jaiñkyrshah to the grand Muka and Dhara worn during special occasions. She highlights the intricate patterns, vibrant colors, and meaningful accessories like the Thohriaw Stem shawl and traditional jewelry, which symbolize elegance and ancestral connection. The poem concludes with a reflection on the evolving nature of clothing, urging us to preserve our cultural identity despite changing times.

KA RIAM KHASI

1. Haba peit bad bishar bniah,
Khlem ia nujor te ym lah ;
Ia ka riam ka beit khasi,
Bad kiwei pat de, ki ri.
2. Ka jingriam ba man ka sngi,
Jong ki 'riew kynthai khasi ;
Wow ! ka long kham pher shisha,
Ba ka ishongkun shongkhia.
3. Jaiñkyrshah ba thoh sawdong,
Ba ki phong ha la ki rong ;
Ba jyrngam, ba iong, basaw,
Riam khasi shisha ka paw.

4. O ! katno jingitynnad,
Haba peit ba don ki lat ;
Ki muka ki sem ki phong,
Ne, dhara ba bun ki rong.
5. Thohriaw stem ba ishongkhia,
Bad muka pynhap tara ;
Ki tymmen la ki jaiñkup,
Ha la khlieh bad la i knup.
6. Haba don ka shad ka kmen,
Rukom riam yn-nai iakren ;
Ha lypung ka khor ka khriam,
Naduh khlieh ki ju pynriam.

7. Duh hyndai ki ju khien kor,
Ksiar, rupa ki pynshongdor ;
Riam khasi ba i-nylla,
Ka dei jingriam ki longshuwa.
8. Katba la nang iaaid ki sngi,
Ka jingriam khasi jong ngi ;
Suki ka nang kylla,
Ban iahap bad por mynta.
9. Hynrei ka shong ha ngi mynta,
Wat jingriam la kham kylla ;
Ngi dei pat ban sngewthuh,
Riam tynrai, ban ym pynduh.

—O—

In Adoration of All My Daako-naamo

Translation of “daako-naamo”: sobriquet or nickname

Priyanka Hembram, 3rd year

In a reclusive stretch of spring-time haze
I walked past boughs of laden maze
Of mango inflorescences and a looming light
Tipping loose-end sheets of a decadent guise.

I missed on streets, and track of trails
And fumbled on thickets of twisted gaze
Clasping words of salience, I seldom staked
For I carry them through a remnant wade.

Now, in present, as I shuffle through
My way, in a semblance of a woodland's shrew
The noon's light scatters and the wind alters
course

In reclamation of sobriquets
I once furloughed.

**Photograph by Nitee Kaushik, 1st year
Psychology, Zakir Hussain**



A Portrait of Love and Belonging

“This photo beautifully captures emotions flowing across generations. The grandparents’ embrace symbolizes care and pride, while the younger ones’ smiles radiate gratitude and joy. It reflects unconditional love and the comfort of belonging, where no words are needed to express the warmth in their hearts. For the elders, it’s contentment in seeing their legacy; for the young, it’s the security of being cherished. A perfect reminder of how love binds generations together in unbreakable harmony.”

The Symphony of Emotions Through the Navarasas

**D Ananya, 1st year
Psychology, Mata Sundri College**

Life is a canvas, splashed with the vivid hues of the नवरस, श्रृंगार, करुणा, रौद्र, वीर, भयानक, बीभत्स, अद्भुत, शांत. These emotions, deeply rooted in our existence, thread through our days like a melody, each note resonating with a unique rhythm. My life, too, is a symphony, composed of these nine emotions, flowing in harmony and discord, shaping my understanding of self and the world around me.

The most profound रिश्ता I nurture is the one I share with myself. There is an unparalleled शांत रस (tranquility) in the quiet moments I spend alone, stirring sweetness into a pot of coffee, letting the vibrant colors of a painting spill across the canvas, or simply sitting under the blushing sky, watching the sun rise on my birthday. These acts of solitude are not just activities but offerings of love to myself. They are pauses in the whirlwind of life, where I reflect on how I could have responded better, where I nurture my emotional garden and plant seeds of hope.

The fragrance of श्रृंगार रस (love and beauty) fills my relationship with my mother. Her name, शेफाली, is the sweet name of a flower so fragrant that its scent spreads across the street, just like her motherly love that fills every corner of my life. Her gentle मुस्कान as we bond over eating इमल, her laughter as we twirl to दिल दियां गल्लां, our favorite song, and her tender invitations to visit her office just to sit together in silence all remind me that love resides in the simplest of moments.

Similarly, my मासी's loving scoldings, “कपड़े पहन ले, ठंड लग जाएगी” or “कुछ खा लिया कर” are her own unique language of affection. Her interests aligning with mine remind me that I always have someone who will listen without judgment, and it will always feel like I'm talking to someone who understands me deeply. These small gestures of care are what make relationships so deeply rooted in श्रृंगार.

Under the soft glow of destiny, श्रृंगार रस blessed me five months ago on a random Saturday. Fate, in its mysterious ways, brought me to someone so special, someone who showed me how love can be unconditional, unspoken, yet deeply felt. This serendipitous meeting became a reminder of the beauty life holds, even in its most ordinary moments.

My bond with my father is another note in this symphony. The annual book fair trips, buying me earrings and laughs heartily at my poor jokes, or the way he listens intently to my college stories, are moments steeped in unconditional love. And yet, alongside the joy lies the poignant ache of करुणा रस (compassion and sorrow), a feeling that visits me when I think of my brother. His return home brings happiness, but it is always shadowed by the bittersweet nostalgia of days when our family was young, carefree, and whole. करुणा रस also lingers in memories of my grandmother. Her eyes lighting up when I returned from school, her gentle presence filling our home, how different everything was just a year ago. These recollections, both tender and aching, remind me of the fleeting nature of time, leaving behind a profound emptiness and gratitude.

But life demands resilience, and every morning I rise with the fire of वीर रस (courage) in my heart. To face the world, to hold myself steady amidst storms of doubt and pain, and to never give up, this is my quiet rebellion. Yet, not every day is triumphant. रौद्र रस (anger) and बीभत्स रस (disgust) surge within me as I scroll through the daily news, stories of violence, injustice, and despair. The notifications on my phone speak of a world that often feels cruel, forcing me to

deny myself freedoms like stepping out late at night.

Amidst this chaos, there are moments that leave me awestruck, enveloped in अद्भुत रस (wonder). I marvel at my teachers and mentors, their lives woven with struggles and quiet victories. The way they persevere, hoping their words will inspire us, humbles me. Even the smallest acts, a smile, a word of encouragement, can ripple through a person's soul, leaving a profound impact.

Through all of this, the thread of शांत रस (peace) remains my anchor. Sitting in silence, gazing at the sunrise, or simply being present in the moment reminds me that peace is not found; it is created. It lies in the small joys, in the laughter shared with loved ones, in the quiet strength of self-love, and in the understanding that even amidst sorrow, there is beauty.

The नवरस are not just fleeting emotions; they are the essence of my existence, the threads that weave the tapestry of my identity. Each emotion, whether vibrant or painful, wondrous or serene, reflects a part of who I am. They teach me to embrace every shade of my being, the joy, and the vulnerability- reminding me that to feel deeply is not a weakness but a profound gift. It is through नवरस that I discover myself, connecting with the eternal rhythm of my inner world and understanding that my self-identity is not static but ever-evolving, as fluid and boundless as these emotions are.



“Inspired by the theme NAVARAS, I depicted the spectrum of intangible emotions as vibrant, flowing strands weaving through our tangible bodies. These strands, in hues of light blue, magenta, and green, represent emotions like surprise, adoration, and joy, while deeper shades of green, blue, and red embody envy, sadness, and anger. At the base, a dark black signifies our most profound and shadowy emotions, contrasted by the warm glow of yellow that symbolizes inner happiness. The tangible body, with an open chest, serves as a vessel of acceptance, embracing the full range of emotions that flow through it.”

Artwork by Tamchi Nyakum
2nd year, History

ENCULTURATION & ACCULTURATION

“The Emotional Journey Between Cultures”

India’s rich diversity of traditions and regional identities creates a unique landscape where internal migration often leads to significant cultural exchange and adaptation. Enculturation refers to the process by which we internalize the emotional norms and values of our native culture, while acculturation describes how we adapt to the emotional frameworks of a different cultural setting. These processes are particularly relevant in a country like India, where people frequently move across states for education, employment, or marriage, encountering distinct cultural practices and emotional expressions.

This sub theme explores the emotional experiences and adaptations that arise as individuals navigate these transitions. For example, a Tamil-speaking individual from Chennai moving to Delhi might experience emotional acculturation over time - adopting Delhi’s fast-paced lifestyle, its celebratory openness during festivals like Diwali, and the emotionally expressive nature of interactions commonly seen in the city. At the same time, they may retain the calm, community-oriented emotional expressions typical of Tamil culture by maintaining traditional practices within their family, participating in Pongal celebrations and so on.

Students can delve into questions such as: How does cultural upbringing shape emotional expression? In what ways do emotions shift when individuals immerse themselves in new cultural environments? How do factors like age, language, and social interactions affect emotional adaptations? By reflecting on these questions, we aim to deepen our understanding on how different cultures influence emotions and show how emotional patterns can adapt and remain strong as people move between cultures. Submissions under this theme are an integration of personal reflections, shedding light on the profound ways emotions connect us to our cultural roots while enabling us to bridge new cultural landscapes.

I've Tried Different Cultures

**Tiana Saha, 3rd year
Psychology, SRM Chennai**

Picture this- a Bengali girl, with a childhood in the United States, adolescence in Hyderabad and thrown into Chennai for her foray into adulthood. It's not as unique as a situation you come across but it's a lonely experience. The only other person I know who gets it is my younger sister. Pop words like 'third culture kid' could be best to describe how I feel – isolated from my ethnicity, stranger to my own culture, and unaware of countless traditions rooted in my mother tongue. I've learned to grow accustomed to being unaware of slangs and being sidelined from conversations when I can't rant about the new construction in Park Street or blurt Telugu insults in an argument. What's worse is that I didn't even grow up in those urban apartments that boast about 'celebrating all cultures'. We rarely traveled home for vacations (both sides of families scattered all over the country), nor did my middle-class family have the time to travel two hours in Hyderabad traffic every month to be a part of those 'Probashi' Bengali associations.

It's difficult to put into words what this experience makes me feel – the language of expression itself seems restricted to the tongue of our oppressors. Yet, with art I always found a connection to my soul. The tireless journey of human emotions rests at times when I sit with a book by Satyajit Ray, admire the art of Jamini Roy, indulge in the soft fabrics of Kalamkari prints, or bite into a crispy vada. The art of literature, painting, textile, and food have made me feel at home.

I now study in Tamil Nadu – where conversation with individuals outside my privileged friend group and English speaking peers becomes limited. I converse with the Chennai auto-drivers and vendors in broken English, and a lot of sign language. Yet I can never forget how it felt when I danced Bharatanatyam, or when I first heard the nadaswaram. In a new cultural landscape, I found myself swept up in the vibrant Dravidian history and the fierce passion with which it is protected.

Culture has the power to unite – only if there is a will to understand. An open mindset bridges the gap between comfort and discovery. Emotional distress of not ‘finding home’ bothers you so much only if you forget to take part in new traditions. And is not the traveler the educator as well? History is testament that knowledge of other civilizations exists only when a brave traveler shares their knowledge. Even as seas of youth travel cities in hopes for better opportunities, we should carry forward the language and practices of our ethnicities and encourage others to learn.

Navaras has transpired over multiple art forms in India and is something that is unique to our culture as a whole. No matter which state you turn to, the language used in poetry and drama, the music in dance and singing – all unite in expression of the elements. This is the invisible string that ties us all together.

FRAMES OF EMOTIONS





“In the dead of the night, my friends and I talk about all that lies in between love and grief over cake and grape juice. We were girls together. Sometimes, I watch them bicker with each other over something trivial, and for a second, I see a glimpse of our younger years—when we believed we knew everything; when we thought the sun would never set on our juvenescence. I take pictures of their laughter, I take pictures of their joy; I would like to immortalise this light forever.”

“A shot taken after an impromptu ride to a live music show; feet tired, bodies sore, throats scratchy from singing our hearts out to the only few songs we knew by heart on the setlist. There is something beautiful in the way my physical-touch-avoidant friend lets my physical-touch loving friend rest her body on her own. They will never look each other in the eye and tell each other “I love you”, but in this moment, they don’t have to.”



Photographs by Ruth Lalremruati, 2nd year



Shringara Ras

“Animals have always been a better model of love and kindness for me than human beings. An honesty reflects in their emotions & actions, be it aggression or affection.

This is a pair of pigeons I discovered sitting at a fort’s height, looking down together at the busy world on a summer afternoon. Their look of love transcends into a mellow joy that remains unimitated by us humans.”

Photograph by Molli Sharma, 2nd year

“This captures the essence of affective synchrony in a shared moment of childhood creativity. The children’s collaboration, immersed in play, reflects emotional co-regulation and connection, even amidst a modest urban setting. The vibrancy of their interaction contrasts with the rugged surroundings, emphasizing resilience, innocence, and the ability to find joy and unity in the simplest of activities.”

**Photograph by Gyanshikha, 3rd year
Psychology, IPCW**



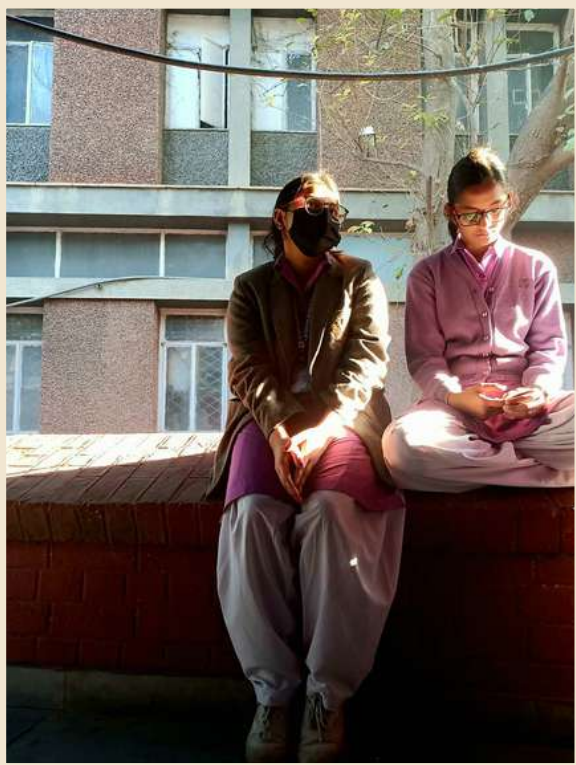


“This picture was taken on September 15, 2024, on the joyous occasion of Onam. It captures the tender love and deep affection shared between these two dear seniors of mine. While we waited for our table at the restaurant, we lovingly bought mogra gajras for each other, sharing a moment of care and companionship. We then gently helped each other adorn our hair and wrists with these fragrant blossoms, celebrating our friendship with warmth and joy.”

“Taken on October 23, 2024 in Aikyam 2.0 at IPCW, this picture captures the essence of female friendship. As one friend struggles with an unexpected allergy, the other, with unwavering care and a gentle touch, offers comfort and reassurance, showcasing the strength of their bond.”

**Photographs by Sunanda, 1st year
Psychology, IPCW**





Boundless Empathy

“This photo holds great significance for me as it was taken during a not so great phase with a great friend. A classmate randomly took it when I was going through emotional turmoil, and my friend was there throughout that time. The prettiest part is that none of us was aware of being photographed. It is a beautiful, candid reminder of their unwavering support during a difficult time.”

Lunchboxes and Chit-Chats

“To go back to the land where you spent 12 years of your life, looking at children running through the corridors unaware of the struggles and turmoils of the outside world. The moment my friend and I returned to our school for some official work, we just surged with emotions as we looked at the ground filled with lunchboxes and chit-chats.”

**Photographs by Nidhi Rajput
1st Year, Journalism**





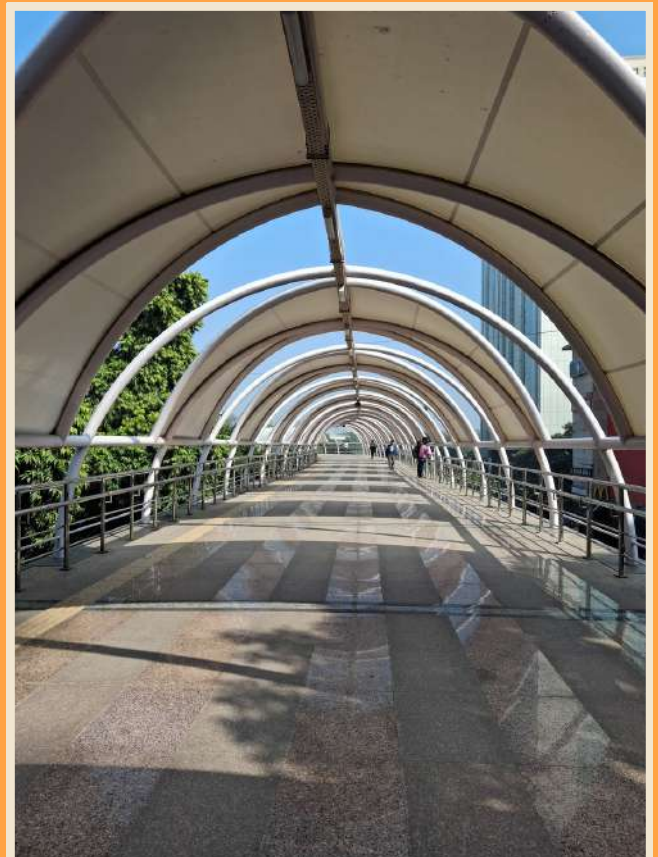
“An empty classroom, quiet and sunlit, but still alive with echoes of the past. It’s a place where ideas blossomed, friendships grew, and emotions were shared in the simplest of ways. Every desk holds a story, every chair a memory of laughter, curiosity, and dreams. It’s a reminder that even in silence, some spaces carry the warmth of the people who’ve been there.”

Photograph by Sheen Madan, 1st Year

The Dome of Silence

“A geometrical pathway that evokes the beauty of human creativity. It is decked up with people standing in various countenance, with the only emotion that they share on this bridge - silence.”

Photograph by Navya Yadav, 1st Year



OPEN-THEMED ENTRIES

My Voyage To Insanity

Nandani Sharma, 2nd year

Insanity is falling too deep into once entirety
Made of thoughts
acquired through presence of emotions
Which gave a lens of experience
To this repeating sets of familiar doings

Which gave you and me creativity
Gave me music to dance on
A song for you to cry upon
To display your lovers of beings and non beings
through colors and
brushes

To see a smiling young self through atoms
An old memory of autumn.
To see and feel
And preserve this insanity for one who want to
not just breath
But to do it with insanity.

“Happiness doesn't exist in the absence of sorrow.
Heart needs soul to embrace life, as my grandfather said.”

**Photograph by Parvathy
2nd year, Sociology**

No Reply

**Siya Kaushik, 1st Year
Psychology, IPCW**

I keep the flowers you gave me in my little box.
They are now lathered with the redolence of a
thousand other memories,
All of which are extremely dear to me.
The flowers rest, covered in a thin sheet and
labelled 'special',
Not because I could ever misplace their worth
But to remind me what I was to you.
Every time I open my box, I cannot hold myself
back
From breathing in the new scent
That was birthed from my life and our death.



When It Does Actually Happen

**Siya Kaushik, 1st Year
Psychology, IPCW**

Content Warning: “mention of abuse”

“So when it does actually happen, how would it feel?

Will you think of someone else while you rip me apart? You lover who said no to you? Or was I the lover?

My mere mistake, saying yes. Yes to my choice? Will you gently rip my clothes away, reveal my shriveled, weak body, to glance at it?

Or will you just get to doing it to me? Get to hurting me with pleasure?

Will you trace your worked up hands all over me while I look away, trying to deny reality?

Or will you mark me as your victim since you couldn't mark me up as your lover?

Will I breathe, breathe your scent of dirt

Or will I have already breathed my soul out?

Will I ever be able to be mine again

Since I never said yes to be yours?”



“That Thing.

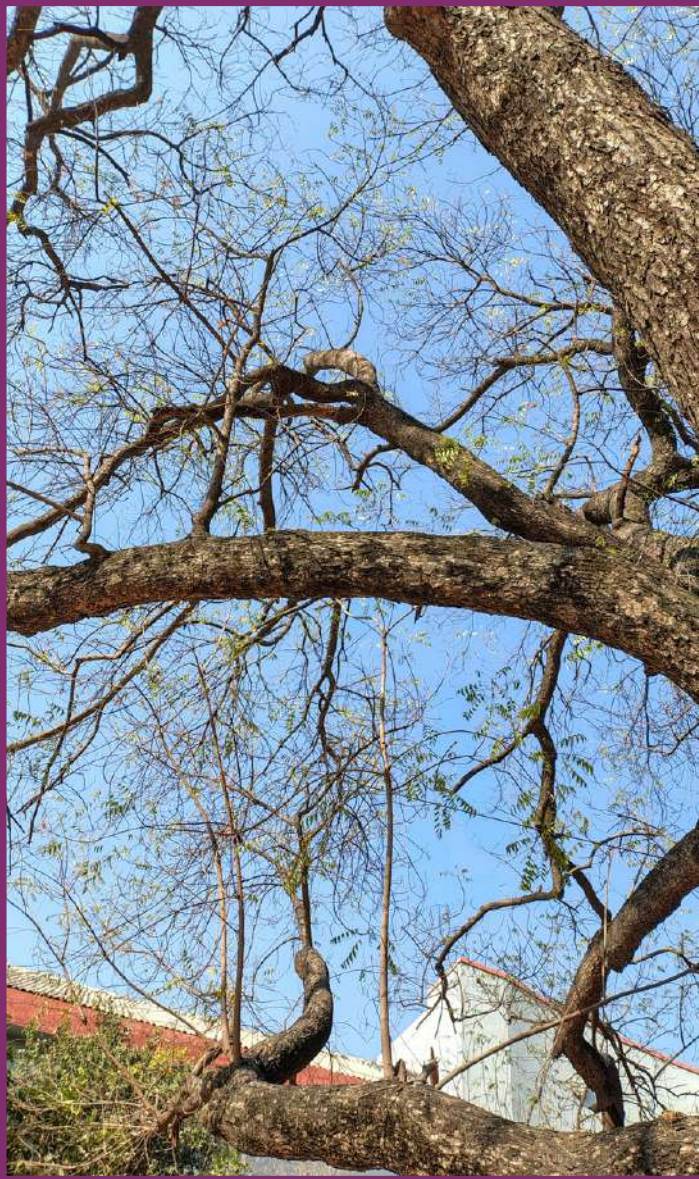
It picked me up callously, meeting my eyes eerily. It knows no bounds – surely no mercy, as I know it will remorselessly turn the page on me.”

Sketch by Eva Singh, 2nd Year

Decoding Life

Avni Gupta, 3rd year

As a child, was told life is a gift
As a teen, saw it as a rift
Yes a rift— can fall, can rise
Or be saved for a short mile
They say value it all,
But then they put a toddler to grab it all
Toddler, now a near adult realises this unending
expanse of the rift
Yours, mine, theirs- no eyes, no math
capable of measuring it
Drops in mind then this question of what
exactly are we in?
A journey, a puzzle, a mystery or an experience
persisting
Would be uncanny to call it but—a competition
Rather not, because this is what they have made
it all
A competition one of a kind, no definite victor,
no definite loser
Instead a shout out to those winning over
despair.



“Branches of Thought – Twisting, Turning, and
Reaching for Clarity”

Photograph by Bhavya Singh, 1st year

यादें

Aarushi Bhayana, 2nd year

कुछ तो है उन धुंधली छवियों में,
जो एक विचित्र रूप से मन को हैं भातीं।
बसतीं हैं वो यादों में इस प्रकार,
बीच रास्ते में रोक, खींच मुझे कहीं और ले जातीं।
न जाने किसके हैं वो मुख,
जो एक समय पर प्रतिदिन थे दिखते।
बाँटा करते थे सारे सुख और दुख,
परिवार से कम नहीं थे हमारे रिश्ते।
सुना करते थे वो फिल्मी गीत,
ताल-ताल पर जिनकी धुन लाती मुस्कुराहट।
उनकी स्मृति आज करती है कुछ विपरीत,
सुनायी देती है उस काल की छिपी आहट।
वो कहानियाँ कैसे सकता हूँ मैं भूल,
जो हम एक दूसरे के साथ बनाते?
वो सपने आज बन गए धूल,
जो किसी जन्म में दिल बहलाते।
पर अब जीवन की लीला तो है ही निराली,
हर स्वाद जो चटाने का ठाना है।
रुकता नहीं किसी के लिये एक क्षण भी,
जैसे अब मुझे भी जाना है।

Memories

English Translation

There's something in those hazy images,
That strangely captivates my mind.
They reside in my memories in such a way,
They tend to stop me mid-way, taking me
somewhere else.
I don't remember whose faces those are,
That were seen every day at one time.
We used to share all joys and sorrows,
Our relationship was no less than family.
We used to sing film songs,
Whose melodies brought smiles on the beat.
Their memory does something opposite
today,
I hear the hidden murmur of that time.
How can I forget those stories,
That we used to create together?
Those dreams have turned into dust today,
Which soothed the heart forever ago.
But, the play of life is indeed unique,
It intends to make you savour every taste.
It doesn't stop for anyone even for a
moment,
Just like I too have to go now.

The Importance of Empathetic Discourse in the Political Landscape

Aadisha Chandel, 3rd year

India, a nation renowned for its rich diversity, prides itself on its unity in diversity. This philosophy, deeply ingrained in our collective consciousness from a young age, reflects the essence of our national identity. From ethnicities to languages, religions to geography, India is a microcosm of the world. However, this diversity presents significant challenges, particularly in decision-making processes. With a population of 1.43 billion, there are 1.43 billion aspirations, opinions, and stories—each deserving of attention and respect.

In recent years, the growing divide among people based on identity has become increasingly apparent, fueled by polarizing media narratives and divisive political rhetoric. The primal instinct to form "in-groups" and "out-groups" has resurfaced with alarming intensity, not just in India but globally. This trend manifests in restrictive immigration policies, religion-based nationalist identities, and a general erosion of mutual understanding. In such times, it is imperative to rise above the noise of sensationalist media and self-serving political agendas.

Empathy—the ability to understand and share the feelings of others—is the cornerstone of meaningful discourse. By approaching issues with empathy, we can transcend abstract debates and recognize the human impact of political decisions. Imagine the transformation of our political environment if empathy guided our discussions and policies.

Empathy has the power to break down barriers between opposing groups in a politically polarized world. When citizens and politicians alike strive to understand differing viewpoints, common ground emerges, enabling productive dialogues and fostering unity rather than division. It fosters a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by diverse communities. Politicians who listen empathetically to the concerns of marginalized groups are better equipped to craft policies that address their unique needs.

Too often, political debates become overly technical and detached. Empathy restores the human connection, reminding policymakers that behind every decision are real people with hopes, fears, and aspirations. This perspective can lead to more compassionate and equitable policies. Furthermore, empathy ensures that all voices, especially those typically excluded from political discussions, are heard and respected. Leaders who approach issues empathetically are more likely to develop solutions that are inclusive and fair, irrespective of background or status.

Political conflicts often escalate when parties refuse to empathize with one another. By fostering empathy, we create opportunities for compromise and collaboration, shifting the focus from winning debates to solving problems and meeting collective needs. Empathetic leaders hold themselves accountable for the consequences of their policies. Understanding how decisions impact individuals, particularly the vulnerable, motivates leaders to prioritize societal welfare.

A thriving democracy depends on citizens feeling heard and understood. Empathy builds trust in political institutions, ensuring people believe their leaders genuinely care about their well-being. This trust is essential for active participation and cooperation. Empathetic leaders prioritize citizens' welfare over political gain, addressing inequality, fighting injustice, and uplifting marginalized communities. This approach promotes a more just and equitable society.

Empathy encourages ethical governance by highlighting the broader social impact of decisions. Leaders guided by empathy strive to protect and uplift all citizens, particularly those at risk of being neglected. It unites people from diverse backgrounds, fostering social harmony. It encourages individuals to see beyond their immediate interests and recognize their interconnectedness, which is crucial for maintaining peace in a pluralistic society like India.

In a globalized world, empathy extends beyond national borders, fostering international cooperation. By understanding global struggles, leaders can work collectively on issues like climate change, poverty, and conflict. Empathy also counters hate and intolerance by promoting respect for diversity. Understanding others' experiences helps build a more tolerant and peaceful society. It fosters trust and long-term loyalty between leaders and constituents. This trust strengthens communities and enhances resilience.

During crises, empathy enables leaders to act swiftly and supportively. An empathetic response resonates with the public, mobilizing collective efforts for recovery. Empathy is not a weakness but a profound strength. It has the power to unify, heal, and drive meaningful change. In a world that often pushes us to choose sides and harden our hearts, let us instead lead with empathy, building a future rooted in understanding and compassion.

As Brené Brown eloquently said, *"Empathy has no script. There is no right way or wrong way to do it. It's simply listening, holding space, withholding judgment, emotionally connecting, and communicating that incredibly healing message of 'You're not alone.'"* Let us embrace this message and work towards a more empathetic political discourse that benefits everyone.

Why Should We All Be Feminists?

Aadisha Chandel, 3rd year

Feminism is often misunderstood and negatively portrayed in modern society. Such misrepresentation has subjected the movement to ridicule, perpetuated by those who hold limited and skewed understanding of its true essence. This narrow view paints feminism as an exclusionary movement serving only the interests of a particular group, such as Western women, when in reality, it advocates for social, political, and economic equality among all sexes—a goal that remains unfulfilled across the globe. Cultures worldwide, including in India, are steeped in male chauvinism, underscoring the universal need for feminism.

Societal biases and stereotypes have long relegated women to the bottom of the social hierarchy. From a young age, many girls face systemic discrimination. For instance, they are often denied leadership opportunities based solely on their gender, reinforcing the stereotype that women make poor leaders. Such prejudices are not only outdated but also harmful, perpetuating a culture that resists change and denies women the freedom to fully realize their potential.

Historically, gender hierarchies may have served a purpose in societies where physical strength was paramount. However, in today's world, where creativity, intellect, and collaboration are far more valuable, these hierarchies are obsolete. Despite this, socialization processes continue to exaggerate the differences between men and women, stifling progress and limiting individual freedom. Gender norms remain rigid, dictating how individuals should behave based on their sex rather than their abilities or aspirations.

Society also imposes a double standard when it comes to emotions. Women are often denied the right to express anger, as it is considered "unladylike." Men, on the other hand, are praised for showing aggression, particularly in leadership roles. This disparity forces women to prioritize being "likeable" over being authentic, silencing their voices and discouraging them from embracing feminist ideals. Fear of societal disapproval or jeopardizing marriage prospects often prevents women from challenging these norms, perpetuating a cycle of subjugation.

The narrow definitions of masculinity also contribute to the problem. Boys are socialized to suppress vulnerability and fear, equating their worth with financial success and material possessions. Similarly, women are taught to take up less space and remain deferential.

Ambition and assertiveness in women are often perceived as threats to men's masculinity, further entrenching harmful stereotypes. These rigid roles harm everyone, trapping individuals in molds that limit their humanity and potential.

Marriage often reflects these entrenched norms. Women are frequently valued based on their marital status, with single women facing societal disdain. Within marriage, women are expected to "respect" their husbands, while men are rarely held to the same standard. Women's sexuality is heavily policed, with societal expectations dictating modesty and chastity until marriage, denying women agency over their own lives and bodies.

To address these issues, society must shift its focus from dictating "how a woman should be" to recognizing "how a woman really is". Women should be judged on their abilities and contributions, not their adherence to traditional gender roles. Labor and responsibilities, such as childcare and cooking, should not be tied to gender but shared equitably. By unlearning deeply ingrained lessons of inequality, individuals can challenge harmful norms while embracing their authentic selves.

Feminism is not merely a human rights movement; it is a fight against the specific problem of gender-based oppression. Men must actively participate in this movement, recognizing their role in both perpetuating and dismantling oppressive systems. The subjugation of women cannot be justified as a cultural norm. Culture does not create people; people create culture. By embodying the principles of feminism, society can redefine these norms and create a world that values individuals for their abilities and humanity rather than their gender.

Harmful societal norms trap both genders in predefined roles, limiting their freedom and potential. Men are expected to be stoic and dominant, while women are expected to be nurturing and submissive. To build a more equitable society, these norms must be questioned and actively challenged in daily life, institutions, and interactions. By advocating for mutual respect and equality, we can create a culture where both men and women thrive, free from the constraints of outdated expectations.

Ultimately, the feminist movement seeks to cultivate fairness, respect, and opportunity for all. The full humanity of women must become a cornerstone of our culture. This transformation begins with each of us—through our actions, conversations, and willingness to embrace change. Only then can we create a society where gender no longer dictates one's worth or potential.



**Photograph by Gyanshikha, 3rd year
Psychology, IPCW**

“This photograph captures a moment of unfiltered joy and spontaneity, exemplifying the essence of affective synchrony. The child’s playful expression, hanging upside down, reflects childhood interactions’ freedom and shared energy. The vibrant backdrop of a modest neighbourhood emphasizes the dynamic interplay of emotions in everyday spaces, evoking connection, resilience, and the celebration of simple pleasures.”

Photograph by Ishita Tanwar, 2nd year

“Happiness is the moment when you feel you can take out the best from anything, like I felt when I saw this dry leaf lying on the ground. I felt nostalgia to my hometown in the mountains and so I thought of capturing the moment with me. It was a moment I shared with me and mother Earth.”





“The Sun, tired after holding the world together by day, gently sinks into the Sky’s caring embrace at night.”

“The Holy Ganga, dipped in the Sun’s warmth, shimmers with golden joy.”



Photographs by Aarushi Bhayana, 2nd year



"The wound is the place where the light
enters you."

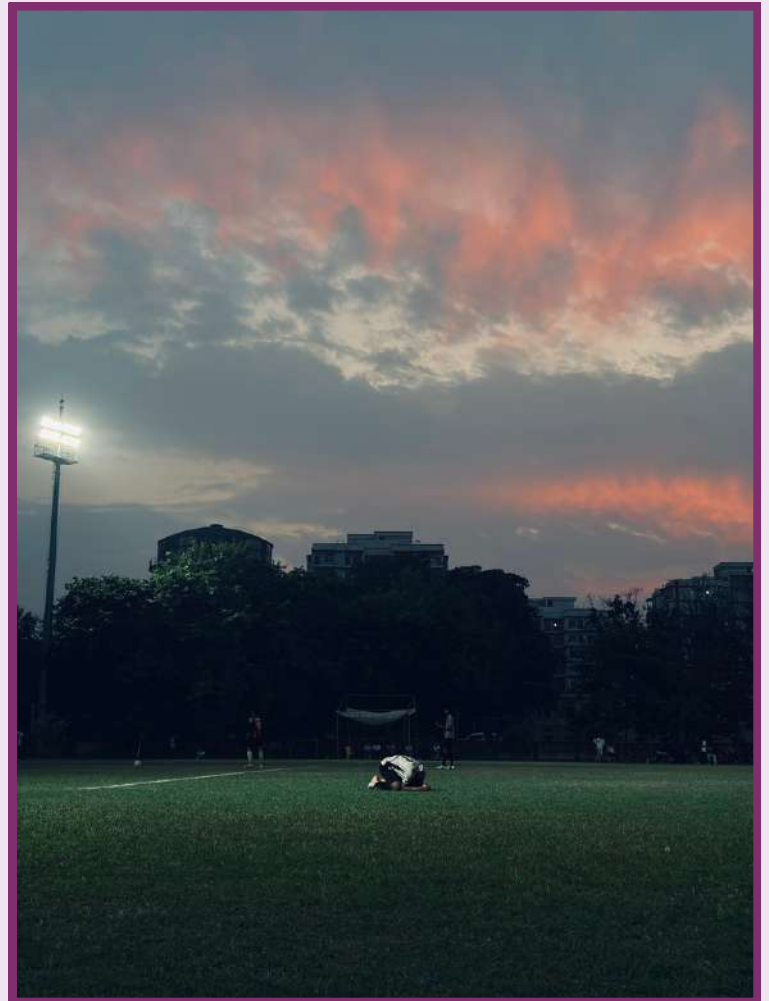
-Rumi

Photograph by Aliya Khan, 1st year

"A lone player collapses on the field,
exhaustion sinking into his bones as the
sky burns with the colors of a fading sun.

Countless hours of effort, sweat, and
sacrifice have led to this moment—one of
crushing defeat or overwhelming relief. His
body bows under the weight of his
struggles, a silent testament to his
dedication. The distant figures, the glowing
floodlights, the world around him move on,
but he remains frozen, lost in the echoes of
his hard work and the emotions that come
with it. "

**Photograph by Nitee Kaushik, 1st year
Psychology, Zakir Hussain**



Media Recommendations

MOVIES & TV SHOWS



Imtiaz Ali's *Tamasha* is a movie that speaks to anyone who has ever felt stuck living a life that doesn't feel like their own. With Ranbir Kapoor and Deepika Padukone delivering some of their most heartfelt performances, the film takes you on a journey of self-discovery and reconnecting with the parts of yourself that you may have lost along the way.

At its heart is Ved, a character we can all see a bit of ourselves in. As a child, he's full of wonder and creativity but as he grows up, life gets in the way. His inner storyteller? Silenced. The conflict between who Ved really is and who the world wants him to be is what Carl Rogers calls incongruence- when your true self and the self you're forced to show the world don't align.

Then comes Tara, a force of nature who sees right through Ved's mask. She doesn't just love him for the version of himself he's pretending to be—she loves the storyteller, the dreamer, the real Ved. Her faith in him feels like what Rogers describes as unconditional positive regard—accepting someone for who they truly are, flaws and all. Ved's breakdown is a reminder that it's never too late to reconnect with your passion, and to rewrite your own story.

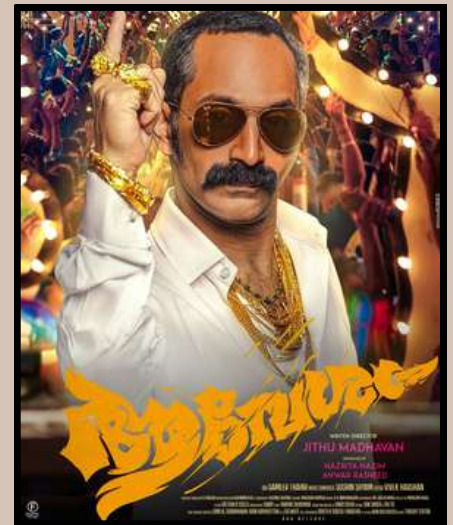


Goldfish (2022) is a poignant exploration of the fraught relationship between a mother and a daughter, set against the backdrop of dementia. Anamika comes back to a neighbourhood she has tried her best to forget, and to a mother who's slowly forgetting her, only to find both as she never knew; confronting buried wounds amidst the pulls of familial duty, and the tugs of emotional estrangement. "I know you, but I don't know you"—this haunting line encapsulates the paradox of remembering, yet forgetting. Sadhna's fading memories highlight the fragility of life and identity, sharpened by Anamika's frustrated outbursts of repressed emotions. In *Goldfish*, emotions ebb and flow like an ocean- raw, deep and unpredictable, yet undeniably human—a profound testament to the endurance of love beyond memory.

The Good Place is an American situation comedy that tackles complex philosophical and ethical issues very comprehensively and humorously, making us ponder what it means to be a good person. The series revolves around the various components that encompass the afterlife. After death, the human is supposedly either sent to “the good place” or “the bad place” which is determined by an elaborate point system. The show excels in presenting emotions through its characters, particularly Michael. His transformation reflects the show's overarching theme: the capacity for growth and redemption, even for those who initially seem irredeemable.



Aavesham is a Malayalam film that delves into the complexities of human psychology. The film masterfully weaves together moments of intense drama with lighter, comedic interludes, creating a captivating viewing experience. The characters are not simply good or bad, but rather complex individuals grappling with their own inner turmoil. Fahadh Faasil embodies the protagonist's conflicting emotions with remarkable subtlety. His character's journey is one of self-discovery and acceptance, marked by moments of anxiety, guilt, grief, and ultimately, hope and acceptance. The film's cinematography and background score further enhance the emotional impact.



BOOKS



Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* is a timeless tale of love, ambition, and family, following the lives of the four March sisters as they navigate personal growth and societal expectations. Among them, Jo stands out with her bold independence and fierce determination, embodying the struggle for creative freedom and self-discovery. The novel's heartfelt exploration of relationships and individuality creates an emotional, relatable story that continues to captivate readers of all ages.

Trigger Warnings: Suicide, Depression

Title inspired by a Beatles Song, *Norwegian Wood* is set in Japan during the late 1960s/70s exploring themes of love, loss, identity, and the complexities of mental health. Toru Watanabe is a university student living in Tokyo following the suicide of his only high school friend. The book delves deep into the aspect of suicide—its ramifications, the feeling of helplessness, loss and grief. Although the plot might seem mundane and Toru is by no means a dynamic hero of the story, there's something very human about the novel that gives its charm. It is a psychological crusade through the depths of human emotion. The candid exploration of mental health, grief, and existential loneliness resonates with readers on a personal level.

"What happens when people open their hearts?"

"They get better."



DOCUMENTARY



India Untouched: Stories of a People Apart by Stalin K, delves deeply into the harrowing realities of caste-based discrimination across India, laying bare the profound psychological and emotional scars carried by Dalits. Spanning regions from Gujarat to Tamil Nadu and cities like Delhi and Mumbai, the documentary reveals heart-wrenching anecdotes of oppression and alienation. Lifelong conditioning whispers, "We weren't told, we know this since birth," creating an inescapable web of inferiority and despair, and statements like "This culture is our country's main asset" mask centuries of privilege and denial. The documentary poignantly exposes how caste remains an omnipresent force that crushes dreams and perpetuates unbearable sorrow.



In Memoriam

Dr. Anita Ghai

23rd Oct 1958 – 11th Dec 2024

On 11 December, 2024, there was an outpouring of grief and shock in academic circles with the passing of Dr. Anita Ghai, with many paying tribute to one of the pioneers of critical disability studies in South Asia and a prominent disability rights and feminist activist.

Dr. Ghai was born in 1958 and diagnosed with polio at a very young age. She has spoken extensively about her own experiences, which has informed her work to a great extent, and made significant contributions to disability studies, having authored several seminal texts such as *(Dis)embodies Forms: Issues of Disabled Women* (2003), *Rethinking Disability in India* (2015) and *Disability in South Asia: Knowledge and Experience* (2019).

She was a professor at Jesus and Mary College, affiliated with the University of Delhi, and subsequently at Ambedkar University, Delhi, where she also introduced courses on disability for students of all levels. In 2020, she also launched the *Indian Journal of Critical Disability Studies* (along with T Bhattacharya).

Dr. Ghai's work focused on the intersection of gender and disability, including themes regarding the asexualisation of disabled women and their exclusion from the larger feminist movement. She also proposed an alternative to Western theories, challenging the autonomy/dependence binary and recasting interdependence and mutuality as strengths that can foster solidarity. The scope of her work was vast, encompassing not just disability but also education, health, bioethics, gender and sexuality studies and even Buddhist ideas or conceptions of disability.

"I had no memory of an able-bodied self. I also treasure the valuable experience that I can carry through life."

Anita Ghai's systematic critique of the existing disability model in India, stemming from her own contexts, has contributed tremendously to disability studies in India and South Asia. It has opened up a space for a more nuanced and social model-based understanding of disability and her work will remain as an invaluable legacy.

The Research Digest

Global Emotional Trends in Social Media During the Pandemic - Chauhan, A., et al. (2024)

The study revealed that despite the pandemic's challenges, positive emotions were more prominent than anxiety in social media posts across countries. Emotional responses varied by nation, with some exhibiting higher anxiety levels, such as the UK, while others displayed greater positivity, such as South Africa. Early in the pandemic, emotions were volatile but stabilized over time. Interestingly, the WHO's declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic reduced anxiety and increased positive emotions, possibly by alleviating uncertainty. Government economic support measures also boosted positivity, while national lockdowns and restrictions did not lead to heightened anxiety or diminished positive emotions, highlighting the public's resilience.

How Brands Become Icons - Murti, A. & Ghosh, R. (2023)

A study examined the neural correlates of cultural branding and it revealed that 90% of purchasing decisions are driven by emotions rather than logic. Neuromarketing tools like fMRI and EEG showed that emotional ads activate the amygdala, enhancing attention and memory, while familiar logos trigger dopamine release, fostering brand loyalty. Brands build strong consumer connections through emotional appeal, cultural relevance, and storytelling, as seen in campaigns like Coca-Cola's "Share a Coke", and Apple's "Think Different". By tapping into subconscious emotions and societal values, marketing creates lasting brand loyalty and engagement.

Rose Odour Helps to Improve Memory Consolidation - Knötzele, J., et al. (2023)

Imagine if boosting your memory was as simple as sniffing roses! A group of researchers put this idea to the test by having 160 participants learn 40 German-Japanese word pairs while being exposed to a rose scent. Participants were split into four groups: one with no scent, one with scent during learning and sleep, one with scent during learning and testing, and one with scent during all three phases. The supercharged group (learning + sleep + testing) remembered 8.5% more words than the rest—proof that a little floral magic can go a long way! Even better, the memory-boosting effects grew stronger over three days. However, the scent didn't seem to slow down forgetting over time.

Social Media ‘Likes’ Affect Mental Well-Being
- **Voggenreiter, A., et al. (2023)**

A research analyzed how receiving online feedback, such as "likes," impacts users' emotional experiences, social connectedness, and self-esteem. The study found that receiving little to no reactions from others elicits negative emotions and stress, leading to lower self-esteem. Conversely, receiving positive online feedback fosters feelings of social connectedness and reduces loneliness. The research suggests that while the emotional rewards of social media validation are linked to higher levels of social satisfaction and emotional well-being, the lack of feedback can trigger feelings of isolation.

Exposure to Violent Combat Sports Significantly Reduce Crime Rates
- **Lindo, J. M., et al. (2022)**

The rising popularity of shows on competitive mixed martial arts (MMA), namely the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) and reality TV show the Ultimate Fighter (TUF), has been found to significantly reduce antisocial behaviour. Drawing data from monthly reports of crimes filed by police agencies, the study revealed that the decline in crime rates were particularly evident in cases of assault, rape and property crimes after the shows' premier. These results are proposed to be attributed to changes in the individual's underlying psychological tendencies to engage in violent behaviour or criminal activity. For example, the UFC's realistic depictions of violence and the adverse consequences from physical altercations can ward viewers away from engaging in such behaviours.

Exposure to Hate Speech Impacts the Ability to Empathise
- **Pluta, A., et al. (2023)**

What does scrolling through social media and constantly seeing hate-filled comments do to your brain? Researchers had participants read either hateful or neutral comments before viewing stories about people (Polish and Arab individuals) in pain. The results? Those who read hateful comments showed reduced activity in the right temporal-parietal junction (rTPJ)—a brain region crucial for understanding others' emotions and perspectives. In short, exposure to hate speech dulled their ability to empathize, regardless of the person's ethnicity. This suggests that hate speech doesn't just fuel division—it numbs us to human suffering altogether.

Online Gaming and Adolescent Mental Health
- **Singh, A., et al. (2020)**

The link between online gaming addiction and emotional and behavioural problems were studied among adolescents in north-east India. The results revealed a significant correlation between online gaming and emotional distress, conduct issues, hyperactivity, and peer problems. Excessive gaming was also linked to lower self-regulation. Thus, the results emphasise on the need for targeted psychosocial interventions, in additions to underscoring the growing public health concerns surrounding excessive gaming and its psychological impact on adolescents.

Financial Incentives Proven Effective in Smoking Cessation Efforts

- Notley, C. (2019)

A study from the University of East Anglia has shown that offering financial incentives, such as cash rewards or vouchers, significantly increases the chances of smokers quitting. For every 100 people given such incentives, about 10 were likely to quit after six months. Lead author Prof. Caitlin Notley emphasized that these incentives were particularly effective, with participants continuing to experience success in quitting even after the rewards ended. This study supports the idea that financial incentives can be a valuable public health tool in promoting smoking cessation and reducing related health risks.

Do Emotions Linger in the Air?

- Savani, K., et al. (2011)

The concept of emotional residue, a belief that emotions leave a trace in the physical environment, is more popularly believed by Indians as compared to those in the United States. Researchers suggest that the belief about how emotions escape the body to leave a presence in the room, is a shared intuitive concept that people acquire without explicit teaching. The study asserts that people believe emotional residue can affect their moods and behaviours over time. For instance, chronic exposure to a space that is perceived to be associated with negative emotions could lead to similar feelings in new occupants which illustrates a psychological consequence of emotional residue.

How Indian Mothers Shape Emotional Growth

- Raval, V. V., & Martini, T. S. (2011)

Highlighting the interplay between cultural norms and parenting, a study by Raval and Martini (2011) revealed that mothers display unique patterns in handling their children's emotions. In contrast to Western rearing practices that emphasize emotion-focused coping, Gujarati mothers often prioritized "making the child understand" (samjhavavu)—a culturally ingrained strategy that highlights interdependence over individual expression. By articulating specific expectations regarding appropriate emotional expressions and behaviors in their children, mothers aimed to foster a sense of responsibility and social awareness in their children to comply with societal expectations.



RCI News & Updates

The Rehabilitative Council of India (RCI), an apex government body, plays an important regulatory function by managing training programs and providing guidelines for courses for professionals engaged in rehabilitative tasks. The Central Rehabilitation Register (CRR) is its mechanism for documentation of qualified professionals and serves an essential purpose in regulating practices in the field. In line with its objective to synchronize practices in the field, create a comprehensive framework of professional accountability through distinct licenses, and implement the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the RCI implemented significant updates to its guidelines. These reforms aim to reshape the training and education framework and thus, have significant implications for career planning amongst students.

The RCI offers the following programs for students pursuing careers in clinical psychology, each corresponding to a specific level of expertise:

- **PG Diploma (Postgraduate Diploma):**

- Duration: 1 year (full-time) (In place of present Professional Diploma in CP):
- Level: NHEQF Level 6.5
- Licensed as 'Clinical Psychologist (Associate)' under CRR with the RCI
- Description:
 - i. Qualified to provide assessments and routine counseling in non-teaching settings.
 - ii. Not eligible for neuropsychological evaluations, neurorehabilitation, or specialized interventions for complex cases.
 - iii. Cannot independently conduct research or hold academic positions without further training.
 - iv. Can work in roles like clinical assistant or junior consultant in hospitals and community clinics.

- **M.Psy (Master of Psychology):**

- Duration: 2 years (full-time) (In place of present M.Phil Clinical Psychology)
- Level: NHEQF Level 7
- Licensed as 'Clinical Psychologist' under CRR

- Description:
 - i. Training includes extensive theoretical knowledge and clinical skills.
 - ii. Employment opportunities include academic roles, medical colleges, hospitals, community health centers, schools, and private practice.
 - iii. Eligible to apply for Year-3 of the Psy.D. program if other criteria are met.
- **Psy.D. (Doctor of Psychology):**
 - Duration: 4 years (full-time)
 - Level: NHEQF Level 8
 - Skills necessary to function as a senior consultant, researcher, supervisor, and trainer '**Clinical Psychologist**' with CRR registration under RCI.
 - Description:
 - i. Aimed at developing senior consultants, researchers, and supervisors.
 - ii. Involves over 4,000 hours of clinical training and advanced competencies.
 - iii. Includes management, advocacy, legal, and ethical training through internships.
 - iv. Graduates are eligible for leadership roles in academic, clinical, and research settings.

The National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) levels indicate the academic and professional depth of each program, with Level 6.5 representing diploma-level qualifications, Level 7 indicating master's-level training, and Level 8 corresponding to doctoral-level expertise.

Course Structure:

The Psy.D.(Clinical Psychology) is a “nested” suite with two early exit points. The Postgraduate Diploma is “nested” within the M.Psy Clinical Psychology. The M.Psy Clinical Psychology is “nested” within the Psy.D. This is as given on the next page.

	CREDITS			
YEAR 1	60 (1440 hours)	PG Diploma (Clinical Psychology):	M.Psy (Clinical Psychology)	Psy.D. (Clinical Psychology)
YEAR 2	+ 60 = 120 (2880 hours)			
YEAR 3	+ 60 = 180 (4320 hours)			
YEAR 4	+ Two non-credit courses			

Eligibility Criteria:

Direct entry:

Students may apply directly to the above mentioned programs, provided they meet the educational and proficiency requirements:

A) Educational Qualification:

- UGC-recognized Bachelor's Degree (Hons) of 4-year duration (8 semesters) (NHEQF Level 6) in Psychology as a core subject with a minimum grade average of 60% (or equivalent as per UGC norms), and successful qualification in the entrance test and interview by a panel assessing proficiency and knowledge.

OR

- UGC-recognized Master's Degree in any branch of Psychology (2-year duration, NHEQF Level 6.5) after completing a 3-year Bachelor's Degree with Psychology as one of the major/core subjects, with a minimum grade average of 60% (or equivalent as per UGC norms), and successful qualification in the entrance test and interview.

OR

- UGC-recognized Master's Degree in any branch of Psychology (1-year duration, NHEQF Level 6.5) after completing a 4-year Bachelor's Degree (Hons) in Psychology, with a minimum grade average of 60% (or equivalent as per UGC norms), and successful qualification in the entrance test and interview.

B) Credit Requirement:

Minimum 160 credit hours of study in Psychology as per UGC norms. Of this, 60% of credit hours must be on modules related to:

- Core Courses: Systems/schools of psychology, Developmental psychology, Social psychology, Physiological psychology, Theories of learning, Brain and Cognition, Theories of Personality.
- Foundation Courses: Adult personality and psychopathology, Child and Adolescent Psychopathology, Abnormal psychology, Health psychology, Clinical neuropsychology, Equity, diversity and inclusion, Vocational rehabilitation, Psychosocial rehabilitation interventions, Community mental health, School mental health, Neurodevelopmental disorders, Socio-cultural issues in health and illness, Positive psychology.
- Modular Courses: Psychotherapeutic methods, Psychological Assessment, Personality assessment, Counseling skills and techniques, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Applied Behaviour Analysis, Interviewing skills and techniques, Behaviour modification techniques, Biofeedback techniques.
- Research: Introduction to statistics and measurement, Applied Statistical methods, Psychological testing and measurement, Bachelor/Master's level thesis and research.

C) Desired Traits and Qualities: Work Ethics, Authenticity, Integrity, Commitment, Attention to detail, Critical thinking, Positive attitude, Empathy, Confidence, Flexibility, Communication skills, Leadership, Passion, Teamwork, Compassion, Autonomy, Accountability, Respect, Positive engagement.

Lateral entry:

A) Eligibility for Year-2:

- Those who have completed a Professional Diploma in Clinical Psychology (1-year duration) within three years prior to the admission year from an RCI-recognized center, with a minimum of 65% marks in aggregate, valid CRR, and no legal/professional complaints. Such candidates must pass a separate entrance exam.

B) Eligibility for Year-3:

- Those who have completed an M.Phil in Clinical Psychology (2-year duration) within three years prior to the admission year from an RCI-recognized center, with a minimum of 65% marks in aggregate (in both Part-1 and Part-2), valid CRR, and no legal/professional complaints. Such candidates must pass a separate entrance exam.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

The Department of Psychology at Lady Shri Ram College For Women organised several engaging sessions and a workshop in 2024. This academic year, a new series of production called “Career Compass” was added to the repository, where we ensconce our Alumni under the spotlight, to discuss a wide assemblage of topics, ranging from prospects for psychology in higher education to mastering placements and exploring the novel and forthcoming career paths in the field of psychology. The following reports offer insights about the department’s contribution in the overall success of these events.

Career Compass 1: Navigating Masters Admissions in Psychology



An online session titled 'Navigating Masters Admission in Psychology' was held on August 20, 2024, at 7 PM via Google Meet. The speaker, Ms. Shivangi Anil, an LSR alumni from the 2016 batch, holds a master's degree from Ambedkar University and is pursuing a second master's in Mental Health Counseling at Boston University. She is a psychotherapist specializing in workplace mental health and disability affirmative therapy. Ms. Anil provided insights into

postgraduate psychology applications and careers in India and the US. She discussed her experience with Ambedkar University's Masters in Psychology (Psychosocial Clinical Studies), detailing the admission process, psychodynamic focus, and emphasis on social issues like caste and queer mental health. The session also explored the structure of US higher education, covering application processes, licensing, and maintaining a holistic personal profile. Ms. Anil highlighted the clinical exposure and opportunities at Boston University and offered guidance on selecting colleges. The interactive session concluded with audience questions, providing clarity on the application process and decision-making for pursuing a Master's degree.

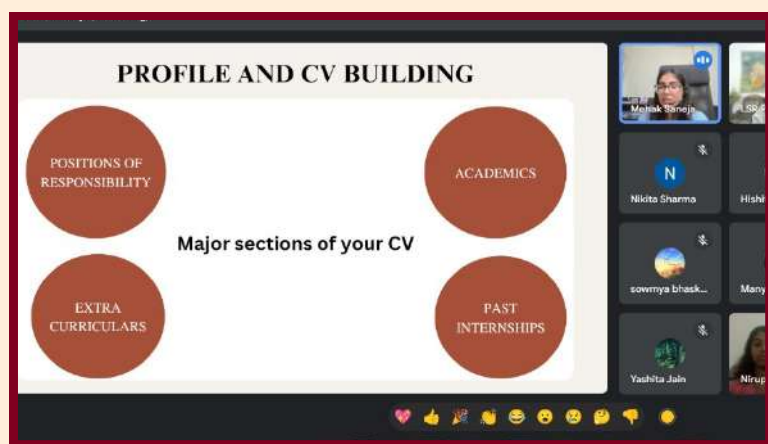
Lecture & Discussion on “My World Without Jehan”

A session on the book “My World Without Jehan” by Liana Mistry was organised on August 22nd during the ECA period in the Upper Seminar Room. The event, attended by the Association In-Charge, Dr. Bhawna Devi and introduced by the Department President, Avni Gupta, focused on grief, loss, healing, and mental health. Mistry shared her deeply personal journey of losing her elder brother, a gay rock musician, to suicide. She recounted how he had attempted suicide three times before his death and how his struggles with undiagnosed mental health issues impacted their family. She emphasized the importance of remembering the



life lived rather than just the manner of passing and described the 36-year silence she eventually broke by writing her memoir, spurred by the loss of her mother. The session provided a safe space for open discussions, with attendees engaging in thoughtful conversations about grief, healing, and resilience. They explored Mistry's writing process, the challenges of translating emotions into words, and how her brother's death shaped her own mental health and relationship with her children. Complex topics like "closure" were discussed, helping attendees reflect on their own experiences of loss through storytelling and acceptance. The event concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks from the Department Union. My World Without Jehan served as a powerful platform to address stigmatized issues like suicide and mental health, fostering empathy, understanding, and deeper exploration of grief and resilience.

Career Compass 2: How to Crack Placements As a Humanities Major?



A virtual session on cracking placements as a humanities major was conducted on September 7, 2024. The speaker, Ms. Mehak Saneja, an LSR alumna and IHOP associate at D.E. SHAW, shared insights drawn from her extensive experience. The session, held on Google Meet, began with a presentation outlining the placement process and its key components. Ms. Mehak stressed the importance of building a strong CV, focusing on a few societies and aiming for leadership roles rather

than spreading oneself too thin. She also advocated for internships at startups, participation in research projects, and maintaining a CGPA above 7 for better placement prospects. Key tips included getting CVs reviewed by seniors, preparing for aptitude tests using resources like entrance books and FacePrep, and staying updated on current affairs for group discussions. For interviews, she emphasized tailoring responses to personal experiences, connecting academic skills to company needs, and asking thoughtful questions to engage the interviewer. Ms. Mehak encouraged students to explore off-campus opportunities, network on LinkedIn, and maintain adaptable job strategies. The session concluded with a Q&A, where students delved into her experiences and placement advice.

Workshop on The Problematic Use of Internet and Addiction

A workshop on "The Problematic Use of Internet and Addiction" was conducted on September 12, 2024, led by distinguished alumna, Ms. Surbhi Gupta. An RCI-Licensed Clinical Psychologist and Psychotherapist, Ms. Gupta shared her expertise during the ECA period in Lab 4. The session delved into recognizing early signs of internet addiction and understanding the boundaries between use and overuse. Ms. Gupta discussed behavioural addiction, highlighting internet addiction, and contrasted it with substance addiction. She explained the absence of a homogenous definition of Internet Addiction, touching upon concepts from the American Psychological



Association and exploring its impacts on time management and social functioning. Key diagnostic criteria, such as preoccupation with the internet, mood changes, and impaired relationships, were discussed alongside different types of internet addiction—cyber-relational, net compulsions, and more. Statistical data revealed 20-40% of Indian college students face risks, with 27% of LSR students showing moderate problematic use. The biopsychosocial model outlined the biological, psychological, and social factors contributing to addiction. Tools like the Internet Addiction Test and treatment approaches involving SSRIs and psychotherapy techniques were

also covered. The inclusion of a case study greatly facilitated the explanation of the concepts. The session concluded with a vote of thanks, as Ms. Gupta's insights left a lasting impression on the interactive audience. A token of appreciation was presented to honor her contribution.

Interdisciplinary Lecture: Rethinking Families: Sociological Insights

On November 14, 2024, a seminar was held in Lab 4 of the Psychology Department, featuring Prof. Anuja Agrawal, Head of Sociology at the Delhi School of Economics. The session was introduced by the Department President, Avni Gupta, and attended by students and faculty members from the Psychology and Sociology departments of LSR. The discussion explored sociological and anthropological perspectives on family and kinship. Prof. Agrawal discussed the evolution of family structures, emphasizing that families are shaped by economic and historical contexts rather than just biological ties. She cited Marshall Sahlins' concept of kinship through shared experiences,



Judith Stacey's critique of traditional domesticity, and theories by Meyer Fortes, Maurice Bloch, and David Schneider on family as a system of moral obligations and solidarity. She also addressed universal taboos like incest and the cyclical nature of family development. The Q&A session delved into the psychological assessment of family norms and historical influences like the Industrial Revolution. The seminar concluded with Prof. Priti Dhawan delivering a vote of thanks, acknowledging the depth of discussion and Prof. Agrawal's insightful contributions.

Career Compass 3: Unlocking Career Paths in Criminal Psychology



An online session, titled "Unlocking Career Paths in Criminal Psychology" was held on November 16, 2024, via Google Meet. The session featured Ms. Harshita Bajaj, an LSR alumna, gold medalist in M.A. Criminology (LNJN NICFS), UGC-NET JRF qualifier, and Senior Research Fellow at the National Forensic Sciences University, specializing in Criminal Psychology, Human Rights, and Victimology. Ms. Bajaj introduced the topic with an engaging

discussion on Criminal vs. Forensic Psychology, addressing common misconceptions and the field's growing relevance in India. She outlined the roles and responsibilities of a criminal psychologist, emphasizing practical applications and career opportunities. To provide deeper insight, she shared real-world case studies, including an incident involving a national-level hockey player and her experiences working with ex-prisoners, highlighting the complexities of offender rehabilitation. Following the presentation, students actively participated in an interactive Q&A session, posing questions related to career prospects and field challenges. The session concluded with a formal vote of thanks from the Department of Psychology, expressing gratitude for Ms. Bajaj's invaluable insights and inspiration to aspiring professionals in the field.

Mind Over Matter : A Story of Hope and Resilience

The Department of Psychology and World University Service, in collaboration with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), hosted Mr. Nidhin Valsan (IPS), Deputy Commissioner of Police, Outer North Delhi, on November 29, 2024, for a session titled "Mind Over Matter: A Story of Hope and Resilience." The event took place in the New Common Hall during the ECA period and was attended by approximately 100 students from various courses. The session was graced by the Association In-Charge, Dr. Bhawna Devi, and the Convenor of IQAC, Dr. Megha Dhillon.



Dr. Bhawna Devi introduced Mr. Valsan, highlighting his journey as a 2012 batch IPS officer (AGMUT Cadre) who battled stage 4 Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and later became an Ironman triathlete. He is also the author of the

book “Cancer Man to Ironman”. Mr. Valsan shared his experiences of resilience and perseverance, recounting how he coped with his diagnosis, explored new interests like learning Arabic, and overcame setbacks through continuous effort. He emphasized how life’s challenges can feel like a fluctuating graph, yet determination and persistence are key to overcoming hardships. His completion of the Ironman 70.3 triathlon symbolized his unwavering spirit. The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Megha Dhillon, who commended Mr. Valsan’s strength in battling cancer amid active duty and the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Dhillon expressed her heartfelt gratitude on the behalf of the college administration for the speaker's availability and insightful session. To conclude, a brief Q/A session was held wherein questions regarding what motivated him to push through and his unique battle with cancer were asked by the students.

PERMA: The Path to Well-Being

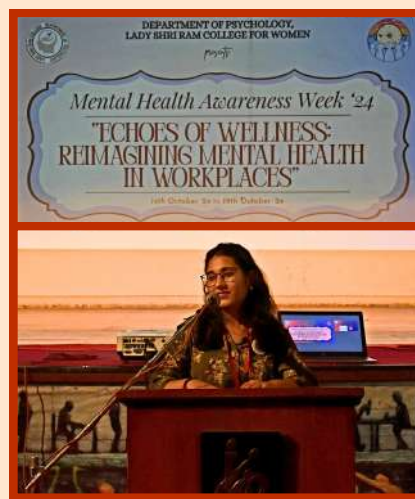


On 9th January 2025, the Department of Psychology, in collaboration with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), organized a speaker session on “PERMA: The Path to Well-Being” in the New Conference Hall during the ECA time slot. The session was delivered by Dr. Jaya Mohan, a renowned psychologist, mental health advocate, and ICSSR Doctoral Fellow. It was attended by over 60 students from the Department of Psychology. Dr. Jaya has extensive

experience in counselling students and staff at various institutions and has delivered talks on All India Radio to address mental health issues. She also created the podcast, “Chasing Sunshine”, which promotes emotional well-being and resilience. Dr. Jaya began the session by highlighting the significance of Positive Psychology in today’s fast-paced post-pandemic world. She presented concerning data collected from Delhi and Andhra Pradesh, revealing high levels of stress, fatigue, and feelings of inadequacy among students. To address these concerns, she introduced and elaborated on PERMA, an acronym given by Dr Martin E. Seligman, representing Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement—five key pillars of well-being that help individuals flourish. She actively involved the audience through engaging activities such as ‘Find Your Tribe’, ‘Thought Experiment’, and ‘Colour Your Heart’. At the end of the session, Dr. Megha Dhillon, Convenor of IQAC, thanked Dr. Jaya Mohan for elucidating the concept of PERMA and reinforcing the principles of Positive Psychology. She also expressed her gratitude to the Principal, Dr. Suman Sharma, for her continued support of IQAC. As a token of appreciation, the Association In-Charge, Dr. Bhawna Devi, presented Dr. Jaya with a handmade card and a shawl. The session concluded on a high note, reflected in the lively atmosphere, the smiling faces of the audience, and their enthusiastic participation in the ‘Blow Your Worries’ activity.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS TRAINING WEEK 2024

Echoes of Wellness: Reimagining Mental Health in Workplaces



Inaugural Ceremony

The Department of Psychology at Lady Shri Ram College for Women inaugurated its flagship Mental Health Awareness Week 2024 on 14th October, 2024 with a ceremony held in the college auditorium. The ceremony was attended by around 60 students from the Department of Psychology across all three years. It began with the college prayer led by Dr. Priti Dhawan, followed by a warm welcome and introduction of the 2024 theme, “Echoes of Wellness: Reimagining Mental Health in Workplaces”, by the Department President, Avni Gupta. The theme was aligned with the global theme, “It’s Time to Prioritize Mental Health in Workplaces.” The flagship week was officially inaugurated with the ceremonial lamp lighting by faculty members and the Union. Following that, Dr. Siksha Deepak recited a self-composed poem reflecting on the theme and her journey as a professor at LSR, after which students shared their views on the topic. Dr. Bhawna Devi, the Association In-Charge, further explored the theme, highlighting its relevance with striking statistics on how mental health impacts productivity and well-being. Quoting the UN Secretary-General, she emphasised that “Mental health is not only a personal struggle but a shared responsibility.” The ceremony concluded with Avni Gupta presenting the itinerary for the week and thanking everyone for their presence and contributions to the meaningful event.

Panel Discussion With Alumni



On 15th October 2024, a panel discussion titled “Striking the Balance: Navigating Work & Life” was hosted which was moderated by Dr. Pushpita Behera. The panel comprised seven distinguished alumni namely, Aishwarya Bajaj (Guest Faculty, Jesus & Mary College), Reva Garg (Management Trainee, Boston Consulting Group), Arushi Sawhney (Senior Consultant, Ernst & Young), Srishti Kumar (Senior Consultant, Deloitte), Tanvika Kalra (Phd Scholar, Organizational Psychology at IIT Delhi), Akrita Verma (Senior Executive Human Resource, BlinkIt) and Unnati Singhal (Human Resource Associate, Bain & Company), currently working and enrolled in prestigious companies and institutions. The discussion explored topics such as work-life imbalance, workplace mental strain, disagreements



with seniors, and managing unrealistic goals. The panelists shared strategies like setting boundaries, taking breaks, creating mental health resource groups, prioritizing meaningful careers, and engaging in hobbies to achieve personal and professional balance. Around 65 students attended the event and actively participated in the Q&A session where issues such as AI’s role in workplaces and managing technology after work hours were discussed. The panel discussion concluded with closing remarks by Dr. Pushpita Behera and Dr. Bhawna Devi, followed by a vote of thanks from the union members, expressing gratitude to the panelists and faculty for their insights and support.

Character Care Kits

An engaging activity session on ‘Character Care Kits’ was held as part of Mental Health Awareness Week 2024. Organised by the Books, Documentaries, and Media Team, the session took place on 16th October, 2024 during the lunch break in Lab 4 of the Psychology Department. It aimed to create an interactive space where students could explore support and coping mechanisms by reimagining their favourite fictional characters. The session began with students sharing their expectations and expressing enthusiasm for understanding fictional characters through a fresh lens. Discussions delved into how fictional personalities evoke emotional experiences, highlighting their dilemmas and perspectives. A sample ‘support kit’ for a character was demonstrated, incorporating mechanisms such as creative hobbies, music, movies, and professional help. Students then designed personalised support kits for their chosen characters, addressing challenges and suggesting coping strategies. Presentations of these kits revealed common struggles faced by characters and tools such as stress

management techniques, seeking mental health aid, and engaging in leisure activities. The session also facilitated discussions on psychological disorders, trauma, stress, and more, through relatable characters from video games, animation, and popular media. The activity concluded with an emphasis on understanding coping strategies for enhanced mental health and a note of thanks to the students for their enthusiastic participation. The session successfully sparked meaningful conversations in a creative and relatable way.



Lecture With Prof. (Dr.) Kanika K. Ahuja

A lecture on time management as a key to wellness was delivered by Dr. Kanika Ahuja, an esteemed professor with 24 years of experience in industrial and organisational psychology. The event was held on October 16, 2024, during the eighth period in the New Conference Hall. Dr. Ahuja was introduced by Avni Gupta, the Department President, and was accompanied by Dr. Bhawna Devi, the Association In-Charge. She emphasised that time management is self-management and discussed using Time Logs to track daily activities and optimise productivity. She outlined five key strategies: setting SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound), prioritising tasks through tools like the Time Matrix and the Pareto Principle, managing interruptions by scheduling them in one's daily schedule and saying no, addressing



procrastination by identifying triggers and rewarding progress, and delegating tasks effectively with clear communication. She introduced the Productive Pyramid, which starts with identifying values and ends with daily planning, and also shared practical tips such as prioritising major tasks (big rocks first), silencing notifications, exercising, and maintaining a tidy space. The lecture concluded with a vote of thanks by Vanshika Dhyani, the Department Treasurer, who expressed gratitude to Dr. Ahuja and Dr. Bhawna Devi for their valuable contributions.

Session With Mr. Alok Khanna



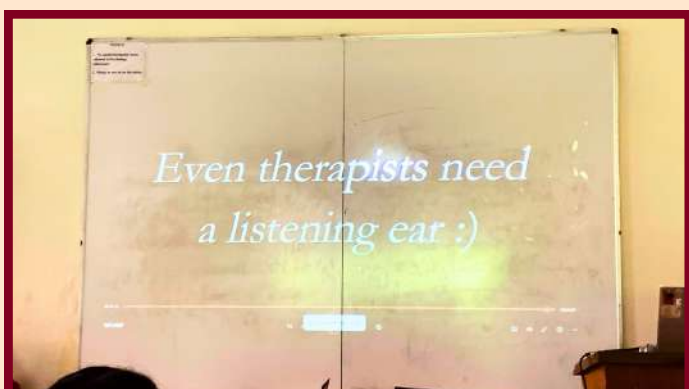
On 17th October 2024, the Department of Psychology hosted Mr. Alok Khanna as a special guest for Mental Health Awareness Week 2024. Held in the Upper Seminar Room, the workshop was attended by professors and psychology students across all years. The session aimed to promote healthier, more inclusive workplaces by addressing mental well-being as a cornerstone of productivity and employee satisfaction. Mr. Khanna began by emphasising the growing importance of mental health in workplaces, linking it to improved productivity, reduced absenteeism and increased presenteeism. He discussed key challenges like workplace stress, anxiety over job performance, burnout, and stigma. Drawing from his diverse professional experiences, he highlighted the role of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), counselling services, and mental health resources in supporting employees' well-being. He also used the analogy of a bell-shaped curve to represent the ups and downs of life and work, advocating for training and awareness programs to help employees maintain balance and perform effectively. The session included a dynamic Q&A, with questions such as "How do social inclusion and gender diversity influence mental health?" and "Why do we often adopt a casual approach toward mental health-related language?" These discussions added depth and insight to the workshop. Mr. Khanna concluded with an inspiring message: "You have the power to transform lives—one mind at a time," urging the audience to take tangible action, stay focused, and let their work reflect their dedication to mental health advocacy.



Valedictory Session

The Department of Psychology at Lady Shri Ram College concluded the Mental Health Awareness Week with a Valedictory Session on 18th October, 2024. The session took place in Lab 4 of the Psychology Department and was attended by both the students and the faculty members. The event began with a quiz on Workplace Mental Health Initiatives conducted by the Research Circle, which kept the audience engaged with interactive questions. Correct answers were rewarded with chocolates. A cake-cutting ceremony followed, where teachers shared the cake with students and colleagues, marking a special moment. The session featured a short film created by the Press and Photography Team, showcasing the journey of an overworked therapist prioritizing her mental health.

The film emphasized the need for mental health awareness among both students and professionals. The Media and Publicity Team then presented a video of interviews with LSR teachers, sharing their views on mental health at the workplace and practices for well-being, such as relaxation techniques and physical activities. Prabhjot, the Media and Publicity Team Head, and Avni, the Department President, shared their thoughts on the significance of mental health practices for both teachers and students. The event concluded with a heartfelt thank-you speech by third-year student Sanya Ganjoo and a vote of thanks by Dr. Bhawna Devi, appreciating the efforts of the entire department in making the flagship week a success.



PSYCHOLOGY AROUND THE GLOBE

JANUARY '25

ISBF Partners with King's College for Psychology Education

Chopra, H. (2025, January 23). ISBF Partners with King's College London to Enhance Psychology Education in India. *Jagranjosh.com*.

ISBF has partnered with King's College London to enhance psychology education in India, offering Indian students access to high-quality, internationally recognized programs. This collaboration includes a BSc Psychology (Hons) program, designed to meet the growing demand for mental health professionals in India. The curriculum, developed by both institutions, will provide students with enhanced learning opportunities and global exposure. ISBF will also introduce a psychology laboratory for practical experience in simulations and experiments. Mrs. Arushi Bakshi, Director of ISBF, highlighted that this program integrates theoretical rigor with practical application, backed by King's College London's resources.

DECEMBER '24

UNESCO Supports Mental Health of Palestinian Students

UNESCO supports mental health and well-being of Palestinian university students. (2024, December 31). *UNESCO*.

UNESCO launched a new initiative to support the mental health and well-being of Palestinian university students. The program aims to address the mental health challenges students face due to ongoing conflict and socio-political stress. Through partnerships with local universities, UNESCO is providing mental health resources, including counselling and peer-support networks. This initiative also includes workshops and training for staff to enhance their capacity to support students. The project is a step towards fostering resilience and mental well-being in the Palestinian student community.

NOVEMBER '24

Using Psychology for Conflict Resolution in the Courts

Dabhi, B. (2024, November 23). Justice Kumar bats for conflict resolution using psychology. *The Indian Express*.

In his valedictory address at the CPSICON 2024 National Annual Conference, Supreme Court Justice Aravind Kumar said that psychology is crucial for resolving conflicts. He stated the role of four Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods, out of which 'conciliation' comes under the purview of psychologists, is particularly useful in dealing with disputes at the police station level before they escalate to the court. Justice Kumar supported institutional acknowledgement of conciliation, stating that it will aid in improving the function of law and serve to promote harmony among citizens.

OCTOBER '24

ReFrame 2024 Journal Launched by Mariwala Health Initiative

Mariwala, R., Hembrom, R., Roy, M., Hadke, A., Rizwan, S., & Sengupta, A. (Eds.). (2024). ReFrame: Global Mental Health from the Margins: Issue 6. In Mariwala Health Initiative.

In October 2024, the Mariwala Health Initiative launched ReFrame 2024, a journal focusing on mental health through a South Asian lens. The journal features contributions from global feminists, mental health professionals, and indigenous communities. Divided into three sections, Re-vision, Contexts and Engage, it explores themes like colonial trauma, cultural negligence, and neurodiversity. ReFrame 2024 aims to challenge mainstream mental health constructs and provide a platform for marginalised voices. It is a vital resource for mental health professionals, activists, scholars, and policymakers worldwide.

SEPTEMBER '24

WHO and TikTok Collaborate for Health Literacy

World Health Organization: WHO. (2024, September 26). WHO and TikTok to collaborate on more science-based information on health and well-being. World Health Organization.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and TikTok have announced a year-long collaboration to provide reliable, science-based health information. With over 1 billion users, TikTok will help raise health awareness by sharing evidence-based content and promoting positive health behaviors. This partnership aims to address the challenges of misinformation on digital platforms, particularly among young adults who actively seek health information on social media. WHO's Fides network of health influencers will play a key role in amplifying credible health content. The collaboration will focus on health topics, translating science into relatable video content and supporting influencers with training programs.

AUGUST '24

APA Guidelines for the Practice of Telepsychology

APA Guidelines for the Practice of Telepsychology. (2024, August). <https://www.apa.org>.

Telepsychology, the delivery of psychological services through digital platforms like video calls, phone, or chat, has risen in popularity. A study found that psychotherapy has increased among Americans, especially Young Adults. From 2018 to 2021, U.S. adults receiving therapy grew from 7% to 9%, with Young Adults (12%) leading, followed by Middle-Aged (8%) and Seniors (5%), possibly due to Telemedicine. This shift has improved access but also highlighted healthcare inequalities. In response, the APA released the "APA Guidelines for the Practice of Telepsychology" in August 2024, emphasizing ethics, human rights, and equity in AI. India's Tele MANAS and KIRAN helpline similarly provide accessible mental health support, aligning with Telepsychology.

APA Policy on Artificial Intelligence and the Field of Psychology

Artificial intelligence and the field of psychology. (2024, August). <https://www.apa.org>.

This policy approved by the APA Council of Representatives recognises the seminal impact AI technologies are having on society. The APA affirmed that the role of psychology in addressing any future societal challenges arising from this remains vital, and it recognises the positive, negative and ethical implications of using AI. The policy highlights the need for scientific psychological knowledge in guiding AI development, and harnessing its potential to enhance health and well-being for society, while mitigating any inadvertent ethical and privacy related effects it may have. With this policy, the APA seeks to promote equity by identifying and mitigating biases in AI systems, advocate for continued research to assess AI's societal impact, ensure its integration into various fields, inform policymakers, and so on.

JULY '24

Growing Concerns for Athletes' Mental Health

Ninan, S. (2024, July 17). At Paris 2024, India to prioritise mental health. *Hindustan Times*.

India's performance at the Paris 2024 Olympics brought moments of pride and emotion for all of us. Our nation ranked 71st among 206 participating nations. It was even more impressive that our athletes were accompanied for the first time by mental health professionals, namely psychologist Divya Jain and psychiatrist Dr Samir Parikh. This initiative reflects a growing acknowledgment of the importance of mental health in sports, especially following global discussions sparked by events like Simone Biles' withdrawal from the Tokyo Olympics. Their presence underscores a recognition that psychological support is essential for enhancing athletic performance and maintaining overall health.

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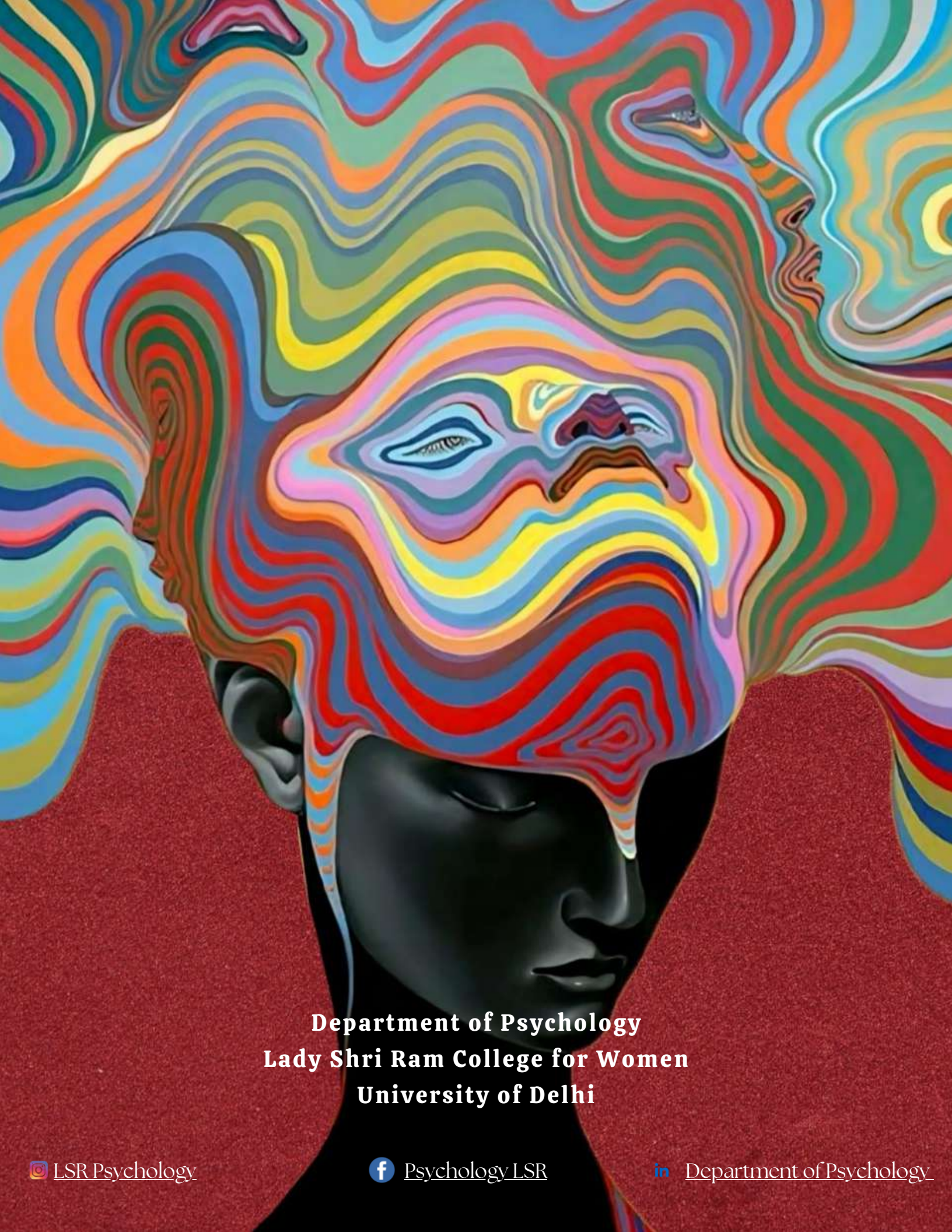
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