

The Gender Studies Cell of St. Stephen's College had an enriching year, filled with both academic as well as non-academic events including lectures, panel discussions, reading circles, collaboration series, Let's Talks, and film screenings. The academic year came to a closure with its annual fest *Sarfarosh*, and the official release of its annual newsletter *Kön*.

The year began with a vibrant orientation that attracted a significant turnout from enthusiastic first-year students. This event introduced them to our wide range of activities and set the stage for the inclusive dialogue we aimed to nurture.

Throughout the year, we hosted five engaging 'Let's Talk' sessions, each addressing crucial issues of gender, society, identity, caste and their intersections. These sessions provided a safe space for students to openly share their experiences and ideas on topics addressing concerns that affect them. The themes of the Let's Talk sessions were as follows - 'Navigating

Elitism in Campus Spaces', 'Love Laws: Exploring Identities and Legislation', 'Gender and Disability in the University Space', 'Identities and Citizenship: Sectarian Politics and the Nation' and 'Queering Indian Cinema'.

Our efforts culminated in several significant events, including our mini-festival, 'Voices from the Intersection', where we collaborated with various societies to foster a sense of community. Beginning on 7th November 2023, the three-day fest platformed speakers and organized discussions and reading circles about discourses on intersectional subjectivities. The inaugural lecture was delivered by research scholar Shainal Kabir Verma. This was followed by a student panel discussion in collaboration with the North-East Society. For Day 2, we hosted a lecture by Dr. Mridula Rashmi Kindo in collaboration with the Adivasi Toli, followed by a Let's Talk in collaboration with the Enabling Unit. On Day 3 we hosted a lecture by journalist Fatima Khan in collaboration with the Gandhi Ambedkar Study Circle, following which we organized a reading circle with Bazm-e-Adab. Such collaborative events created an environment conducive to compelling socio-political discussions, engaging with intersectionalities and the ways they operate in society.

We also launched a reading club that explored the theme 'Bodies Beyond Binaries'. In two captivating sessions, we delved into works like *Breast Stories* by Mahasweta Devi and *The Laugh of the Medusa* by Hélène Cixous. Participants were encouraged to critically examine societal constructs related to gender and embodiment. Enthusiastic participation by students has encouraged us to organize many such reading sessions afterward.

Our commitment to amplifying marginalized voices was further highlighted through a series of impactful film screenings. On 21st November 2023, we featured the documentary 'Trans Kashmir' which documents the lives of transgender individuals in Kashmir. The screening was followed by a discussion with Surbhi Dewan, the director. On 18th March, we screened a documentary on the lives of sex workers and their children by journalist Bhumika Saraswati which was followed by a discussion with her. On 21st March 2024, we collaborated with the Cine Club to screen 'Margarita with a Straw' which was followed by a Let's Talk session on 'Queering Indian Cinema'. These

screenings sparked meaningful discussions and raised awareness about various pressing issues in society.

To further broaden the scope of our discourse, we introduced *Raqt*, an online platform open to submissions from the entire student community. This initiative allowed the Gender Studies Cell to amplify diverse voices and perspectives, through digital means. It increased our reach and the audience, helping to build a larger collective understanding of gender-related issues.

The highlight of our year was the annual fest, *Sarfarosh*, which featured the launch of our esteemed annual journal, *Kön*. The fest began with keynote addresses by distinguished speakers like Ritu Menon and Mallarika Sinha Roy, followed by an enlightening discussion led by Dr. Seema Kazi. Panel discussions on topics such as 'Mapping Queerness in Conflict' and 'Authoritarianism and the State' further enriched our discourse. The event concluded with a powerful poetry recitation of translated Palestinian works by the group *Raschakra*.

In conclusion, the Gender Studies Cell remained dedicated to fostering inclusivity, diversity, and critical dialogue throughout the academic year 2023-2024. Through a wide range of events, collaborations, and initiatives, we challenged societal norms, amplified marginalized voices, and worked towards a more equitable future. The Gender Studies Cell has thus been able to achieve its objectives and plans to go beyond and explore new avenues of expression and solidarity.

Date

Event

Resource

person

Particulars

12 September 2023

Orientation

Introduced **the** society and its objectives to the incoming batch, familiarising them with its **key** events.

22 September 2023

Let's talk session on **Navigating** elitism in

•

campus **spaces**

Discussed **the caste** and **class based connotations** of elitism, **the** exclusivity of an elite **space** and **the privilege** that it accords. Students expressed their encounters with discrimination and elitism

6 October 2023

27 October 2023

Reading Circle: Breast Stories by Mahasweta Devi

Read and discussed the context in which the author wrote, **the** social content of her stories and the importance of resistance through literature

Let's talk session on Exploring Identities

and legislation

Discussed the vocabulary of legislation, how social structures govern laws, and how sexuality is constrained by them.

7-9 November

2023

Mini- fest

Shainal Kabir Verma, Mridula

R. Kindo, Fatima Khan

The speaker explored how the politics of caste and gender play out in college **spaces**.

21 November 2023

Screening of Trans Kashmir

Surbhi Dewan

1 February 2024

19 February 2024

11 March 2024

The film explored the lives and limited choices of trans persons in Kashmir. The director elaborated upon her experience working through it.

Screening of documentary In the Name of God"

Explored and discussed themes of sectarianism and the politics of faith

Let's talk session on Identities and Citizenship

Discussed the category of the citizen in terms of the nations and its various imaginations

Reading Circle: The Laugh of the Medusa by Hélène Cixous

Discussed women's writing as a tool of reclamation of identity and selfhood

18 March 2024

Screening of documentary on Sex workers

Bhumika

Discussed the lived

Saraswati

experiences of the sex

workers of Delhi, the

economic hardships, lack of

alternatives and perpetual stigma associated with the work

21 March 2024

Screening of the film Margarita with a Straw

Explored the intersectional experience of queerness and disability. Discussed queer depictions in Indian cinema

18-22 April 2024

Annual fest, **Sarfarosh**

Ritu Menon, Dr.Mallarika

Sinha **Roy**, Dr.

Seema Kazi,

Schulu Duo,

Pavel Sagolsem,

Bhumika

Saraswati,

Banojyotsna

Lahiri, Purwa

Bharadwaj

Organised lectures, panel discussions, and poetry

reading sessions on **the theme**

"Gender and the Nation: Unveiling the Dynamics of Identity and Power"