

AWARDS



The Indian Sociological Society awarded Dr. Nilamber Chhetri the prestigious M. N. Srinivas Memorial Prize 2024 for his outstanding contribution to Sociology in India.



Dr. Shyamasree Dasgupta received the Teaching Excellence Award 2024 at IIT Mandi.



Dr. Manu Devadevan has been Invited as Scholar in Residence by the Kerala Council for Historical Research for a period of three months.

CHAIRPERSON'S NOTE

Welcome to the 3.1 edition of the Himalayan Chronicles, the SHSS newsletter! In this edition, we are excited to share a series of achievements and events that reflect the dynamic activities at our School. This issue features notable awards, including Dr. Nilamber Chhetri's recognition by the Indian Sociological Society. We also highlight exciting initiatives like the 3rd Young Graduate Meet, the ISTP program, and M.A. fieldwork projects. Additionally, the newsletter covers insightful seminars and workshops by distinguished speakers like Dr. Chinmay Dharurkar and Dr. Navjot Kour, alongside enriching hands-on workshops on data analysis and comic creation. We hope you enjoy reading this edition and look forward to your continued support.



Dr. Surya Prakash Upadhyay
Chair, School of Humanities and Social Sciences

DEGREES AWARDED

Congratulations to the MA and PhD scholars who received their degrees during the 12th Convocation of IIT Mandi held on 28 September 2024:

PhD Scholars (Batch of 2024)

- Isha Jha (Sociology)
- Mahak Mahajan (History)
- Mir Khursheed Alam (Economics)
- Papari Saikia (History)
- Sujata (Economics)
- Muskan Dhandhi (History)
- Bhed Ram (Economics)

MA Development Studies Students (Batch of 2024)

- Aditi Ghosh
- Vanshika
- Prathana Panwar
- Akshima
- Yogesh Krishna Vijay
- Parvathy CR
- Tarun Dev Mishra
- Harshit K Kushwaha
- Mon Priya Mech
- Vinayak R Kamble
- Saurabh Kumar
- Mohammed Salih P S
- Mohammed Ashiq
- Ajit Pandey
- Vishnu Rajeev T V
- Jasmeet S Bindra



STUDENT AND ALUMNI PLACEMENTS

- Harshit Kushwaha (MA, 2022-24) was selected in the PhD program of the Department of Management Studies, IIT Madras.
- Saurabh Kumar (MA, 2022-24) secured admission to the Fellow Program in Management (FPM) at the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, Ahmedabad.
- Prathana Panwar (MA, 2022-24) has joined the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand, as a Research Fellow.
- Shashi Raj (MA, 2021-23) joined the PhD Program in Development Studies at IIT Jodhpur's Center for Emerging Technology.
- Srividya R. (MA, 2018-20) has joined the PhD Program in Health Policy and Management at the College of Public Health, University of Iowa.
- PhD scholar Viliiebeinu Medom has been appointed Assistant Professor in Anthropology at a college under the Higher and Technical Education Department, Government of Nagaland.
- Dr. Sujata has joined as a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Heidelberg Institute of Global Health.
- Dr. Uttam Singh has joined as an Assistant Professor at the Gujarat National Law University, Silvassa Campus.
- Dr. Arya Priyadarshini has joined as an Assistant Professor at NIT Rourkela.

SCHOOL TALKS

- Dr. Chinmay Dharurkar, an expert in linguistics, translation, and poetry, delivered a talk on “Linguistic Continuity and the Past of Language”. He explored the philosophical, methodological, and historical dimensions of linguistic continuity, while also examining linguistic motherhood, past languages, and Saussure’s insights against India’s classical language politics. The second part contrasted Historical Linguistics and Linguistic History, highlighting their treatment of marginalized languages and mutual learning opportunities. Dharurkar’s expertise spanned
- Dr. Navjot Kour gave a talk on “Accessing Archaeological Heritage through the Scientific Lens: Computational Approaches in Identifying Past Patterns”. She discussed revolutionary computational techniques in archaeology, including remote sensing and machine learning, using Jammu’s outer plains as a case study. The session highlighted prospects for Earth Observatory-based research in the Himalayan region and beyond.

WORKSHOPS

The two-day workshop and seminar featuring the graphic novelist Harsho Mohan Chatteraj was enthusiastically attended by students and faculty of SHSS. The seminar explored the evolution of comics as an art form and a platform for social commentary, while the workshop provided hands-on insights into comic creation, leaving participants inspired by the creative possibilities of the medium.



The 15-day workshop on “Data Analysis and Data Visualization” was led by Dr. Jayanta Bora, Executive Director of VART. It equipped MA Development Studies and PhD scholars with advanced statistical and visualization skills by providing valuable hands-on experience with essential software tools like MS Excel, Power BI, R, and Stata. Participants also learned to build interactive dashboards, combining multiple visuals to present data insights in a concise and user-friendly manner.



The SHSS organized a workshop for early and mid-career researchers in collaboration with IISER Mohali under the New Political Economy Initiative, IIT Bombay on the theme “New Approaches to Economy and Society: Exploring Popular Economy as a Research Agenda”, which made everyday economy a research agenda and aimed to establish a dialogue between the disciplines of economics and sociology.

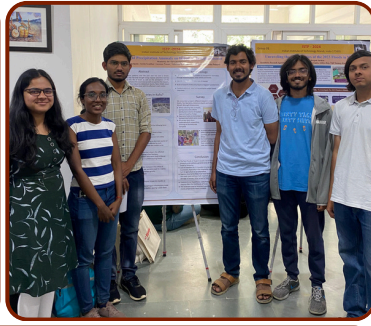


MA FIELD STUDY



The students of the MA Development Studies program (2023-25 batch) completed their fieldwork with various NGOs over the summer. They worked with organizations including People for Himalayan Development (HP), Technology and Governance Forum (Kerala), Ekta Parishad (Chattisgarh), Kailash Satyarthi Foundation (New Delhi), Environment Planning and Coordination Organisation (Madhya Pradesh), and GOONJ (New Delhi). Their projects ranged from tourism development to forest resource management, water resource management, and sanitation and hygiene development in urban slums.





The Interactive Socio-Technical Practicum (ISTP), a flagship course offered by SHSS, IIT Mandi, fosters societal awareness and problem-solving among students. In 2024, the program welcomed Dr. Alex Jefferson Sphar, Dr. Uma Kumar, and 19 students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), who collaborated with over 250 IIT Mandi B.Tech students. Guided by their faculty mentors, 42 teams addressed diverse projects, including anti-fog solutions for automobiles, virtual reality for landslide risk education, and the role of technology in preserving folk music. These initiatives engaged local communities across Himachal Pradesh, creating meaningful societal impact.

The 3rd Young Graduate Meet, organized by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS) at IIT Mandi from October 23-25, 2024, brought together 48 scholars to explore the theme "Interdisciplinary Approaches to South Asian Ecology." Sponsored by ICSSR and IIT Mandi, the event featured distinguished sessions, including an opening address by Prof. Amitabh Pandey on "Nature, Culture, Spiritualism, and Anthropological Approaches," a keynote by Prof. Supriya Chaudhuri on "Waterlands: Ecology, Culture, and Literature in the Delta," and plenary sessions by Dr. Diptimayee Nayak, Dr. Pankaj Sekhsaria, and Dr. John Charles Ryan on diverse ecological and cultural perspectives. New additions, such as interactive panel discussions on "Writing Beyond Academia" and "Commons, Livelihood & Governance", further enriched the dialogue, fostering interdisciplinary and collaborative engagement. The event also included a vibrant cultural evening featuring Raag Studios, Kullu, and it was organized by a dedicated team of scholars led by Indra, Priya, Bhagyasree, Aarifah, Nisha, Sampayan, Piyush, and Neethu.



PROJECTS



The report "District-Level Climate Risk Assessment for India: Mapping Flood and Drought Risks Using IPCC Framework" was released on December 13, 2024, as a collaborative effort between IIT Mandi, IIT Guwahati, and the CSTEP Bengaluru. Funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Govt. of India and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), this study builds on earlier climate vulnerability assessments carried out in 2019 and 2021.

The report provides a comprehensive district-level assessment of climate risks related to flood and drought, identifying their drivers in terms of hazard, exposure, and vulnerability. It also emphasizes the need for state-level capacity building, equipping State Climate Change Cells and allied departments with methodologies for integrating these insights into their adaptation plans.

Distinguished dignitaries, including Dr. Anita Gupta from DST and Mr. Pierre-Yves Pitteloud from SDC, attended the report's launch. Key contributors from IIT Mandi included Principal Investigator Dr. Shyamasree Dasgupta and her team of researchers. The findings offer actionable guidance for integrating climate risk assessments into State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCC). It advocates for a sector-specific, multi-scale approach toward climate risk management.

PUBLICATIONS

Books

- Manu V Devadevan, Karunadu, Akshara Prakashana, Heggodu, 2024

Journal Articles

- Archana Pathak, "The Promises and Perils of Highland Infrastructure: A study of Pakyong Airport in the Eastern Himalayas", HIMALAYA, 2024
- Jens Marquardt, Shyamasree Dasgupta, Chris Höhne, Markus Lederer, Pooja Sankhyayan, "Promises and Pitfalls of Polycentric Federalism: The Case of Solar Power in India", Global Environmental Politics, 2024
- Nilamber Chhetri, "Certitude of belongingness: affective ties and changing politics of identification within the Nepali community in Darjeeling, India", South Asian Diaspora, 2024
- Arya Priyadarshini and Suman Sigroha, "The 'Gentle Recitation': Writing Trauma in Contemporary Children's and Young Adult Literature", International Research In Children's Literature (IRCL), Edinburgh UP, 2024
- Vilibeinuo Medom, "Shaping landscapes: transforming ethnic lands into state highways in Nagaland", Journal of Contemporary South Asia, 2024

Book Chapter

- Manu V. Devadevan, "Vachanas", in Global Language Justice edited by Lydia H. Liu and Anupama Rao, Columbia UP, 2024
- Kamlesh Singh, Suman Sigroha, and Shokeen, B. "Women Singing in a North Indian Rural Community: A Case Study" in Oxford Handbook of Community Singing, edited by Esther Morgan-Ellis and Kay Norton, Oxford UP, 2024
- Nithin Varghese and Suman Sigroha, "Governmentality and Populism: Understanding the Divergent Approaches to Governance" in Encyclopedia of New Populism and Responses in the 21st Century, Springer, 2024

PhD graduates and scholars from the SHSS share about their learning experiences at IIT Mandi

From Viliebeinu Medom, PhD scholar at the SHSS, Assistant Professor, under the State Government of Nagaland:

"My research experience at IIT Mandi under the guidance of Dr. Nilamber was and continues to be a great learning experience. When I was given the chance to apply for the Nagaland Public Service Commission exam for the post of Assistant Professor, he was supportive from the start and was ever ready to guide me in my preparation. From the beginning, he created an effective system of regular meetings, frequent feedback and encouragement to navigate through the challenges of preparing for the exam while balancing my research simultaneously. My advice to the new Ph.D. scholars of SHSS is to create a supportive environment with your colleagues to encourage each other to overcome the hurdles along the research journey."

**From Dr. Uttam Singh, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Gujarat National Law University, Silvassa Campus:**

"My PhD journey at IIT Mandi was a transformative chapter that shaped not just my career, but my personal growth and values. The institute provided me with a nurturing environment to refine my skills and knowledge, empowering me with the confidence to pursue my goals and contribute meaningfully to society. The research experience at IIT Mandi enriched me with technical, analytical, communication, and teamwork skills that are crucial in today's world. I am especially grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Surya Prakash Upadhyay, for his unwavering support and guidance, which have inspired me to give back to the academic community and make a positive impact throughout."

From Dr. Arya Priyadarshini, Assistant Professor, National Institute of Technology Rourkela:

"The research experience at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Mandi, was instrumental in shaping my academic profile and preparing me for my role at NIT Rourkela. Under the guidance of my supervisor, Dr. Suman, I was able to refine my research methodologies and critically engage with interdisciplinary perspectives, which broadened my understanding of contemporary issues in English studies. I am deeply grateful for her mentorship, which helped me gain the confidence and competence needed for this new phase of my career. Further, the research support provided by the institute in the form of travel grant and contingencies helped me to disseminate my research and receive feedback which have significantly contributed towards enhancing my academic and professional skills.

I would advise my juniors to actively engage with the research opportunities available and focus on building a strong foundation in their area of interest. It is important to maintain humility and a willingness to learn, as these qualities will help them navigate the transition to the next phase of their career."



NEW STUDENTS OF SHSS



PhD Scholars, July 2024



MA Development Studies, Batch 2024-26

FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

We would like to express our gratitude to Dr. Surya Prakash Upadhyay for his support in bringing this issue of the SHSS newsletter to fruition. Special thanks to Arya Priyadarshini, Uttam Kumar Singh, and Viliebeinu Medom for sharing their experiences, as well as to all the students and faculty who contributed data and photographs for this edition. We are also very grateful to Stuti Sharma and Ajay Kumar for all their help.

We look forward to sharing more updates and events from SHSS in future issues. Please feel free to share your thoughts to help improve our work.

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