



SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

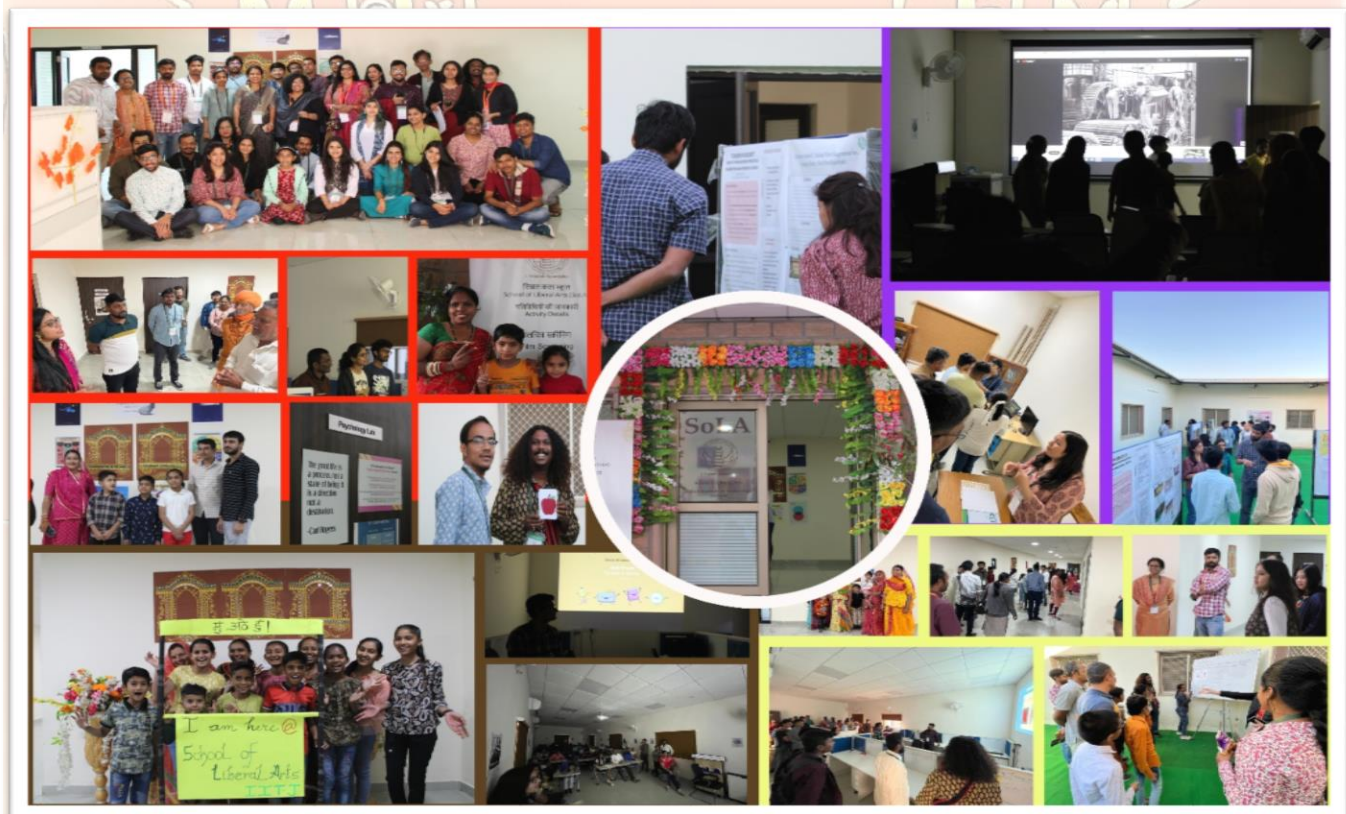
Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur

Report on Open House Padharo 2.0

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The faculty and students of the School of Liberal Arts (SoLA) welcomed a steady stream of enthusiastic school children, college students, and other, equally curious locals of different age groups from Jodhpur city to the School during IIT Jodhpur's Open House Padharo 2.0 held on February 12, 2023. It was truly remarkable to participate in an event in which our visitors were warmly welcomed and shown around the SoLA premises. The humility and friendliness of the members of faculty, students and staff bear mentioning. Some of the research undertaken by students and faculty was exhibited through poster presentations, which showcased a passion for learning and building a culture of excellence in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary education and research. The film screenings, puzzles, games, and interactive sessions around the poster were



deeply appreciated. The audience included a truly diverse group of visitors across age, gender, linguistic, religious, and income groups. Despite the diversity, the enthusiasm of everyone participating resonated with the way in which they could connect with the themes and concerns the School's exhibits and presentations showcased. The interactions between the SoLA team and the guests thus evolved into an excellent instance of the way in which the School seeks to foster humanitarian values, diversity and inclusiveness. The discussions between the extremely cosmopolitan members of faculty, students, and visitors created a dynamic interactive, mutually appreciative social space. Through various showcases of academic work, the team from SoLA showed that it firmly believes in academic excellence with pedagogical innovations that represent its dedication and commitment to the vision of the School and IIT Jodhpur. Just as importantly, it emphasised on the way in which it foregrounds a discourse that seeks to be inclusive and relatable. The team at the School of Liberal Arts believes in the principles on which it was founded: quality education in the Liberal Arts is a primary a primary requisite for solving the multidimensional challenges that our current and future generations face. Through the interest of the general public on our projects and courses, the fact that it has managed to realise this core principle became very evident. The research, pedagogy, and outreach of SoLA has particularly emphasised on recognizing and amplifying disciplinary intersections in the Creative Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Technologies. The feedback we received from academics and industry experts and laymen alike reflected that this interdisciplinarity was one of their primary impressions of our work. We hope to continue engaging with the wider public in similar ways.



FILM SCREENING



Several short films, including the documentary-infomercial 'IIT Jodhpur: A Pearl in the Desert' were shown by the team. The films were screened in the SoLA classroom. Hundreds of students and adults attended them in batches with great enthusiasm and fascination.

The film screening was held with the goal of sensitizing the audience about the general understanding of the medium called cinema through films, posters and quotations. As a

result, the films covered a wide range of subjects, from aesthetically rich classics like Charlie Chaplin films to socially conscious shorts. Easy accessibility despite language barriers played a key role in the success of this activity. Volunteers of the team conducted interactive sessions with the audience, highlighting the key concerns of Film and Media Studies, at the end of a screening. Besides the active participation in these discussions, the feedback on the film screening was extremely positive.



POSTER PRESENTATIONS

The different posters presented showed not only the range of subjects taught at the School, but also the scope of (often interdisciplinary) research conducted by the members of faculty and doctoral and graduate students. The posters generated a lot of curious questions from the audience. The aesthetics and the presentations (choice of photographs, illustrations, graphs) played as much of a role as the engaged conversations

initiated around them by the presenters. Not only the locals but also senior academics and administrative office holders visiting from outside Jodhpur graced the event and spent a considerable amount of time discussing the relevance of the different projects, especially community-based ones, with the presenting members of faculty. The key themes of each poster is shared in brief notes below for a better understanding of the showcase:

1. '4E Cognition and Narrative Self'

Dr. Hari Narayanan

The narrative self co-evolves in an environment that gives the sense that our self is the totality of our experiences. Our experience is not a single process; we propose understanding the narrative self's construction through the characteristics of 4E cognition (engaging with the environment, our brain, body, tools, and other social agents). This study will investigate the generation of the narrative self with the help of the 4E cognition.



2. 'Mary in the Jackson Room'

Dr. Hari Narayanan and Mr. Biplab Karak

The poster presented Jackson's thought experimental case of Mary learning about the relevant physics and biology of colour vision while herself being deprived of non-black-and-white colour vision and its aftermath, when Mary sees a red apple for the first time ever in her life. The poster focused on drawing some possible implications from the presented scenario and apply it on our existing understanding of physical science to critically look at our scientific understanding of conscious experience. The mentioned case was presented in the



poster with the intent to problematise the issue of how any purely quantitative attempt at understanding conscious experience fails and also to introduce the visitors to the notion of qualia, without which grasping the hard problem seems quite unlikely. As reported by the visitors, the poster managed to catch their attention and the presentation done by Biplab K was consequently received well.

3. 'Technologically Manipulated Information: Its Ecosystem and Its Psycho-Social Impact'

Prof. Chhanda Chakraborti with Mr. Divyanshu Pathak

The poster showcased an ICSSR funded transdisciplinary research project titled "An Interdisciplinary Study of Technologically Manipulated Information: Its Ecosystem and its Psycho-Social Impact." The research team for this unique study is truly multidisciplinary. It briefly presented the theoretical framework developed for the project, and the research objectives of the

ongoing project. The term ‘Technologically Manipulated Information’ (TMI) has been coined by the team, and it represents information that has been manipulated by AI-based tools, such as Deep Learning (DL), GAN, Diffusion model. TMI covers the problematic ‘fake news’, ‘fake videos, as well as ‘deep fake’. The research gaps in the current literature and the consequent research questions arising were presented. A novel contribution of the research team is to use the Actor Network Theory (ANT) of Bruno Latour, Michael Callon from sociology as the conceptual framework for understanding the genesis, the dissemination, the believability of TMI, and even the institutional

mechanisms for detection and control of TMI; in short, the ecosystem of TMI. The study will actually generate text to synthetic images suitable for the Indian population, and conduct experiments to draw conclusions. The poster used a schematic diagram of the ecosystem developed by the team



as a rich visual aid for comprehension. The implications of the project were noted at last to specify the practical applications of the project which will be used for the benefit of the populace. People took active interest in the poster, presented by Project Research Associate Divyanshu Pathak, and were pleased to witness such a novel, transdisciplinary effort to use the domains of technology and liberal arts together to tackle such a critical issue of the contemporary times. Some visitors were curious about the methodology and asked technical questions. Some others provided valuable feedback, all of which were duly noted by the presenter.

4. 'It begins in delight: Insights from an English Preschool Reading Program in Russia'

Dr. Rachel Philip

The poster showcased the action research project called 'StoryTime'. This was a bilingual book club for children from ages of 4 to 7 years, which was conducted in the city of Innopolis from July 2020 to June 2021. The research explores how we can understand the interface between the affective response of children to stories in a foreign language (English) and the aspirations of their parents. The genesis and evolution of the book club was explained to interested visitors



who were curious about the larger socio-cultural context of Russia where the English language is a locus of desire and aspiration for upwardly-mobile and middle-class Russians. The different phases of the project were also described to those who were curious about its design. Viewers were interested in understanding how children's affective responses to storytelling were identified and documented, especially in the context of cultural and linguistic differences. One of the individuals recalled his experience of reading translated Russian story books in English,

attesting to a larger cultural history of shared experiences between India and Russia.

5. 'Community-Based & Traditional Water Management in Changing Climate: A Study from Rajasthan'

Dr. Farhat Naz, Mr. Amir Soheli, Ms. Surabhi Singh, Ms. Kritika Mishra, Mr. Gautam Kumar, and Mr. Sibsankar Pradhan

The poster unveiled various traditional and community-based water management techniques in Rajasthan. It also analyzed how traditional community-based water management could be a way forward to sustainably manage water resources in times of climate emergency. Since Rajasthan is an extremely water-stressed region, local communities have adopted various water conservation strategies, e.g., Taanka, Taalab, Jhalara, Khadin, Bandhi, etc. Community-based water management techniques vastly increases the accessibility of water for agricultural and domestic purposes. The audience easily connected to the poster and proactively participated in the discussion. The topic covers their everyday life around water and the issues surrounding climate change.



The presenters humbly answered questions raised by the visitors and it was an engaging and lively discussion. Also a lot of college students and school kids were curious to know more about the traditional water harvesting techniques in Rajasthan. The topic also covered the various policy measures adopted by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India.

6. Poster on Cinema Studies



Dr. Parichay Patra, Mr. Sanjay K. Bissoyi, Mr. Bhairab Barman, Ms. Parnika Agarwal, Ms. Garima, Ms. Nurdini Tsabitul Chusna

This poster showcases the Cinema Studies work being conducted at IIT Jodhpur's SoLA under the supervision of Dr. Parichay Patra. Dr. Patra himself is currently involved in transnational film projects. Sanjay K. Bissoyi focuses on regional cinema politics, Bhairab Barman

on film aesthetics, Parnika Agarwal on film history, Garima on gender aspects of films, and Nurdini Tsabitul Chusna on Indonesian films. The poster presents these topics, and the presenters answered the audience's queries in a gracious and humble manner.

7. 'Spatial and Digital Literary Studies'

Dr. Parichay Patra with Ms. Swarnima Bannerjee and Mr. Samya Brata Roy

This joint poster highlights the work that is being done under the ambit of Literary Studies with Dr. Parichay Patra. Samya Brata's work tries to understand the curiosity called Electronic Literature in the Indian context in terms of its literary and technological disparities. Do technological spaces engage in literary creativity? Do literary circles talk about technology? He looks into the (non?) existence of archives, collections and projects to further his understanding. Swarnima's work aims to investigate the gendered spatial configurations/segregation and to explore the synergy between space, place, and literature through a geocritical analysis of real spaces and their relationship with textual spaces.

8. 'Healthcare Financing in India'

Dr. Alok Ranjan and Collaborators

This poster presented the healthcare financing in India. Various studies show out-of-pocket expenditure as the major source of financing in India. Findings also reveal that public provisioning of care is more cost effective than purchasing it from the private sector.

9. *Under Another Sky*

Dr. Vidya Sarveswaran

The poster that was presented was of the short documentary film, *Under Another Sky* that was possible because of the seed grant from IIT Jodhpur and the Public Outreach Grant, from the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich. The film is an uplifting story about a unique village in India called Piplantri which is in Rajsamand district in the state of Rajasthan, India. The village celebrates the birth of every girl-child by planting 111 trees. The film is situated at the confluences of environment, ecologies, mining, gender, education, and self-reliance (*atmanirbharta*). With a desperate need to heal, nurture and reconnect to the Earth, the villagers under the leadership of Shyam Sudar Paliwal used the marbled mined land as a palimpsest to rewrite their history. The village has planted a quarter million trees over the last six years. The collective initiatives, community building resilience and several government schemes have empowered the people, especially the women, both financially and emotionally. This film addresses issues that are about both local and global sustainability.



10. 'Ecologies of Knowledge, or, The Case of the Royal Bengal(i) Tiger'

Dr. Tonisha Guin

Currently, we can no longer ignore the impact of climate violence. At the same time, we are increasingly aware of how only an inundation of scientific data/evidence has failed to sensitize us about the immediacy of climate change and its biopolitical price. This poster suggests that locating climate concerns like wildlife conservation within the broad networks of –psychosocial, political, economic, ethnic—*cultural* discourses is a step towards the right direction. Exercises like these can help destabilize the perceived rigidity of the nature/culture binary, and the ways in which it often alienates already vulnerable human and wildlife communities existing around more 'natural' spaces

like forests and waterways. As an example of this, this poster takes up the discourse on tigers as a part of the broader discourse on (and by) a particular community—the Bengali Bhadrakalok. It is a part of a larger project on the cultural knowledge systems around environmental conservation, and the key role local knowledge systems can play in this discourse. The illustrations—comical and otherwise—along with the presenter’s translation of a funny children’s poem by Rabindranath Tagore generated a lot of curiosity and questions. Senior academics and guests from outside Jodhpur seriously engaged with the poster’s propositions and talked about the need for interdisciplinary collaboration between Cultural Studies and the Sciences for projects like these.



The local and other, visiting audience—expert and laymen alike—was able to relate with the poster’s subject and was soon sharing analogous stories about the local wildlife and village and urban communities. Very vibrant participatory—often autobiographical—discussions on the vitality of local knowledge systems, rituals and practices, and the danger of forgetting them followed. There was an equal amount of interest for a space like Sunderbans because of the way in which it appeared like the polar opposite of the local topography, and yet generated similar accounts. A lot of interest in supporting and contributing to a similar project around local human-animal habitats was expressed by the visitors. The analogies and urgency that these discussions highlighted was truly exceptional and humbling. It opened up a space to talk about animal-human relationships, as well as intercultural dialogue celebrating diversity.



11. 'Union Budget 2023-24'

Dr. Gopakumar with Ms. Manya Khanna, Mr. Iltefat A. A. Jami, Mr. Raashid Y. Shah, Mr. Shubhi Verma, Mr. Aniket, Mr. Niharika Malti and Mr. Ratikant Dehury

The poster showcased key highlights from the Union Budget 2023-24. The analysis compared budget allocation for various welfare schemes and major expenditure heads on a year-to-year basis. The poster also presented details on how the current budget caters to various sections of

the society/economy such as the farming community, the industry and MSMEs, cooperatives, rural population, middle income earners and senior citizens, women and youth and so on. The presenters were able to connect with the audience by explaining how the budget will influence their life in terms of taxes and various other schemes.

In addition to poster presentations, Dr. Akanksha Choudhary delivered an Open House lecture on Real World Economics and talked about the various programs at SoLA with the audience attending the lecture.



GAMES

Word Puzzle

Dr. Kanak Yadav

In contemporary times, when board games are viewed as reminders of the past, it was refreshing to see a crowd fixated at a whiteboard featuring word puzzles. Inspired by New York Times Classic Spelling Bee, seven letters were provided from which the player may make as many words as possible



provided the middle-letter was used somewhere in each word.



From faculty and staff members to student volunteers, school kids – and their equally enthusiastic parents – this game was quite a success, pushing everyone to put on their thinking caps in making words and, at times, even inventing them. The improvisational element of the game added to the fun as Dr. Vidya Sarveswaran and Dr. Natasa Thoudam eagerly participated and coordinated the game. This was an innovative teaching-cum-learning game which connected us with the wider public.

Games and Puzzles on Logical Reasoning, General Knowledge, and Language Proficiency

Dr. Tonisha Guin, Dr. Ruhi Sonal, Dr. Natasa Thoudam, Dr. Vidya Sarveswaran, with Samya Brata Roy, Swarnima Bannerjee, Krishna Singh Bhandari, Pooja Rawat, Komal Sharma, Jyoti and Prof. Chhanda Chakraborti

Different members of faculty and students contributed to come up with an engaging set of puzzles and games that were made keeping in mind participants from various age groups. They comprised of questions representing the different

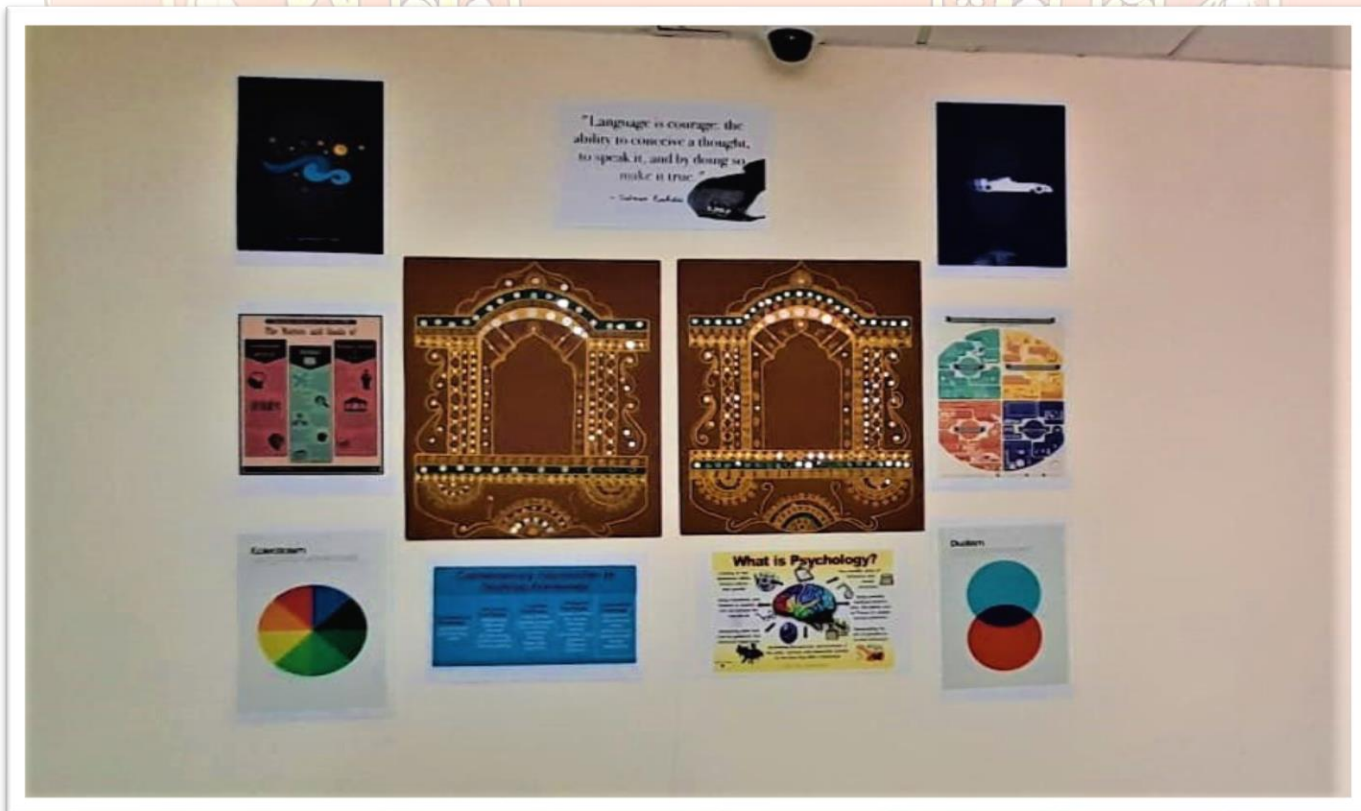


disciplines taught in the School of Liberal Arts. Children and their parents actively engaged with them. It was an invigorating experience to be able to interact with them. The sweets distributed as prizes added an element of cheerful rivalry. The student volunteers interacted with the audience in fixed batches to ensure equal opportunity and avoid overcrowding. The games and the friendly, welcoming attitudes of the volunteers were deeply appreciated by the guests in their feedback.

DECORATION AND ORGANISATION

Dr. Tonisha Guin with Dr. Kanak Yadav and All Doctoral Scholars

We attempted a synergy between celebrating local ethnic motifs and the interdisciplinary knowledge ecosystem created by the School. Accordingly, a set of posters curated by Dr. Yadav and Dr. Guin, in consultation with the doctoral students were printed for the corridors. The posters attempted to show the range of disciplines the School's work engaged with—Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, Economics, English Literary Studies, Film Studies, Media and Cultural Studies.



Along the way, the interdisciplinarity of the School's work showcased allied disciplines like Political Science, History and Anthropology.

The posters were designed to evoke the interest of visitors on particular themes, like Existentialism, or the Art Movement of Cubism that relate to multiple disciplines at once. The illustrations were deliberately minimalistic to capture iconic moments and draw attention. The posters highlighting literary quotations and art complemented those on philosophical and critical theory. A lot of emphasis was given on being accessible and relatable while still focusing on academic concerns.

Besides, the doctoral students, especially Deepa, took the initiative to coordinate with the faculty members to put up selected posters highlighting the faculty's work and individual research interest on their office doors. This led to quite a few questions about particular research questions and interest in knowing more. Some queries regarding doctoral programs were also noticed.

We sourced art made by small-scale women's initiatives from Jodhpur city. The paintings of the iconic Jharokhas were deeply appreciated by both, the fraternity at SoLA and the visitors. We hope to support local initiatives in this way in the future. A selfie-point created by the team added to the sense of celebration and inclusivity that marked the hours of the Open House.

The Open House was a brilliant platform that opened up a space for engaging with our visitors, it also was a very encouraging display of team work and coordination. Both, the faculty members and the student volunteers, took great pride and initiative to make the event a success.



The constant support of the office staff, Shashank Choudhury and Udhay Kumar, was deeply appreciated.

Student Volunteers:

Crowd Management: Gautam Kumar, Amir Sohail, Atul Kumar Pandey, Surabhi Singh, Swarnima Bannerjee, Ahsanshok Kachui, Kritika Mishra

Games: Swarnima Bannerjee, Sanjay Kumar Bissoyi, Biplab Karak, Pooja Rawat, Krishna Singh Bhandari, Deepa, Jyoti Sharma, Minal Mehta, Divyanshu Pathak, Komal Sharma

Film Screening: Jayprakash Show, Bhairab Barman, Sanjay Kumar Bissoyi, Samyuktha A., Nurdini Tsabitul Chusna

Camerapersons: Jayprakash Show, Jyoti Sharma, Komal Sharma

Decoration: Gautam Kumar, Jyoti Sharma, Ashonshok Kachui, Jayprakash Show, Sanjay Kumar Bissoyi, Biplab Karak, Krishna Singh Bhandari, Surabhi Singh, Kritika Mishra, Atul Kumar Pandey, Komal Sharma, Samya Brata Roy, Ashish James, Deepa, Sangeetha M, Sibsankar Pradhan, Nisha Paliwal

Core Team of Faculty Members:

Farhat Naz, Tonisha Guin, Gurujagan Murugesan, Ankita Sharma, Kanak Yadav

