



Safarnama

Sambhaavnaa and Udaan ka
Safarnama

April to June, 2019

Secular Politics: And the 'Idea of India'

April 24 to 28, 2019

In the aftermath of brutalities and violence that followed the Pulwama attack in February, we felt the urgent need to converse with some of the core values of secularism, diversity, gentleness; and prick the bubbles of hyper-nationalism, and politics of hate and pride and fear. So, from April 24-28, 'Secular Politics' was held at the Sambhaavnaa Institute. The workshop - with the total number of participants being 25 - was facilitated by Neelima Sharma and Shamsul Islam. Other resource persons whom we were privileged to spend time with were Nandini Rao, Himanshu Kumar, and Mir Suhail.



The core ideas that we engaged with in the workshop were: understanding the 'idea(s)' of India and their ambiguities, using discursive analysis; engaging with the interlinkages between the narratives of development and power, and how it plays out in the lives of Dalits, Adivasis, and Women in India; grappling with the mechanisms through which women's bodies become a battleground, and 'women' are forced to bear the burden of keeping the boat of moral codes of shame and honor floating in the rigid shores of social structures; and separatism, state violence, and the ambivalences and contradictions of processes through which Kashmiris think about self-identity.

Unfortunately, it seems as if we have no option in the coming years but to conduct the workshop of this nature regularly, at least till 2024.



Digital Colonization 2.0: Ways digitalization is undermining the economy, democracy, and sovereignty

May 17 to 19, 2019



Once again, to understand some important contemporary issues – this time, technology and the dark pathways it creates for itself, with State nurturing them – we organized ‘Digital Colonization 2.0’, from May 17–19, with the number of participants being 21. The facilitators for the workshop were Usha Ramanathan, Sumandro Chattapadhyay, Anupam Saraph, and Srinivas Kodali. The themes of the workshop were: Digital Dystopia, resisting digital colonization, creating possibilities of ‘Digital Utopia’.

The primary objective of the workshop was to show how the dream of convenience is being sold to us left, right, and center – from Aadhaar (which is the backbone of ‘Digital India’ since it tries to give us an ‘identity’) and ‘free’ internet, to Goods and Services Tax (GST), these are all ‘Trojan Horses’ of Digital India. Further, the ideas of ‘corruption’ and ‘terror’ are being instrumentalised to scar the ideas of privacy; and also, the narratives of ‘development’ have not been far behind when it comes to the problematic use of private data – all of this has collectively altered the discourses of citizenship in India. State has become a tool to globalize Indian experiences and identities. As a result, India has become an experimentation bed for figuring out new ways to control resources. At the same time, the dangers involved with technology are being understated. In many technology matters, there is no feedback loop, and that, it can only seem to work lawlessly. UID is a case in point.

It was an insightfully memorable workshop, reminding us of the lost context and perspective when it comes to our relationship with technology, and digitalization in general.



India Youth Jam

India Youth Jam is an annual gathering of 30 diverse young changemakers from across the country for a powerful week of systemic inquiry, community building, sharing, self-discovery and deep listening. It is a transformative experience; an opportunity to engage deeply with the world and our place in it, opt for those who are working for a thriving, just and balanced way of life for all. It connects the dots of the youth activist movement.

Fragmented Spaces: The grammar and politics of urban housing in India

June 12 to 15, 2019



The question of urban housing has been a pertinent one for quite some time now in the policy discourses in India. So, to address issues related to urban housing, 'Fragmented Spaces: The grammar and politics of urban housing in India' was organised at Sambhaavnaa Institute from 12th to 15th June. Under the penetrating guidance of Karen Coelho, Lalitha Kamath, Amita Bhide, Gautam Bhan, Anant Maringanti, and Prasad Shetty, twenty-seven of us attempted to disentangle the different shades of the 'urban housing question'.

The paramount issues that were kept on the table for deliberation included: dissecting the key terms and lexicon associated with the realm of urban housing (urban-rural, dwelling, authorization, homeless, distribution, house, etc.); deciphering the housing 'demand' and housing 'supply' as categories of practice, and the pernicious gulf between the two; sociology of housing struggles and resistance; understanding that enigmatic and twisting maze - State - and the chains of influence running between this concept and the issue of housing in India; technicalities surrounding slum resettlements; conversing about influence and role of different actors and stakeholders like corporate builders, developers, state, investors/financial institutions, people, housing activists, NGOs; pricking the bubbles of the ideological contexts around which the narratives of urban housing have been formed; and exploring possibilities for alternatives to housing.

The activity-based nature of the workshop brought a scintillating and imaginative sharpness to the workshop, as a result of which we were visited by plenty of insights.

Nayi Dishayein Summer School on Rethinking Development, 6-week program

May 21 to July 4, 2019



“Development: Those who ‘benefit’ from an activity take decisions regarding that activity. And they make those decisions attractive for those who aren’t benefiting.” – Dunu Roy

The campus component of the May edition of ‘Nayi Dishayein’ was held from 21st to 30th May. The resource persons who facilitated different sessions were: Dunu Roy, Himanshu Kumar, Kamala Bhasin, Vikramaditya Sahai, Bhanwar Meghwanshi, Pravin Singh, Kamayani Keki, and Manshi Asher.

Broadly, we deconstructed the thematic realm of the notion of ‘development’, and conversed with the abundant narratives and discourses surrounding this notion, and the ways in which these narratives and discourses are constructed. Some vital points that came up: all ideas come from a context; how you identify a problem depends not only on your perspective but also what others are offering you; we have to come out of the problem-solution mode when we are thinking; our education does not encourage us to question our assumptions; class and privilege tend to feel comfortable in a context; every technological intervention will solve one problem but create another one; we negotiate not our own idea of the personal self but how we come across as to the ‘society’; and subjectivity lies in our conception.

As we attempted to distil the essence of some of these issues, many other ideas also began to take on a different significance. Pondering over self-identity, hierarchies in knowledge production, our thought processes (and critical thinking), equity vs. equality vs. justice, and language, led to a struggle with fundamentals of empathy, objectivity, self-bias, our fractured perceptions, and the art of thinking through categories and labels. To animate and stretch our sensibilities, we also educatively amused ourselves through games like mafia, songs and cinema of resistance, and theatre of the oppressed.

After the campus component, the participants went to intern at the following organizations in the month of June, before returning to the campus on July 1 to share their experiences: Mazdoor Kisaan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), Hansdeo Arand Sangharsh Samiti (HASS), and Jan Jagran Shakti Sangathan (JJSS). Among other things, the sharing of their unique experiences of insight from the ‘field’, between July 1 and July 4, was an exercise in attaining a sense of context and perspective, in understanding the rich ambiguities of social movements in India.

Nayi Dishayein Summer School on Rethinking Development, 12-day program

June 17 to 28, 2019



The 12-day June edition of Nayi Dishayein started on the morning of June 17th. In this edition - which had a wonderful group of 23 participants who came from diverse academic backgrounds which included social sciences, law, journalism, statistics, architecture, and humanities - we were privileged to add several new members to our team of resource persons: Madhu Prasad, Dilip C. Mandal, and Sandeep Pandey. Other resource persons were Vikramaditya Sahai, Himanshu Kumar, Amit Kumar (through Skype), and Madhuresh Kumar.

We engaged with the core themes of the workshop by attempting to understand development, in creative ways, through the social prisms of privilege, power, technology, State, nationalism, class, caste, gender, 'communities' and social movements. The interactive and engaging discussions which inspired and ignited many debates, facilitated under the intellectual and insightful guidance of the resources persons, helped us in arriving at the right questions insofar as the complex nature of the aforementioned issues is concerned, to think about the possibilities of addressing these issues in our own individually-specific ways, and in germination of new ideas. The complex reflections of the participants emphasized the vitality of perspective-building, making imagination precise, myriad ways of telling the stories of our lives to ourselves, and the importance of having inner conversations and self-awareness.

Some other specific ideas we pondered over: the ambivalences and contradictions of processes through which Kashmiris think about self-identity; the labyrinth ways through which education reflects and reinforces socioeconomic structures; patriarchy is necessarily self-willed; that all disciplining isn't from outside; the practice of freedom is also the practice of disciplining; we discipline ourselves ... into gender, so that we are intelligible to the system and we aren't punished, and thus, we become participants in our own oppression; and as a critique of caste system: India has never been able to be at the forefront of technological innovation because of availability of 'free' labour, and selective accessibility of knowledge and education.



Upcoming Programs...

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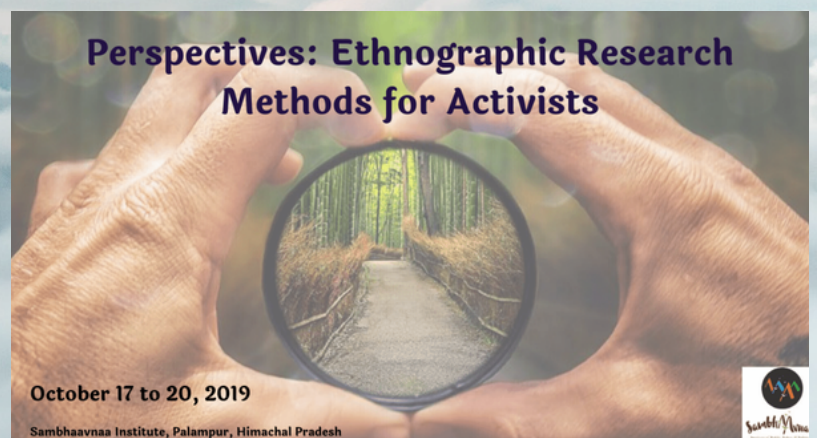
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Gup-Shup Chabootra



Long awaited learning space which aims to ignite curiosity is finally at the end of its completion, although we believe that the space, values and vision do keep updating depending upon the need of the people those who use them in this case especially children, we are looking forward to our new phase of our learning center. To begin with we have asked children to think of a new name for Udaan Learning Center, lets see what unfolds for this space in the future.

Farm To Plate

This summer, we harvested Peas, Eggplant, Capsicum, Beans, Cauliflower, Radish, Bottle Guard, Greens, Onion, Potatoes and Wheat.



Udaan Learning Center



**Udaan Learning Center
hosted a workshop of Life
Meets the Lens**

**We hosted Vimukt
Shisha Yatra organised
by Shikshantar
Andolan**

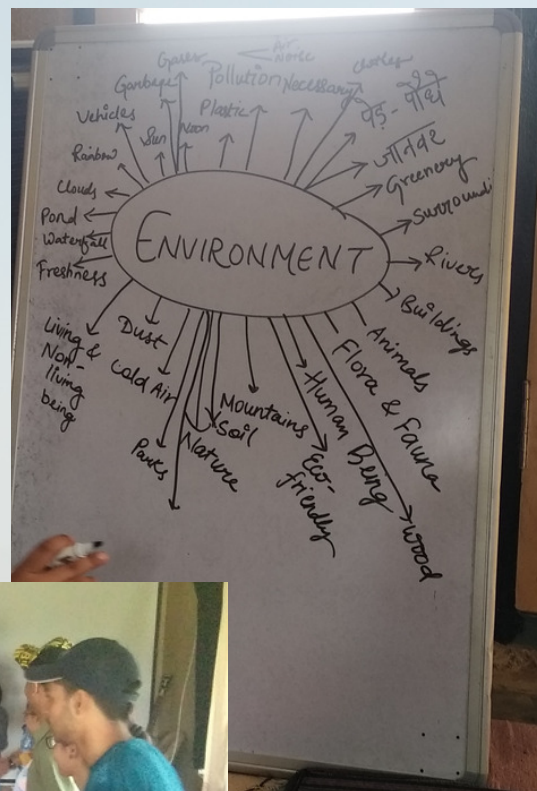


**Fatema
attended Indian
Multiversities
Alliance to
represent
Sambhaavnaa
and Udaan.**

Udaan Learning Center



**We conducted three
Environmental Consciousness camps: Camp
Ganga, Camp Kaveri and Camp Yamuna**



**for more information of Udaan Learning Center please visit:
<https://www.facebook.com/udaanlearningcenter/>**

Udaan Learning Center



Some more pictures of Mensa Summer Camps



Udaan School

For some time now Udaan School has been documenting the experience of its journey. We regularly post updates on school activities, pedagogical methods, reports on guest lectures, and school ethos on our facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/udaanschoolkandbari/>

People are invited to visit and leave their comments and suggestions.