

Short-term Course (STC): 'Indian Perspectives on Society, Polity and Development'

The enlightening short-term course, 'Indian Perspectives on Society, Polity, and Development,' organised by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at Malaviya National Institute of Technology (MNIT) Jaipur, was held at Malviya Sabhagar from 22nd to 26th January 2024. The course was a unique exploration of India's philosophical and psychological ideas through the lens of modern thinkers like Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. Covering themes such as Indian philosophical perspectives, major idea systems, the 'Indian evolutionary view,' and analyses of individual, social aggregates, states, and contemporary trends, the course aimed to enhance understanding of the Indian worldview. Prof. Pranab Banerji and Prof. Rajiv Gupta were invited as esteemed resource persons to deliver lectures on a comprehensive exploration of India's rich philosophical heritage. Dr. Nidhi Sharma was the course convenor, and Dr. Niraja Saraswat and Dr. Nidhi Bansal served as course coordinators.

The inaugural day, 22nd January, commenced with an Inaugural Ceremony, setting the stage for an intellectually stimulating journey. In the introductory session, Prof. Pranab Banerji navigated through the intellectual landscapes of Western philosophers, emphasising their detachment from our cultural tradition. In the second session, Prof. Rajiv Gupta explored the intricate interplay between self and society in classical Indian philosophies, unravelling paradigm shifts and historical revolutions. The day concluded with a focus on elemental concepts and challenging misconceptions about Indian philosophy.

On the second day, Prof. Rajiv Gupta explored the intricacies of caste and varna, shedding light on classical Indian texts and the diverse fabric of Indian society. The afternoon session by Prof. Pranab Banerji delved into the Indian worldview, offering a concise exploration of the cultural and philosophical elements shaping it. The day concluded with Prof. Banerji's session on the 'Indian Evolutionary View,' unravelling core principles and highlighting the holistic and subjective nature of human evolution.

The third day commenced with a captivating session on 'Aurobindo's Evolutionary Theory of History I,' where participants explored ideas ranging from cognitive development to societal

evolution. Prof. Banerji's continued exploration of Aurobindo's insights and 'Cultural Development and Social Classes Theories of Vivekananda' enriched participants' understanding of India's rich history of philosophical and psychological ideas.

On the fourth day, Prof. Banerji's sessions on 'Individual and Society,' 'Social Aggregation: Tribes to Nation to Human Unity,' and 'Role and Limitations of State' provided comprehensive insights into the complex interplay of individual and collective dynamics in society. The day ended with a thought-provoking analysis of cinema and language contributing to psychological unity and the spirit of nationalism.

The concluding day, on 26th January, the Republic Day of India, added significance to the course. The final session on 'Development: Concepts, Measures and Theories' offered a nuanced understanding of India's diverse landscape, aligning the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and Swami Vivekananda. The course concluded with discussions, insights, and expressions of gratitude. Participants acknowledged the course's novelty and immense value. Gratitude was expressed towards Prof. Banerji and the MNIT Jaipur organising team. Course coordinators highlighted the course's role in instilling national pride, emphasizing the brilliance of the content. The successful conclusion left participants with a profound impact on their professional and academic pursuits, fostering a deeper connection with the rich intellectual heritage of India. The course successfully delivered a comprehensive understanding of Indian perspectives on society, polity, and development.