

Report on the lecture on Queer Diaspora by Dr. Sachin Labade
5th February 2022

MMIAS had organized a lecture on **Queer Diaspora**, delivered by Dr. Sachin Labade, Associate Professor, Honorary Coordinator - Indo-Canadian Studies Centre and Coordinator - Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute, University of Mumbai on 5th February 2022.

The discussion on queer diaspora was enriching and factual since the intern had studied Sociology in her graduate programme, in which she had a module on the sociology of gender. As a result, she was aware of the primary issues the Queer Diaspora faced. The discussion with Dr. Labade proved to be fruitful and gave her new insights into the issues faced by the queer diasporic community.

Shikha was also familiarised with the concept of internal diaspora and how this movement of oppressed people in a nation-state had its reasons. She also understood that queer people were in a sense sexual migrants and the core reason for their movement/displacement/dislocation was their sexuality.

The discussion on Queer Diaspora also touched upon the different reasons that queer people came together to form a community, also known as the Politics of Visibility. They are, in essence, fighting to create their own space.



Dr. Sachin Labade (Associate Professor, Department of English; Honorary Coordinator of Indo-Canadian Studies Centre and Coordinator Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute), with Shikha and some M.A. (English Literature) students of the University of Mumbai

Dr. Labade's talk threw light on the dilemma that queer theorists faced when it came to the community in real life: the rights-based approach where the community has demanded rights to be accepted as part of society and societal constructs. Queer intellectuals however believe that it is a defeat to their very being, the very idea of what it means to be queer. Fighting for the right to marry and to be accepted is something that queer intellectuals believe.

Dr. Labade discussed how society, marriage and family are built upon heteronormative ideas. Shikha could relate this to Martha Minow's perspective in *Making All the Difference* that she had studied in her workshop conducted by MMIAS Researcher Mushtaq Shaikh.

The lecture discussed how queer people were similar to diasporic people; in that they were both fighting to create their own space and identity. However what sets queer people apart is that unlike the diasporic people, they do not have a physical and ideological space to look back at. Having grown up in a society that is mainly heteronormative, they are influenced by that to fight for equal rights, fight for the right to marry and have families since they have never known anything else. So it is essential to differentiate between theory and practicality/real-life scenarios, and that queer diaspora experience is not universal.

The discussion also led to cinema and literature in which one sees queer-baiting and queer representation. As a follow up to the discussion and to widen the knowledge base, Dr. Labade suggested the reading of other relevant material and watching movies to see how the queer community is represented in both.

Along with the MMIAS Intern, the lecture was attended by some students of the Department of English, University of Mumbai.