

Department of Philosophy

Report on Activities conducted in 2025-26

1. Dialectica

Nature of activity: **Intra-Department Debate Competition**

Date: **12th September, 2025**

Venue and time: **ROOM 30: 11 am – 1pm**

No of Participants: **8**

Audience: **100 Students**



The Philosophy Department of Sophia College for Women organized Dialectica, an intra-department debate competition aimed at fostering critical thinking, public speaking, and constructive academic discourse among Philosophy students. The competition provided a platform for students across all years to engage with philosophical ideas and articulate their viewpoints confidently.

Overview of Dialectica

Dialectica consisted of three structured rounds, each designed to evaluate the participants' clarity of argument, analytical ability, and debating skills. After the completion of all three rounds, one winning team was selected.

The winners will now represent the Philosophy Department in the upcoming inter-department debate competition.

Planning and Groundwork

The successful execution of the event was made possible due to the dedicated efforts of the Team of the Philosophy Department.

Key steps in the planning process included:

- Preparing the initial event blueprint,
- Submitting it for approval to faculty members and departmental authorities,
- Coordinating logistics and communication,
- Circulating official announcements and promotional messages to student groups.

These efforts ensured enthusiastic participation from FY Majors, SY Majors, and TY Majors.



Participation and Results

Students from all levels actively participated in the competition, showcasing strong arguments and commendable debating skills. After three competitive rounds, the TY Majors emerged as the winning team of Dialectica.

They will compete next with students from other departments in the inter-department debate competition.

Theme and Objectives

The primary aim of Dialectica was to encourage Philosophy students to:

- Speak up with confidence,
- Engage with philosophical discourse, and
- Develop their argumentative and reasoning abilities.

The event was initiated to ensure broader student participation within the department and to strengthen public speaking culture among Philosophy majors.

Feedback and Response

Dialectica received positive feedback from participants and attendees.

Simrah from the English Department remarked that the event was “very well-maintained and well-mannered.”

Several other students appreciated the event for being well-organized, punctual, and conducted without delays. Overall, the competition was praised for its smooth execution and professional conduct.



Expenses

1. **Token of appreciation for judges (Crochet Flower Bouquet):** 150 (Delivery charge, the flower was sponsored)
2. **Stationery and Printing:** 98 (B&W Print) + 80(Colour Print)+ 70 (Spiral Binding)+ 70 (File and Ball pen)
3. **Prizes (Diary and chocolates):** 280
4. **Miscellaneous:** 63 (Tape + pencil + erasers for judges)

Total Amount: Rs. 811

Conclusion

Dialectica proved to be an engaging and intellectually enriching event for the Philosophy Department. The efficient planning by the Team and active participation from students contributed to its success. The department now looks forward to its winning team representing Philosophy with excellence at the inter-department level.



2. Photography Competition

Nature of the Activity- Ananya 2026

Theme of the competition- Building Minds, Bridging Differences

Sub Topics-

1. Communal harmony
2. Unity in Diversity
3. Religious Tolerance

Competition conducted by- Department of Philosophy

Date: 3rd February 2026

Venue: Open sitting area

Time: 12 pm – 2.00 pm

Judge: Dr. Trevor Alis

No of Participants: 11

Objective- The Department of Philosophy organized a Photography Competition under the theme “*Building Minds, Bridging Differences.*” The objective of the competition was to encourage students to express philosophical ideas visually while reflecting on values such as communal harmony, unity in diversity, and religious tolerance.

Report- The competition process commenced two weeks prior to the final event. Participants were invited to upload photographs clicked by them on an online platform. The submissions were required to align with the central theme and its sub-themes:

1. Communal Harmony
2. Unity in Diversity
3. Religious Tolerance

The final exhibition was held on **3rd February**, where the selected photographs were displayed on presentation boards. The exhibition created a thoughtful atmosphere, allowing viewers to engage with diverse interpretations of the theme.

Each participant was given an opportunity to present and explain their creative work before the judge. They elaborated on the conceptual insight behind their photograph and its relevance to the theme. This presentation segment added depth to the competition by integrating creativity with critical reflection.

The event was successful in promoting artistic expression, philosophical insight, and awareness of social harmony among students. It effectively demonstrated how photography can serve as a meaningful medium to build minds and bridge differences in society.



3. Guest lecture (Ms. Simmin Bawa)

Objective: Academic enrichment and intellectual engagement

Subject: Guest Lecture on “Problem of Evil in Indian Philosophy”

Date: 30th January 2026

Venue: AVF Hall, SOPHIA College, Mumbai

Organized by: Department of Philosophy



The Department of Philosophy, SOPHIA College, Mumbai, organized a guest lecture on the topic “Problem of Evil in Indian Philosophy” on 30th January 2026 in the AVF Hall. The session was attended by approximately 30 students from TY MIN, Philosophy. The lecture was delivered by Professor Shimmin Bawa, Head of the Philosophy Department at Jai Hind College. Professor Bawa is a renowned scholar and an expert in Indian Philosophy. She provided a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the problem

of evil, approaching the subject from various Indian philosophical perspectives, with special emphasis on the Vedantic tradition. Her presentation was both thorough and thought-provoking, generating considerable interest among the participants.

Throughout the session, students engaged actively with the topic, posing several insightful questions. Professor Bawa responded to these queries with expertise, fostering an environment conducive to critical thinking and encouraging students to broaden and deepen their understanding of the philosophical issues discussed.

The event was conducted smoothly and successfully achieved its objectives of academic enrichment and intellectual engagement. The Department extends its sincere gratitude to Professor Bawa for her valuable contribution, and to all students for their enthusiastic participation.

This report is respectfully submitted for the records and archive of SOPHIA College, Mumbai.

4. Field Trip

Nature of the activity: Field Trip

Title: Exploring the Diversity of Mumbai

Dates: From 22nd August to 28th September, 2025

Number of Participants: 22

This report summarizes the field trip undertaken by TYBA Philosophy Majors (Semester 5) students, focusing on the theme "**Exploring the Diversity of Mumbai**". The trip incorporated a mix of lectures, online sessions, and site visits across four weeks in August and September 2025, providing a rich, multi-dimensional perspective on Mumbai's history, social fabric, and ongoing challenges. This field trip in collaboration with **CSSS** (Centre for the Study of Society and Secularism).

Schedule Summary and Themes

The field trip was structured around several key themes, combining academic insights from experts with direct observational experiences.

Date	Activity	Speaker/Focus	Theme
Aug 22	Lecture (Sophia College)	Irfaan Engineer	Diversity of Mumbai
Aug 23	Visit/Session (Bahai Centre)	Inter-Religious Solidarity Council (1st Session)	Religious Harmony
Aug 24	Site Visit	Syncretic Shrines at Mahim Dargah	Cultural/Religious Syncretism
Sep 6	Online Lecture	Aravind Ganachari	History of Mumbai
Sep 7	Site Visit	Mani Bhavan (Gandhi's Home)	History/Political Legacy
Sep 13	Lecture (Sophia College)	Neera Adarkar	Mumbai and the Subaltern
Sep 26	Online Lecture	Ram Punyani	Challenges to Diversity

Date	Activity	Speaker/Focus	Theme
Sep 27	Visit/Session (Bahai Centre)	Inter-Religious Solidarity Council (World Parliament of Religion)	Interfaith Dialogue
Sep 28	Site Visit	Aarey Colony with Prakash Bhoir	Tribal Communities/Ecology/Subaltern

Key Lectures and Discussions

A. Foundations of Diversity and History

- **Diversity of Mumbai (Irfaan Engineer, Aug 22):** The inaugural lecture provided a philosophical and sociological framework for understanding **Mumbai's cosmopolitan character**. The discussion centered on how various migrations, economic opportunities, and cultural exchanges have historically contributed to a unique, yet often fragile, social diversity.
- **History of Mumbai (Aravind Ganachari, Sep 6):** This online session delved into the **historical evolution of the city** from a collection of seven islands to a major metropolis, tracing the political, colonial, and post-independence factors that shaped its demographics and infrastructure.
- **Challenges to Diversity in Multicultural Society (Ram Puniyani, Sep 26):** This online lecture focused on **contemporary issues** facing Mumbai's multicultural landscape, particularly the rise of communalism, the politics of identity, and the systemic challenges to maintaining social cohesion and pluralism.

B. The Subaltern Perspective

- **Mumbai and the Subaltern (Neera Adarkar, Sep 13):** This lecture offered a critical perspective, focusing on the lives and struggles of **marginalized groups (the subaltern)** within the city. The discussion highlighted issues of housing, urban planning, displacement, and how the city's economic narrative often overlooks the experiences of its working-class and informal sector populations. This theme was later reinforced during the Aarey Colony visit.

Site Visits and Experiential Learning

A. Inter-Religious Harmony



- **Bahai Centre, Churchgate (Aug 23 & Sep 27):**

The Inter-Religious Solidarity Council (IRSC)
presents

RELIGION AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES
 27th September 2025 | 11 am to 1:30 pm
 Join us for tea at 10:30 am, and lunch at 2:00 pm

Baha'i Centre, 1st Floor, Court Chambers, Marine Lines, Mumbai - 20

SPEAKERS

 Swami Dayadipananda	 Rajni Bakshi	 Mufti Ashfaq Kazi	 Dr. Surinder Kaur
 Fr. Gilbert De'lima	 Roshani Shenazz	 Prabhu Govind Das	 Tahirih Makhija

Please register through the link:
<https://shorturl.at/hz9GY>

Special performance
Radhika Sood Nayak

The two sessions with the **Inter-Religious Solidarity Council** offered direct exposure to **interfaith dialogue** and the practical application of philosophical concepts like pluralism and tolerance. The final session, focused on the **World Parliament of Religion** model,

showcased efforts to foster mutual respect and collaboration among different faith communities in the city.



- **Syncretic Shrines at Mahim Dargah (Aug 24):** The visit to the Mahim Dargah provided a powerful, real-world example of **syncretism**—the blending of different cultural or religious beliefs. Students observed how the shrine is a shared space of reverence, frequented by people of various faiths, embodying a unique form of Mumbai's cultural synthesis.

B. Historical and Political Legacy



- **Mani Bhavan (Gandhi's Home in Mumbai) (Sep 7):** The visit provided an intimate connection to the **Indian independence movement** and the profound legacy of Mahatma Gandhi. It served as a historical anchor, illustrating the city's role as a vital center for anti-colonial politics and ethical philosophy in practice.

C. Ecology and Tribal Community



- **Aarey Colony with Prakash Bhoir (Sep 28):** This was a crucial visit that brought the "Mumbai and the Subaltern" theme to life. Interacting with **Prakash Bhoir** allowed students to understand the complex issues facing the **Warli Adivasi (tribal) communities** of Aarey. The visit explored the intersection of urban development, environmental conservation, and the rights of indigenous people, presenting a live philosophical and ethical dilemma regarding the city's growth trajectory versus ecological and human costs.

Conclusion

The field trip successfully provided TYBA Philosophy Majors with a comprehensive, hands-on study of "**Exploring the Diversity of Mumbai.**" The combination of academic lectures and on-site visits allowed students to move beyond theoretical concepts of diversity, history, and social justice, and critically engage with their real-world manifestations in India's most complex metropolis. The trip effectively highlighted the city's triumphs in pluralism while foregrounding the persistent **subaltern challenges** and the **ongoing struggle for inter-religious and ecological harmony.**

The experiential learning components, especially the interactions at the Bahai Centre, Mahim Dargah, and Aarey Colony, are invaluable in shaping a deeper, practical understanding of applied ethics and social philosophy.

Links for the pictures

Aarey Colony: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/yBLHA6ed9t8gtmyj7>

IRSC Seminar: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/YS1nxTcx1ywLpC45A>

Mani Bhavan: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/P2Qac6LschuVdCfE7>

Mahim Dargah: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/uJBckgbLfNbdpF1L7>

FP Lectures: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/FpPbZJYbFLawh1M76>

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Allis', written in a cursive style.

Dr. TREVOR ALLIS
HEAD, DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY