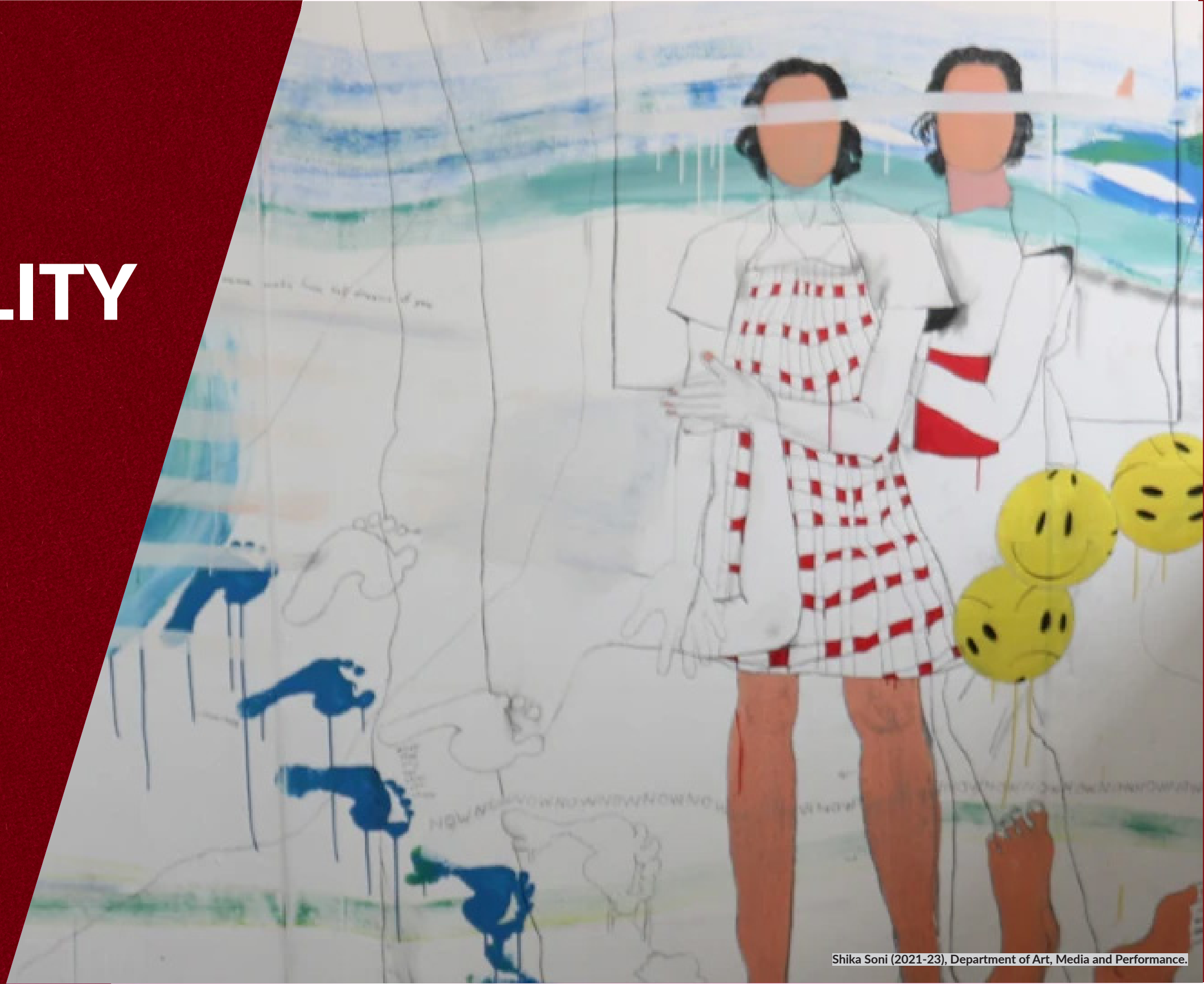


SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

IMPACT STORY 2



Overview

With a broad remit around creating and disseminating knowledge, universities are powerful drivers of local, regional, and global innovation, economic development, and societal well-being. By nurturing the next generation of skilled citizens, universities play a vital role in preparing future leaders. When knowledge and ideas move from university laboratories and lecture rooms into society through partnerships, the knowledge and ideas begin to make an impact.

At Shiv Nadar University, we bring you some of these impact stories through a sustainable series. The stories feature our faculty, their research, and their students creating a difference and contributing to UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In Conversation with Dr. Paromita Goswami, Professor, School of Management and Entrepreneurship

Over the years, the lens of your research questions has moved from marketing and consumption to questions around sustainability, inclusivity, and equity. What inspired this journey?

It has indeed been a journey. Some years ago, I was working at a Jesuit business school in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, and a group attacked us in the aftermath of Kandhamal riots. I started doing some fieldwork on riot victims, and the stories left me shocked, and at the same time wonder whether marketing can be used to promote peace. The tribals that fled the riots and took refuge in the slum near the campus were literally skin-and-bone-and I felt almost guilty for the lifestyle I had. In some way, the injustice and inequity I saw first-hand inspired me to explore issues of violence, justice, and inequity using the consumption/marketing lens. Also, as a single mom, it was incredibly tough for my daughter and me to face the way society was set in its patriarchal ways. My work on masculinity stemmed from that. The Jyoti Singh rape case happened at a time when we had just returned from US-and often, my daughter, who was then in high school, took the metro to come back home after her theatre classes in Delhi, sometimes almost at 11 pm. I was deeply concerned for her safety and what it meant to negotiate public transport for young women. This drove me to work on sexual violence and consumption.

Dr. Paromita Goswami

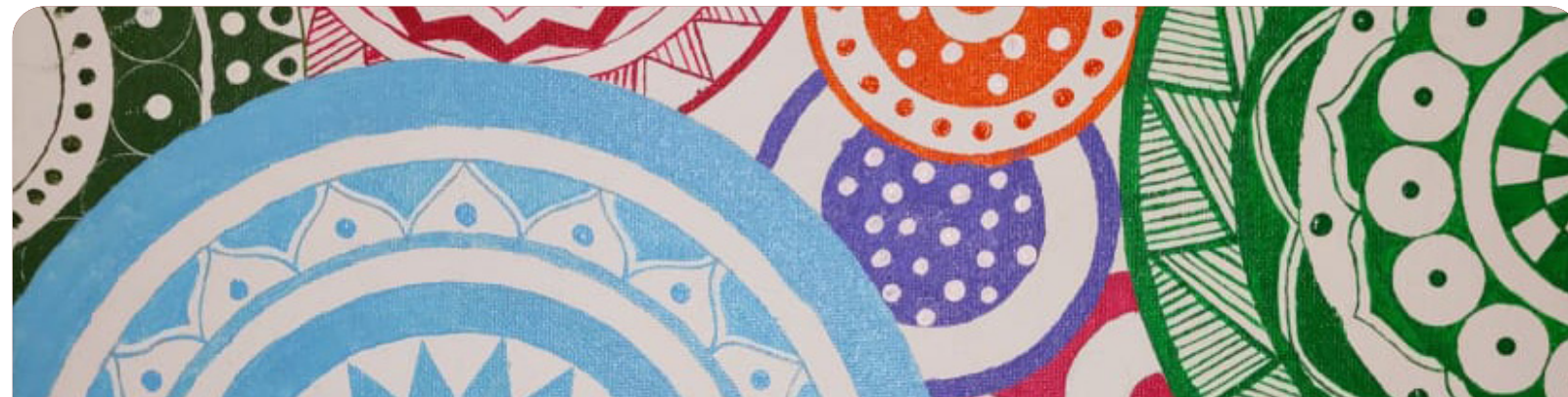


Dr. Paromita Goswami is a Professor of Marketing and Social Innovation at the School of Management and Entrepreneurship. Her area of research ranges from sexual violence and consumption, sustainable menstruation and social entrepreneurship, clinical depression from a critical marketing perspective, social marketing of peace, and youth consumption, to name a few. While she expertly guides students through courses like mining insights from the consumer's mind, marketing management, and critical theory, Prof. Goswami's impactful contributions also extend to on-demand courses covering gender violence and social marketing for social change. With a focus on qualitative research, she offers diverse courses under this umbrella while imparting knowledge on social innovation and sustainability.

One of the key frameworks to check the global progress towards sustainability is the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. A lot of your research includes many of these goals. Please describe how your work, in general, and particularly 2023, is around sustainability.

I ended up with sustainability by chance. My younger brother was doing his Ph.D. at the University of Leeds, UK, and asked me to do a feasibility study for a special sustainable fabric he was working with. I designed a study to understand if there was a market for eco-label certified clothing in India and published it as a single-author piece in what was then an A* journal. That was the beginning of my journey with sustainability. Later, I accidentally chanced upon a spiritual community near Puducherry in Tamil Nadu and its work on sustainable menstruation. It transformed my relationship with myself and my body and made me want to understand social enterprises and movements. Other than a piece in the [Journal of Business Research](#), I also co-authored a teaching [case](#) on distribution to rural underprivileged women. I have co-edited a [special issue](#) in a journal on marketing education, working on bringing out an edited volume on SDGs and Marketing, and a conceptual paper with colleagues in Australia for a journal.

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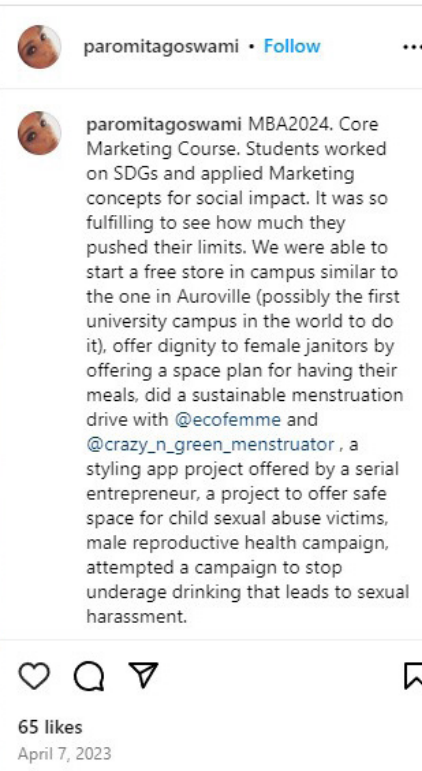
How have you been able to connect and include sustainability in your teaching?

I have encouraged successive batches of students to work on sustainable menstruation. Last year, MBA students raised money from campus residents and donated cloth pads to female janitors on campus. Since last year, I have incorporated SDGs in all my course projects. I've joined hands with my friend and colleague Dr. Aadya Kaktikar, Associate Professor in the Department of Art and Performing Arts to offer a university-wide elective on SDGs and Social Marketing using Performing Arts, where student groups took up an issue on campus and worked on it to make the eco-system aligned with SDGs.

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Here is an example:

As part of a core marketing course, the class of MBA 2024 worked on sustainable development goals and applied marketing concepts for social impact. The students truly pushed their limits and were able to work on a wide range of projects. Such as starting a free store on campus (possibly the first university campus in the world to do it), offering dignity to female janitors by offering a space for meals, doing sustainable menstruation drive with [@ecofemme](#) and [@crazy_n_green_menstruator](#), a styling app project offered by a serial entrepreneur; a project to offer safe space for child sexual abuse victims; male reproductive health campaign; attempted a campaign to stop underage drinking that leads to sexual harassment and more.



What are some of the key research projects of your students (PhD/ OUR/ conferences etc.)

Here, I would like to highlight two of my recent publications:

1. **The Catharsis of Male Consumption: Reimagining Masculinity in India**, is the study that uses in-depth interview methods to uncover the “marginal” masculinity of a group of urban, upper-middle-class, heterosexual Indian men. We probe their consumption as a part of their identity project, referred to as cathartic. Such consumption leads to a sense of high subjective consumer well-being amidst an otherwise patriarchally defined Indian consumptionscape. Published in *Consumer Affairs* in 2022, this was done in collaboration with Arindam Das of Alliance University and Himadri Roy Chaudhuri of XLRI.

Das, Arindam, Himadri Roy Chaudhuri, and Paromita Goswami. “The catharsis of male consumption: Reimagining masculinity in India.” *Journal of Consumer Affairs* 57, no. 1 (2023): 4-35.

2. **Alleviating Help-Seeking Stigma Among Depressed College Students Through Shadow Social Marketing: A Meso-Level Intervention to a Wicked Problem** is a study that addresses the issue of societal stigma attached to mental health issues of college students, which strongly suppresses their attempts at help-seeking.

Goswami, Paromita, and Jaideep Ghosh. “Alleviating Help-Seeking Stigma Among Depressed College Students Through Shadow Social Marketing: A Meso-Level Intervention to a Wicked Problem.” *Social Marketing Quarterly* (2024): 15245004231225457.

Both pieces are invariably backed by class projects of students who worked on allied projects in the past addressing issues ranging from masculinity and consumption, modern-day slavery and mica in lipsticks, upcycling and starting a free store on campus, working on social marketing projects on recycling plastic packs in campus, art intervention on menstrual leave, campaigns to promote romantic wellbeing and stand against sexual harassment and so forth.

? How do you think your work is creating a long-term impact on sustainability?

Other than publications that all academics necessarily publish, my students engage with the business of doing good (a course I offered during the pandemic, but also an ethos I strongly believe in). I don't think any student who takes a course with me can graduate without engaging with sustainability in some form, either through case studies and/or primary field-work-based projects.

? What are some of the partnerships and collaborations you have been able to nurture with not-for-profit, industry, or academia?

My students and I have worked with non-profits like [Ecofemme](#) and [Mediclown Academy](#) in Auroville, [Rangutra](#) is a hybrid organization that has both a non-profit and for-profit wing, and students have interned at [IPSOS](#), done class projects with [Atal Incubation Centre](#) enterprises on campus helping them with consumer insights (for example the [Dabung Girl](#), a social impact superhero to promote gender equity in rural girls) and marketing plans as well as units promoted by university alumni (like [Shrey Jain](#), listed in Forbes 30 under 30). My academic partners are from the University of Sydney, Australia, Birmingham University and Brunel, UK, and Skema Business School, France, and colleagues from TISS, XIMB, XLRI, and Alliance University in India.

Some interesting snippets from the courses and research with students.



On Earth Day, my students undertook an initiative to recycle and upcycle food packets from campus vendors as a part of a course on 'sustainable development goals and social marketing for social change using performing arts. The products prepared from these packets would be made into corporate gifts that the university may use.



This is a 3-credit course on SDGs and Social Marketing for Social Change using Performing Arts.

Believe it or not, this is a marketing course I take along with my colleague Dr. Aadya Kaktikar, Associate Professor in the Department of Art and Performing Arts. One curious gentleman asked what was going on in classroom and when I said it's a Marketing course, he literally stumbled and almost ran away!



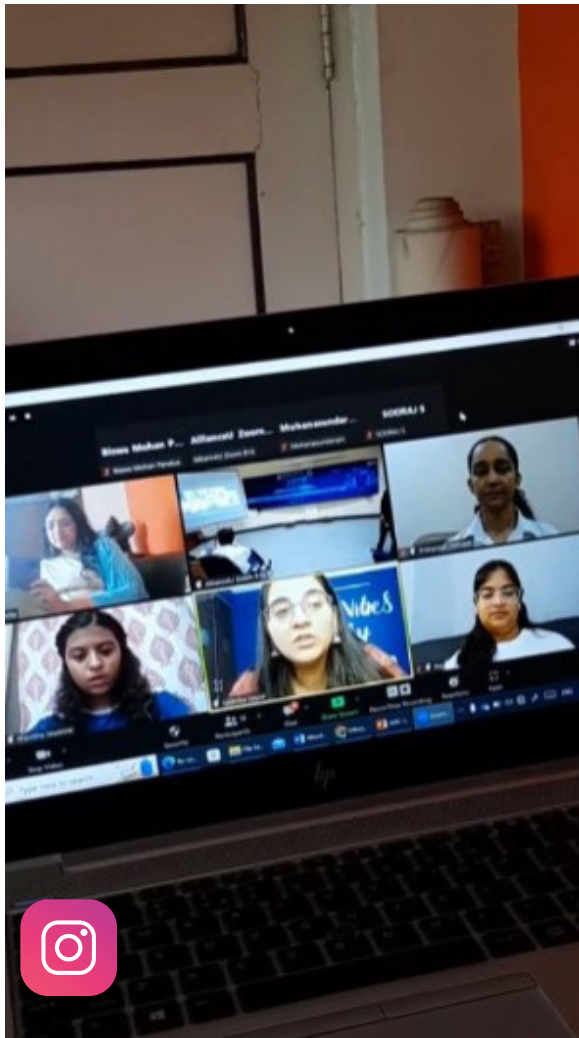
paromitagoswami The toppers of MBA2024 Executing Marketing Plans! The end-term topper wanted to see her paper to see what got her the highest. Ha ha.

I'm so happy to see how much positive impact they had on the campus community. They got a place for the female janitors who had meals in bathrooms earlier to have a clean, healthy place to have their meals with dignity. Helped women support staff to switch to sustainable menstruation option of cloth pads from [@ecofemme](#) by doing three interventions, helped by [@crazy_n_green_menstruator](#) . Started an Auroville-style free store in campus to recycle clothes. Did a solidarity campaign for survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Worked on male reproductive health. And much more

102 likes
May 10, 2023

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My students are PHENOMENAL! I had an invitation for a plenary talk on "Can Sustainability Development be driven by Social Marketing and Consumer Movements?" at the International Conference on Business, Innovation, and Sustainability in Digital Era 2023, organized by Alliance Ascent College, affiliated with Alliance University Bangalore. I requested my students to co-present with me. They talked about sustainable menstruation for Group D employees, menstrual leave, recycling plastic waste, and finding a dignified place for janitors to have meals.

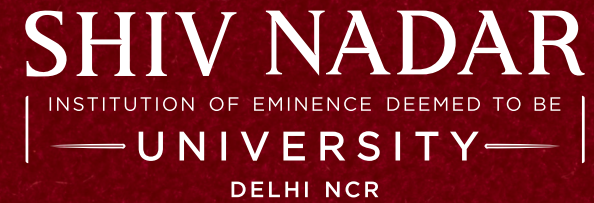


Our students, Aamaya Kumar, Sadhika Uppal, Tanmayee Sharma & Siya Nayak wrote a paper on "Menstrual Advocacy Through A Social Marketing Lens," and got accepted at the prestigious Australian and New Zealand Marketing Conference (ANZMAC) 2023 in affiliation with the University of Otago. Our students make us proud. This paper was inspired as part of a course on SDGs and Social Marketing for Social Change using Performing Arts. I, too, submitted one paper with a team of scholars in the same conference that got accepted. But until the girls dropped by to share the good news, I didn't get a chance to tell anyone that there was an acceptance. And frankly, I revealed theirs more than mine.



This semester, Aadya and I are working with our undergraduate students on different Sustainable Development Goals and trying to bring Social Change using Social Marketing and Performing Arts. Sadhika Uppal, Aamaya Kumar, Tanmayee Sharma & Siya Nayak are working on menstrual flexibility/leave policy. Their art intervention is visible here: they are trying to do both upward and downward interventions.

The badge I wore says 'underestimate me, it will be fun!' The students designed these!



Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence is fully committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We have embraced a four-pronged strategy for SDGs through teaching, research, our core institutional practices, and partnerships.

Deepa Hazrati

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