

NEWSBYTE

JANUARY-MARCH, 2024



Prof. K. Ladha & Dr. Pronab Sen at NITI AAYOG



Mr. Montek. S. Ahluwalia at ISPP Campus



Mr. Amitabh Kant at ISPP Convocation



Government Capacity Building



Enriching the Policy Landscape



Government Stalwarts as Teachers, Mentors



Alumni working with the Government



Government-focussed curriculum



INDIAN
SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC
POLICY

Powering Governance

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MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



DR PARTH J. SHAH

I am thrilled to share with you the highlights of our recent journey at ISPP. As I stepped into my new role as Dean in December 2023, besides being a co-founder, it's been a heartening experience to see our dynamic Team ISPP in action from close quarters, forging new partnerships and empowering our scholars and alumni to earn laurels in national policy competitions, Immersive Learning Experiences, and life-long learning.

As the country gets into the election season, we thought it would be opportune to reflect on the significant work that ISPP is doing to strengthen India's governance system at the union, state, and local levels. Our collaboration with the **Capacity Building Commission** has enabled thousands of Indian civil servants to enrol in ISPP-designed courses on the iGoT platform. The cases developed at our **Case Study Centre** are now integral to the curriculum at government training institutes. Our partnership with the Bihar Institute of Public Administration and Rural Development (**BIPARD**) will **train about 800 Bihar government officers**. Along with **Artha Global**, ISPP will conduct training of trainers programmes for **urban local bodies** in the states of **Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Tamil Nadu**.

We continue to leverage synergies through collaborations with institutions like **NLU** (for a policy drafting competition), **Chase India** (for a policy hackathon), and **ASER** (for conducting field surveys). Our scholars have been a source of immense pride, securing victories in national competitions at prestigious institutions such as IIM Calcutta, **IIM Bangalore**, IIM Bodhgaya, and **IIT Kharagpur**. Scholars also presented papers at important conferences like the All India Conference of East Asian Studies, IIHS Urban Arc Conference, and XIM Bhubaneswar.

Following the Annual Dinner in Delhi, with **Montek Singh Ahluwalia** as the chief guest, we organised one in Mumbai, which was graced by prominent figures from philanthropy, academia, media, business, and public policy. My deep gratitude to **Amit Chandra** and **Vidya Shah** for their insightful conversations facilitated by **Josy Paul**.

We reaffirmed ISPP's commitment to the **Women in Public Policy** (WiPP) initiative by convening deep conversations on International Women's Day. Our focus on lifelong learning continued with the **Alumni Learning Circles**. The Team ISPP took off to **Jim Corbett** for four days, uncovered hidden talents, and strengthened our **bonds**.

With our **vision** of creating next-gen policy leaders for a rising India and the **mission** of democratising public policy and building policy capacity across samaaj, sarkaar and bazaar, we are completing our **5-year strategy**. We will be strengthening and expanding the ISPP team across all functions: academics, student life, alumni relations, admissions & marketing, and fundraising. We are open to internships, externships, part-time consulting, and full-time roles. Please let your network know.

I thank each one of you for walking with us on this promising journey and wish you and your family a joyful summer ahead.

Onward & upward!

Powering Governance

Given its history and mission statement, ISPP believes in **evidence-based policymaking**, at the intersection of samaaj, sarkaar and bazaar. ISPP is working to **enhance government capacity building** and **enrich the policy landscape**. A **governance-centric curriculum** here is a great enabler. With **government stalwarts** as mentors faculty members, and alumni contributing to the governance and policy space in various capacities, ISPP takes pride in living up to its motto – “creating next-gen policy leaders for a Rising India”. As this newsletter edition explains, it’s all about ‘Powering Governance’ – the ISPP way.



GOVERNMENT CAPACITY BUILDING

ISPP is involved in central-level training with **NITI Aayog** and at the state-level with BIPARD in **Bihar**. Additionally, we have partnered with Artha Global for training in **Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh**, along with case study development with CBC and courses on the iGoT platform.



ENRICHING THE POLICY LANDSCAPE

ISPP is drafting a flagship report on administrative reforms for a \$30 Trillion economy, collaborated with CIVIS for India’s First Public Consultation Awards, and our scholars have been involved in Immersive Learning with an MLA to enhance grassroots-level governance.



Powering Governance

GOVERNMENT STALWARTS AS MENTORS, FACULTY



A distinguished **faculty/academic advisory council** lineup comprises at least **14 government stalwarts**, many of whom are former I.A.S. officers. They have previously held prestigious positions, such as

- **Chairperson of Finance Commission**
- **Principal Economic Advisor to Planning Commission**
- **Chairperson of NITI Aayog**
- **CEO of National Health Authority**
- **Commerce Secretary of India**
- **Director of LBSNAA (Mussoorie)**
- **Chairperson of UIDAI**
- **Secretaries to various central ministries.**

ALUMNI WORKING WITH THE GOVERNMENT



ISPP's alumni are directly involved with the government, with many others working indirectly on government projects. Our alumni have worked/are working at prestigious government institutes such as:

- **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW)**
- **Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHuA)**
- **NITI Aayog**
- **Ministry of External Affairs,**
- **Sports Authority of India, and others.**



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GOVERNANCE FOCUSSED CURRICULUM

ISPP's curriculum and programmes are designed to equip participants to contribute to better governance in India. Some of ISPP's courses aimed at better understanding government and democracy include:

1. Structures of the Government (PDM programme)
2. Business and Government (PDM programme)
3. A Two-day programme on 'Understanding Government'
4. A mini-course on 'Redefining Democracy in Indian Election' (PDM programme)



GOVERNMENT CAPACITY BUILDING

1) Training Professionals at NITI Aayog

ISPP collaborated with **NITI Aayog** to conduct a full-day session on public policy, which benefitted 40 participants, including newly appointed individual consultants, young professionals, and officers from the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and Development Monitoring & Evaluation Office (DMEO).

The first session, titled “**Art and Science of Public Policy**” by **Prof Pronab Sen**, was followed by the second session by **Prof K. Ladha**, where he explored the intersection of **game theory** and public policy.



2) Empowering Bureaucrats in Bihar

ISPP's MoU with the **Bihar Institute of Public Administration and Rural Development (BIPARD)** marks a five-year commitment to conducting capacity-building, facilitating faculty exchanges, and engaging in joint research initiatives.

After successfully training **400 officers** in Feb 2023, ISPP is currently conducting a five-month induction programme for about **800 trainee officers** of the 2nd Combined Foundation/Induction Course at BIPARD. The training covers public policy formulation, implementation strategies, and challenges, utilising a case study approach.



3) Capacity building at state and local level

Our collaboration with **Artha Global** introduces innovative **urban-focused capacity-building programmes** and academic courses customised for **state and local governments** in India. Artha Global and ISPP will soon train government officers in **Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu**.

Beyond **training initiatives**, the partnership extends to **collaborative research, publications, and curriculum development**.



GOVERNMENT CAPACITY BUILDING

4) Case Study development in partnership with Capacity building commission (CBC)

The Case Study Centre's first initiative was a project to create shared learning resources for the **Capacity Building Commission (CBC)**, Government of India. These include eight case studies that equip India's civil servants to analyse real-life policy dilemmas and enhance public policy education. These case studies will be **used at government (union and state) training and private academic institutions.**

The case studies cover inclusive governance, renewable energy, and AI for effective governance, serving government training programmes and academic institutions.



5) Courses on Mission Karmayogi's iGoT Platform

The **'Fundamentals of Public Policy'** and **'Public Policy Writing'** courses curated by ISPP recently were featured on the **iGoT Karmayogi platform**, a comprehensive online platform that guides **individual civil service officials in their capacity-building journey.**

This will enable officials to deliver more effectively, eventually enhancing government execution capabilities. It will provide anytime-anywhere-any-device learning to train about **2 crore users**, which was hitherto not achievable through traditional measures.



ENRICHING THE POLICY LANDSCAPE

1) Flagship Report on Administrative reforms to enable a \$30 Trillion economy



ISPP launched its annual flagship initiative, “Rising India’s Pathway to a \$30 Trillion Economy”, to address the crucial question of whether current administrative systems are equipped to propel India towards this ambitious economic milestone. The report will be enriched by insights from a series of moderated panel discussions, where diverse stakeholders will contribute their perspectives and suggestions for reform.

2) Immersive Learning Engagement with MLA

Our scholars, **Ms Nallammal Sobana**, **Ms Rishika Gaur**, **Mr Prakhyat Mathur**, and **Mr Kishor Avhad**, were selected for an Immersive Learning Experience with **Mr Arvind Bellad**, the sitting **MLA of the Hubli-Dharwad (west) region in Karnataka**.

Under the guidance of **Prof OP Agarwal**, they delved into various projects, like building a strategy to make Hubli-Dharwad Global Education Hub, expanding the market potential of the renowned Dharwad Alphonso Mangoes, and solving the social, economic, and environmental issues around affordable housing.



3) ISPP and Civis: Launch India’s 1st Public Consultation Awards



In partnership with Civis, ISPP hosted **India's Inaugural Public Consultation Awards** programme by identifying ministries, departments, and authorities embodying the essence of the Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy of 2014 (PLCP).

Some of the noteworthy winners include the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** for its outreach efforts on the Draft National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 2022, and the **Central Electricity Authority** for its thorough consultation process on the National Electricity Plan Vol. 1. These showcase tangible examples of impactful public engagement.

GOVERNMENT STALWARTS - as Teachers, Mentors and Patrons

Some of our current Academic Advisory Council members & Patrons



Dr Indu Bhushan

Ex-CEO, National Health
Authority
Ex-Director General, ADB



Mr Vallabh Bhansali

Ex-Trustee, BSE
Ex-Committee member, SEBI
Ex-board member, RBI



Dr Vijay Kelkar

Ex-Chairperson, 13th
Finance Commission
Ex-Finance Secretary, GOI



Mr Nandan Nilekani

Ex-Chairperson, UIDAI
Head, GOI's technology
committee

Our Faculty



Dr O.P. Agarwal

Ex-Joint Secretary,
DoPT & MoHuA
Advisor, World Bank



Dr Rajiv Dutt

Ex-Managing Director,
IRFC



Dr Archana Gulati

Ex-Advisor, NITI Aayog
Ex-Head of Public Policy,
Google India



Mr Rajiv Kapoor

Ex-Director, LBSNAA
Ex-Joint Secretary, DoPT



Dr S. Gangopadhyay

Ex-Advisor, Finance Minister
of India
Ex-Policy Consultant, Ministry
of Planning & Industry



Dr Pronab Sen

Ex-Principal Economic
Advisor, Planning
Commission of India



Dr N.C. Saxena

Ex-Secretary, Planning
Commission of India
Ex-Director, LBSNAA



Dr Anup Wadhawan

Ex-Commerce
Secretary of India

ISPP ALUMNI WORKING WITH THE GOVERNMENT

In just **4.5 years**, **170 scholars** across four cohorts in our flagship PDM programme and another **170+ participants** across five cohorts in our LokNeeti programme have graduated. A substantial number of ISPP graduates are actively engaged in government projects both directly and indirectly,



Himanshu Burad

OSD, ABDM
National Health Authority
Class of 2020



Shashank Mishra

Senior Associate
National Institute of Urban
Affairs, MoHuA; Class of 2020



Khwmdwm Mushahry

Assistant Accounts Officer
Government of Assam
Class of 2020



Manohar Lal Vishnoi

Consultant, Office of the CM,
Rajasthan
Works with EY, Class of 2021



Sachin Wyal

Assistant Director
Sports Authority of India
Class of 2021



Mekhla Raina

Lieutenant Governor's
Sustainable Development
Fellow, J&K; Class of 2021



Manas Gubbi

Programme Manager, PRS
Capacity building of MPs
& MLAs; Class of 2021



Saurabh Mishra

Consultant, Office of
Hon'ble Minister of MoHuA
Class of 2022



Dr Barkha Agrawal

Cooperative Inspector
Government of MP
Class of 2022



Dr Poonam Choudhary

Consultant, CBC,
Mission Karmayogi,
Class of 2023



Nidhi Agrawal

Communications Consultant
MoHFW, GOI
Class of 2023



Deepali Vandana

District Advisory Committee
Member, Women & Child
Development Dept, Govt. of
Maharashtra; LokNeeti 2022

Where our alumni work in the Government



Ministry of Housing
and Urban Affairs
Government of India



NITI Aayog



National Institute of Urban Affairs



GOVERNANCE FOCUSSED CURRICULUM

1) Course on 'Voting and Democracy'

In ISPP's mini-course on Voting and Democracy, **Prof Parth J. Shah, Prof Krishna Ladha, and Prof Subhashis Gangopadhyay** explore how voting patterns shape India's democracy, challenging conventional wisdom and delving into theories like **Arrow's theorem** and **Condorcet's theorem**.



2) Understanding Government: Two-day immersive learning programme

ISPP's inaugural 2-day leadership programme, '**Understanding Government**', led by **Dr OP Agarwal, Mr Ajay Khanna, Dr OP Mishra, Mr Vishwanath TS, and Dr NC Saxena**, delved into government structures, public policymaking, corporate perspectives, learning from policy failures, and public servant imperatives. Guest speaker **Ms Supriya Devasthali** discussed strategies for enhancing the Ease of Doing Business.

3) Structures of the Government

This course by **Dr O.P. Agarwal** in the **1st term** of ISPP's flagship **PDM programme** explores the role and importance of government, its various forms, organisational structure, and critical functions. In this course, scholars gain valuable insights into public systems and enhance their understanding of governmental dynamics through interactive sessions and engaging debates.



4) Business and Government

This course by **Prof K.L. Ladha** in the **3rd term** of ISPP's flagship **PDM programme** focuses on the intricate relationship between business and government. It delves into market failures, governance systems, and strategies for influencing government policies. In this course, scholars understand the dynamics of demand and supply in government action, and it prepares them for active participation and informed decision-making.



SCHOLAR ACHIEVEMENTS 2023-24



The Future of Agriculture: ISPP Scholars Shine on NDTV

ISPP recently hosted **NDTV**, with our PDM scholars taking centre stage in a thoughtful discussion, providing insights into the **future of agriculture**. The conversation delved into the pressing issue of demands for Minimum Support Price (MSP), a crucial aspect of the ongoing agricultural debate in India.



ISPP's Policy Innovation Initiatives: Bridging Academia and Practice



In partnership with **NLU and Judicial Academy, Assam**, ISPP organised **Vichaar**, a policy drafting competition that engaged young minds on India's \$10 trillion economy goal.

Concurrently, collaborating with **Chase India**, ISPP hosted a hackathon focusing on crafting a "**Governance Framework for Responsible & Ethical AI**".

ISPP-ASER Field Survey in RK Puram, New Delhi

ISPP and ASER collaborated for an inaugural field survey in RK Puram, New Delhi. Led by Scholar Coordinators **Prakhyat** and **Rishika**, ISPP students conducted the survey over three days in February, reaching nearly **400 households** in the **Harijan Basti**. Over two months, ISPP scholars and the ASER team diligently organised and managed the survey, resulting in a successful community engagement initiative and a learning experience.



SCHOLAR ACHIEVEMENTS 2023-24



ISPP takes pride in celebrating the remarkable achievements of its **scholars who have excelled nationwide in prestigious competitions**, showcasing exceptional public policy talent. Below is a brief overview of their accomplishments.

Team Name	Members	Achievements
Team Salahkar	Aastha, Vaibhav Sindhi, Avhad Kishor	-1st Place: Healthquest by IIM Bodhgaya -Championship: Greenovate by Biotech, Noida -2nd Prize: Mock Niti Aayog by SP Jain, Mumbai -National Finals: The Governance Challenge by Samagra - Top 20 in Tata Steel TomorrowLAB
Team Snehalt24	Snehal, Khayati	- 1st Runner-Up: Shillong Water Hackathon, International Water Conclave, Meghalaya
Team Vishleshan	Sai Manikanta Thota, Harshita Miglani	- Winners: Parishram, Purvodaya 2024, VGSoM, IIT Kharagpur - 2nd Prize: The Great Indian Policy Debate, IIM Shillong
Team Adwithya & Subrat	Adwithya, Subrat	- 3rd Prize: Case Study Competition by AIM Delhi



Team Snehalt24, First Runner Up, Shillong Water Hackathon, International Water Conclave



Team Salahkar, Winner of Greenovate by Biotech, Noida

SCHOLAR ACHIEVEMENTS 2023-24



Team Name	Members	Achievements
Anshuman, Himani, Rishika	Individuals	- Winners: Finals of National Policy Hackathon at IIM Calcutta
Harshita	Individual	- 3rd Place: IIM-B Competition themed like a mock parliament



Team Vishleshan, Harshita Miglani, Salin Mahajan & Shubhi Agrawal at NITI Vichar



Team Adwith & Subrat, 3rd prize, Case Study competition, AIM Delhi

Paper Presentations

Jose Deepak TT presented "The Broken Edges: Politics of Imaginations, Expansion, Marginalities, and the Right to Ernakulam City" at the **IIHS Urban Arc conference**, stimulating discussions on urban development. **Adwithiya Pachisia** shared insights at **XIMB, Bhubaneswar**, and presented a paper at **Amity Noida**, contributing to AI development and public policy discussions.

Publications

Adwithiya Pachisia and **Sai Manikanta Thota** gave insights on eco-friendly transit in Delhi through the perspectives of e-bus drivers in their paper published in the **International Journal of Novel Research and Development**. Additionally, Pachisia delves into the realm of flood management technology in India in an article featured in the **World Journal of Advanced Engineering and Sciences**. Beyond these contributions, numerous scholars have also shared their expertise in the **ISPP Policy Review** and **ISPP Blogs**, enriching the discussion on various contemporary policy issues.

PARTNER DINNER IN MUMBAI

Adding to the list of many firsts, ISPP organised the **1st Partner Dinner** in Mumbai in January. Prominent philanthropists, academicians, CEOs, and public policy leaders attended this closed-door, invite-only event.

The session commenced with **Dr Parth J. Shah** and **Mr Luis Miranda** sharing the inception story of ISPP. They emphasised the current challenges the government faces in building capacity and relevance of public policy education across Samaaj, Sarkaar, and Bazaar.



Post the founders' address, **Mr Josy Paul**, Chairperson at BBDO India, invited **Mr Amit Chandra**, Chairperson, Bain Capital India and Co-founder of ATE Chandra Foundation, and **Ms Vidya Shah**, Executive Chairperson, EdelGive Foundation and Board Member, ISPP, for a provocative and craftily executed Q & A session, asking them deep questions: "**Do you find purpose or does purpose find you?**", "**How do strategic thinking and compassion go together?**" and "**What role can a citizen play in public policy?**"

Mr Chandra reflected on his long philanthropic journey, sharing how it started with supporting scholarships just after receiving his first paycheck. After tasting financial success, he received early exposure in the social sector, as he fondly remembered people who inspired him, including the late **Chuck Feeney**, who gave away 99.9% of his wealth to create transformational change across countries. He further spoke about how every person can do something and how each person's efforts can amplify transformational change. Talking about the role of citizens, he mentioned why it's essential for citizens to voice their opinions, for policies to get delivered effectively and not remain at a thought level, and how philanthropy can create that much-needed push towards effective public policy implementation.



"We need to move from apathy to change. Every person can do something and each person's efforts can amplify into transformational change"

-Amit Chandra

Ms Shah reflected on how aspiration at the grassroots is the biggest driver, how awareness at the grassroots has undergone a drastic change and how restlessness among the citizenry is proving pivotal for them to ask and get what they deserve. She also said, "There is nothing that binds people like tears, and it is important to wear the lens of compassion and get into the shoes of the people on the ground." She shared the importance of being close to the ground because when philanthropists design programmes, they are actually far away from what an actual Indian thinks and feels.

PARTNER DINNER IN MUMBAI



“ We come from Samaaj. We understand the Bazaar, but the biggest change comes from Sarkaar. Therefore, our role as philanthropists is like that of a good broker, who can balance these three elements.

- Vidya Shah

Many industrialists and C-suite corporate leaders attended the event; some of them included Mr Rajiv Anand, Mr Jyotirmoy Chatterji, Ms Amita and Mr Ajay Chauhan, Ms Deepa and Mr Shyamsundar Gurumoorthy, Ms Arpita and Mr Anant Gupta, Mr Raj Kataria and Mr Rajeev Gupta, Mr Shailesh Haribhakti, Ms Archana Patkar and Mr Rajesh Jog, Ms Sarika and Mr Girish Kulkarni, Ms Shobha and Mr Satish Mandhana, Ms Paula and Mr Ravi Mariwala, Ms Beena and Mr Ravi Menon, Ms Gita Nayyar, Ms Bela and Mr Bobby Parikh, Mr Sanjay Parikh, Ms Manisha and Mr Raja Parthasarathy, Ms Kavita and Mr Avinash Satwalekar, Ms Bina and Mr Harish Shah, Ms Poonam and Mr Bhaskar Sharma, Mr P D Singh.



Some key partners of ISPP also graced the occasion with their presence - Ms Pritika Hingorani, CEO of Artha Global; Mr Mathias Pontoppidan, Managing Partner, Pontoka; Dr Susan Thomas, and Dr Ajay Shah, Co-founders XKDR Forum; Antaraa Vasudev, Founder & CEO Civis,



ACADEMIC UPDATES

Dr Easwer Iyer's Session on Marketing and Public Policy

ISPP recently hosted a compelling lecture by **Dr Easwer Iyer**, Professor Emeritus of Marketing at UMass Amherst, exploring the intricate **relationship between marketing and public policy**. Dr. Iyer's insights covered fundamental marketing concepts like the **4 Ps** (Product, Place, Promotion, and Price) and emphasised how public policy is a guiding force shaping marketing strategies and ensuring consumer protection.



Mini course on Public Policy and Corporates



ISPP held an enriching 2-day mini-course on "**Public Policy and Corporates**," with an insightful kick-off session by **Ajay Khanna**, Professor of Practice at ISPP.

Featuring industry luminaries such as **Ishteyaque Amjad** (Managing Director, Policy & Government Affairs, Abbott), **Shivnath Thukral** (Director and Head of Public Policy, Meta India), **Rahul Sharma** (Managing Director, APCO Worldwide), and **Vishwanath TS** (Principal Adviser, ASL - Legal), this mini-course was a treasure trove of knowledge and real-life experiences.

ISPP Policy Relay: Insights from Laveesh Bhandari

In a recent instalment of the ISPP Policy Relay, the ISPP had the privilege of hosting **Mr Laveesh Bhandari**, President of the Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP). His journey underscored the evolving nature of public policy, transcending traditional economic foundations to embrace diverse disciplines and perspectives, offering valuable insights to those trying to navigate this field.



ADMISSIONS UPDATE: ISPP ENGAGES WITH DELHI UNIVERSITY

ISPP continued its commitment to fostering awareness and engagement within the Delhi University community this quarter through various outreach initiatives. Here's a glimpse of the endeavours.



दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय
University of Delhi



1) Career Fairs and Beyond

ISPP actively participated in career fairs organised at prominent colleges like **Lady Irwin College**, **Daulat Ram College**, **Ramjas College**, and **Sri Venkateswara College**. These events provided a platform for students to explore the diverse opportunities in the field of public policy.

2) Lecture Series on 'Cracking Policy Problems':

ISPP organized a compelling series of lectures titled '**Cracking Policy Problems**' at **Kirori Mal College**, **Ramjas College**, and **Hansraj College**. The sessions, led by distinguished ISPP faculty members **Ms Vincy Davis**, **Mr Dhruva Mathur**, and **Dr Imran Amin**, respectively, delved into the intricacies of policy problem-solving, enriching the students' academic experience.

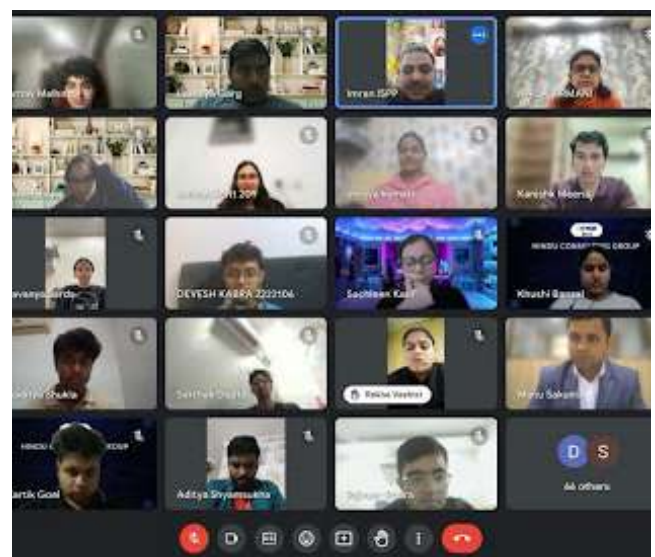


3) Policy Conclave at St Stephen's College

Dr Imran Amin and **Manu Sakunia**, members of the ISPP community, were invited as judges for a Policy Conclave Event at St Stephen's College. This collaboration showcased ISPP's involvement in significant policy discussions and strengthened ties with one of Delhi University's prestigious institutions.

4) Webinars

Dr Imran Amin, a seasoned expert in public policy, conducted two insightful webinars. The first, titled '**Policy Case Approach to Public Policy**,' catered to **St Stephen's College students**. The second webinar, '**Policy Cases for Risk Society**,' engaged the audience from Hindu College. These virtual sessions aimed to provide valuable insights into policy approaches and challenges.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AT ISPP

A reaffirmation towards strengthening

WOMEN IN PUBLIC POLICY

In 1946, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur became the first woman to hold a cabinet rank in Nehru's cabinet post-independence. She was also one of the 15 female founding members of the 299-member constituent assembly that came together to debate and draft the Constitution of India in December 1946. Like many women of the Constituent assembly, she did not believe in reservations for women.



Former Minister of Health and Family Welfare of India

In her own words "In the matter of representation, it was felt that if practical equality were secured for women in the domain of franchise, they would be able to find their way into the legislative and administrative institutions of the country through the open door or ordinary election, and no special expedients such as reservation of seats, nomination, co-option or separate electorates would then be necessary"

However even after 77 years, women have not found their way into the parliamentary corridors through open door and ordinary election. As of 2023, the Lok Sabha had 15% and Rajya Sabha had 16 % women representation.

Was Rajkumari Amrit Kaur too optimistic or too naive?



In 1995, Hillary Clinton, who was then the first lady of the United States, took the opportunity at a UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, to announce **"Women's rights are Human rights and Human rights are Women's rights."**

However, 29 years later, as women across the world continue to survive AND thrive in what is still an unequal ecosystem not designed for them, the Global gender gap Index serves as a good reminder that we are still 131 years away from reaching gender parity.

Was Hillary Clinton's message not impactful enough?

With this backdrop and context, an open-format discussion was organized, on the occasion of International Women's Day on 8th March, as it served as a platform to reaffirm ISPP's commitment towards the Women in Public Policy (WiPP) initiative.

17 enthusiastic scholars and passionate ISPP team members came together in solidarity on International Women's Day and collaborated on the why, how, what, and who of the initiative "Women in Public Policy", which was launched in July 2023. **Ms Sumeet Sandhu**, Head-Development and Lead—Women in Public Policy led the discussion.



WOMEN IN PUBLIC POLICY

The discussion threw up some pertinent questions as well as thoughtful answers –

The conversation opened by first addressing the question, “Why do we celebrate ‘International Women’s Day?’” and Why is there not as much fanfare around ‘Men’s Day?’ as it moved onto the fundamental question, “Why do we need a separate initiative for women, called “Women in Public Policy”, at ISPP? After some debate, the group reached a consensus that we have inherited an unequal ecosystem, which needs to be levelled for women, and hence calls for separate and focussed initiatives such as WiPP.



Ms Shubhangi Narayan and Ms Sri Janaki (Scholars, Cohort of 2024) raised the significant question of not getting enough women’s perspectives in classes, as most faculty members in ISPP are men. **Ms Leah George** added that women professors are required not just because we need women's representation but also to develop our understanding of balanced discourses and narratives.

This started a discussion on the talent pool of women academicians being extremely limited, bringing us back to the chicken and egg situation of a limited number of women in public policy”. **Mr Dhruva Mathur**, Coordinator, added, “This also points to the fact that historically there have been very few women holding leadership positions in the domain, who could be now called upon for teaching and lecturing. If ISPP were set up 30 years ago, with the 50-50 gender ratio that it has today, then we would have had a 50-50 gender ratio in our faculty today.”

Mr Amit Gordon, Head - Institutional Support and Excellence, added, “Perhaps there is a need for ‘Affirmative Action’ in our selection process, where we can have focussed strategies like ‘head-hunting women.’” **Ms Urvashi Shah**, Head - Placements, opined, “There is a need for positive bias for women, where we could reserve a minimum number of seats for Women faculty.”

Mr Arjuna Tiwari, Scholar - Class of 2024, shared the perspective that we are only celebrating women who are already leading; “What about women who don’t even know what public policy is and how are we reaching them? How can it be ensured that enough women choose to study economics and public policy to develop a healthy pipeline?”



A reaffirmation towards strengthening

WOMEN IN PUBLIC POLICY

Ms Snehal Thakre, Scholar - Class of 2024, said, "Policy-level changes are required. However, based on my learnings at ISPP, for policies to be foolproof, people must first know the why, what, and how of it. Hence, advocacy is important, and starting a dedicated blog and focused social media posts would be a good starting point".

Ms Sri Janki, Scholar - Class of 2024, stressed the need for having more conversations and dialogues, as most of the women she met in the field of public policy in networking events shared that they "transitioned into public policy" from other careers like lawyers, architects, and others.

Mr Vaibhav Sindhi - Scholar - Class of 2024, added, "We also need specific action lists of what needs to be done to take these conversations forward, in the short-term, mid-term and long-term, if we are serious about moving the needle."



Ms Sumeet Sandhu also brought in some crucial factors affecting the women workforce from the body of research work of Nobel-prize winner Claudia Goldin (for Economics in 2023) vis-a-vis women's withdrawal from the workforce (temporary or permanent), linking it to the state of care economy in India and exploring its impact on the current state of women in the public policy domain.

The powerful session came to a close with a call to action to intensify the initiative of "Women in Public Policy" at ISPP, which is in line with the Government's discourse of moving from "**Women's Development to Women-led Development**"

LEADING THE CHANGE: WOMEN IN PUBLIC POLICY

How far have we come? Where do we want to go?



The first panel discussion on "Women in Public Policy" took place in June 2023, at the ISPP Campus.

The audience participated in a thought-provoking discussion led by an illustrious panel of leading ladies in the policy space - **Dr Shamika Ravi** (Member, Economic Advisory Council of the Prime Minister), **Devanshi Vaid** (Co-Founder, India Development Review), **Sowmya Karun** (Lead, Public Affairs at Google), **Kankshi Agarwal** (Founder, Netri Foundation), **Parikrama Chowdhry** (Senior Policy Manager at J-PAL), **Ayushi Gupta** (Consultant, World Bank and Community Representative, Women in Economics & Policy), and **Sumeet Sandhu** (Head of Development at ISPP).

LEARNER FOR LIFE: ISPP LAUNCHES ALUMNI LEARNING CIRCLES

As part of our commitment to lifelong learning and professional development, we have launched a series of alumni learning circles under the ambit of Lifelong Learning, as spelt out in our academic philosophy. We will offer a session each month focusing on practical skills relevant to today's policy market. The first session was instructed by **Ms Vincy Davis** (Assistant Professor, ISPP) and centred around **project management using Trello**, a popular free project management software.

The first session aimed to help participants become more strategic in their daily tasks rather than just be busy. During the 1.5-hour skill development workshop, attendees learned how to leverage Trello to enhance their personal and team productivity. The session covered various topics, including Trello's essential key features, setting up boards and cards, creating checklists, assigning tasks, and setting deadlines.



Participants also learned to use Trello to manage their workload effectively, streamline communication, and collaborate with team members. The session was highly interactive, with ample opportunities for participants to ask questions, share their experiences, and learn from each other. Overall, it was an informative and engaging session that gave attendees actionable insights and practical tools to improve their project management skills.

ISPP AND WELLNESS

ISPP's Partnership with YourDost



X



The journey through academia can be challenging, filled with academic pressures, personal dilemmas, and emotional hurdles. Understanding the diverse needs of our scholars, ISPP collaborated with **YourDost- an online counselling and emotional support platform** designed to foster mental wellness. It provides online, in-person counselling and mental well-being workshops for the entire community at ISPP.



FROM OCTOBER 2019 - APRIL 2024

Overall signups
with YourDost

175

Counselling Sessions
with YourDost

876

At ISPP, we recognize the importance of nurturing not just the academic growth of our scholars but also their mental and emotional well-being. Our scholars have benefited immensely from this support system, gaining fresh perspectives, understanding their emotions better, and learning to process them efficiently. Not only has it positively impacted their mental well-being, but it has also contributed to their physical health and overall academic performance.

"I'm deeply grateful for the invaluable support provided by ISPP through free counselling services. Without it, I wouldn't have been able to access or even consider getting the counselling I really needed. The safe space it provided has been instrumental in prioritizing my mental health throughout this journey, and for that, I am truly thankful."

-Scholar from the current class

"Thanks to my counsellor Meenakshi's guidance, I am no longer anxious about the hurdles I might face in the future and have learned to see things from a fresh perspective. I just really needed someone to talk to without being judged for my actions."

-Alumni (Class of 2022)

"I would normally run away from conversations that would dig up my feelings and thoughts. Since my first call with Meenakshi, I just felt this sense of comfort. I could have never imagined speaking to a complete unknown about my past, about my family etc. with such ease. Meenakshi was an absolute delight to speak with an amazing listener. She helped me just feel calm and introspect. Her calls felt like a safe space so I was not only honest with her but also quite comfortable in sharing some of the things that I normally would never. I wish Meenakshi the best! This was my first experience with seeking support and I felt heard which is what helped. Thanks!"

-Alumni

ISPP TEAM OFFSITE

ISPP's first-ever Offsite, held at the serene Riverview resort in **Ramganj, Uttarakhand**, near the **Jim Corbett National Park**, was a time for the team to pause, reflect, and recharge. Themed "**Finding our Magic - Who, Why, What & How!!**", the gathering aimed to deepen connections within the ISPP community while planning for the future.

Through a series of thoughtfully crafted sessions, team members explored the alignment of their work with ISPP's core objectives, vision, and mission. Activities such as blindfolded house-building and intimate story circles fostered stronger bonds and revealed personal insights among colleagues.



Strategic learning sessions focused on long-term goals, highlighting the importance of customer-centric approaches and operational excellence. As the Offsite concluded, its legacy lives on in the team's commitment to continuous improvement and a shared vision for ISPP's growth and impact.





INDIAN
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Creating next-gen policy leaders for a rising India



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