



STUDENT ETHICS AND CONSTITUTION COMMISSION

NEWSLETTER



Section /01

Cases

As per Chapter V, Section III, Clause VIII of the Students' Constitution of IIT Madras, SECC Commissioners are supposed to periodically inform the GSB members about the voting decisions that are being taken by the Commissioners with respect to the cases that we have dealt with so far. While ensuring transparency, SECC is also accountable to the stakeholders of the cases and has to ensure that the privacy of the concerned parties is maintained. Moreover, a repository of past cases has been made by SECC where GSB members can go through the final rulings of the past cases which have more details than what are mentioned in this newsletter. Once the SECC Website is launched, GSB members can access the repository of past cases there.



Case /01

Improper composition of the Selection Committee for the post of Humanities & Social Sciences (HSS) Department Secretary 2023-24

The case concerns the improper composition of the Selection Committee for the position of Humanities & Social Sciences Department Secretary for 2023-24. The issue was raised when the outgoing Branch Councillor was included in the Selection Committee, while the elected Research Councillor was excluded. This violated Chapter VII, Section I, Clause V & Chapter VII, Section II, Clause X, Sub-Clause E of the Students' Constitution. These breaches occurred due to non-compliance with the HSS Department Charter, which clearly mandates the involvement of the outgoing Department Secretary, elected Branch Councillor, and elected Research Councillor in the Selection Committee. The SECC ruled that the Selection Committee must be reconstituted, involving both the currently elected Branch Councillor and elected Research Councillor; and the outgoing Department Secretary. The previous selection panel's decision was declared null and void, and the committee was instructed to apologize to the applicants and establish new evaluation criteria for the two existing applicants.

Date of Ruling: 5th May 2023

Case Duration:- 7 Days

Votes:- For = 2

Commissioners – Mr. Sushant Jaswal & Ms. Tejaswini Jagtap

Case /02+03

1st Contempt of Court initiated by SECC for overruling the Writ of Mandamus issued by the Student Ethics and Constitution Commission, IIT Madras by Team Pragati & Students' General Secretary (SGS).

2nd Contempt of Court initiated by SECC for overruling the Writ of Mandamus issued by the Student Ethics and Constitution Commission, IIT Madras by Team Pragati & Students' General Secretary (SGS).

Team Pragati under the leadership of Student General Secretary (SGS) called for the application for the post of the Head of CAT Club. Even though it was known to the SGS that CAT Club had not been ratified by SLC under team Pragati and SECC subsequently issued a Writ of Mandamus and directed Team Pragati to halt the selection process. Team Pragati sent a mail to the General Student Body (GSB) asking the students to ignore the decisions of SECC. SGS is responsible to execute constitutional responsibilities but SGS has failed to do so by not tabling the CAT Club in SLC. SGS, under whom Team Pragati functions, is accountable for all the actions and was sanctioned along with the Cores. Team Pragati and SGS did not present any concrete reason for sending the mail in contrast to the Writ of Mandamus issued by SECC, which was a violation of a judicial order, which is an act of Contempt of Court.

For the verdict addressing the investigative hearing, SGS was suspended from his official position for the next 24 hours from the time the verdict was in public. All the Team Pragati Cores were given a disciplinary warning and directed to send a public apology.

Case /02+03

Team Pragati Cores were requested to have better understanding within themselves as it was mentioned that some were not aware that they were going to send a mail to GSB violating the Writ of Mandamus. If any student or organization wants to challenge the orders issued by SECC, they are supposed to write to SECC directly as per the protocols mentioned in the Rules of Procedure. Pragati Club is suggested to have a Faculty Advisor of their own who can guide Team Pragati & SGS in an appropriate manner.

For the verdict related to Contempt of Court proceedings, Team Pragati Cores were suspended from their official position for the next 24 hours from the time the verdict was made public. SECC believes that all the actions taken by Team Pragati were in consultation with SGS. So, SGS was given a disciplinary warning, and was directed to send a public apology for the 2nd Contempt of Court (28th May 2023). While the three heads of the Pragati Club were suspended for a period of 24 hours from their official capacity as part of the ruling for the 2nd Contempt of Court. The second contempt of court happened with respect to the AMC Club for which a GSB member had filed a complaint stating conflict of interests between AMC Club and a club under AAS.

Date of Ruling:- 2nd June 2023

Case Duration:- 60 Days

Votes:- For = 2

Commissioners:- Mr. Sushant Jaswal & Ms. Tejaswini Jagtap

Case /04

Academic Mentorship Club under Pragati Club under Students' General Secretary in conflict with the Department Academic Mentorship Program under Career Development Cell under Academic Affairs Secretary

Team Pragati called for applications for the post of the Head of Academic Mentorship Cell (AMC). SECC Issued a Writ of Mandamus and convened an Investigative Hearing as SECC had received a complaint stating that there is a conflict between the interests of Academic Mentorship Club under Pragati Club under SGS and Department Academic Mentorship Program under Career Development Cell under AAS. As per the issued Writ of Mandamus, Pragati Club was directed to halt the selection procedure until further notice.

The agenda document mentioning Team Pragati and AMC under it has been attached with the 3rd SLC meeting agenda points, but there is no evidence of it being passed in the MoM of 3rd SLC. As per former Academic Affairs Secretary (AAS), AMC was passed under his tenure. It was taken under the Career Development Cell (CDC), and renamed as Department Academic Mentorship Programme. SECC has found that the SGS rulebook mentions the Academic Buddies. As per the inputs of former SGS to the Writ of Mandamus, he stated that AMC, which runs academic buddy, was under Saathi and was shifted under Pragati. However, SECC found that there does not exist any evidence of the AMC being part of SAATHI or the shifting of the academic buddy program to Team Pragati.

SECC concludes that AMC was not part of SAATHI, it was just Academic Buddies and the same was also not shifted to Team Pragati. Rolling out of applications was against the spirit of the Student's Constitution as the due procedure was violated. The dispute has been resolved with the updated rulebooks in the first SLC of 2023-24. Since the 1st SLC MoM dated June 18, 2023, the updated rulebook of SGS states that the AMC comes under the Pragati Club while the DAMP comes under the CDC under AAS.

Date of Ruling:- 17th July 2023

Case Duration:- 52 Days

Votes:- For = 2

Commissioners:- Mr. Sushant Jaswal & Ms. Tejaswini Jagtap

Case /05

The arbitrary and unconstitutional removal of 2 ratified Disaster Management Committee (DMC) Cores by the Students' General Secretary (SGS) and the subsequent issuance of a Writ of Mandamus (First and Second) by the Student Ethics and Constitution Commission (SECC) against the arbitrary removal.

Two ratified DMC cores were arbitrarily removed as no submission of report or dissemination of official warning via mail was provided to the concerned cores as mentioned in the SGS Rulebook. Subsequently, a Writ of Mandamus was issued by SECC to freeze the activities and the team structure until further notice to ensure justice to the students who have been arbitrarily and unconstitutionally removed from their PoRs. SECC issued a Second Writ of Mandamus to unfreeze activities while maintaining the status quo in terms of team structure to ensure that other GSB members do not suffer because of the trial that SECC has taken up. The 3 major reasons provided by SGS for the removal of DMC cores were (i) DMC Cores were not communicating on the WA group where SGS was present and both these cores were not working for the development of the team, (ii) denial that the 2 Cores showed in terms of incorporating 3 students without the due process in the team, and (iii) having more than one Core Position in other teams. At the time of recruiting DMC cores, the eligibility criteria did not state anything about not having other Core position PoRs and there is no established rule for the same in the SGS rulebook.

However, the Faculty Advisor, the former DoSt Sir, had instructed SGS and DMC Cores to abide by this reasoning and proposed that the core can remain a core of DMC if they resign from the other core position because handling more than one core position reduces the productivity of the student and the team.

Case /05

SECC concluded that SGS was to send a formal apology from his official mail ID to both the students for violating their fundamental rights of free speech and expression, equality, personal liberty and privacy, right to seek information & access to healthcare (mental health). Not abiding by the 2nd Writ of Mandamus was considered as a Contempt of Court and mandated a disciplinary warning to the SGS. SGS was instructed to reinstate both the DMC Cores respectfully back to the team with immediate effect as the grounds of removal are unreasonable and lack evidence. All 3 DMC Cores were directed to release applications for coordinator positions among the GSB in order to incorporate the three new members to the team by following the due process. The Speaker was recommended to draft a policy mentioning the procedure in which a ratified member can be removed and to propose an amendment to the policies of Ratification mentioning that no student should hold more than one Core position at a time as the former DoST had suggested the same.

Date of Ruling:- 7th September 2023

Case Duration:- 29 Days

Votes:- For = 3

Commissioners:- Mr. Sushant Jaswal, Ms. Tejaswini Jagtap, Ms. Meenakshi Anoop

Case /06

The Saraswathi Hostel Council 2023-24 has been accused of being irresponsible for not conducting the Hostel General Body Meeting (GBM) appropriately on 12th September 2023 and in the same GBM the Sports Secretary was absent with no prior information to the Hostel Residents.

A complaint was sent to SECC by one of the residents of Saraswathi Hostel who had accused the Saraswathi Hostel Council 2023-24 of being irresponsible in conducting the Hostel General Body Meeting (GBM) on 12th September 2023 as well as accusing the Sports Secretary of Saraswathi Hostel for being not present in the meeting without prior information to the hostel residents. The members of the Hostel council arrived at the GBM (to discuss the Budget) 30 minutes later than the prescribed time without any communication, which created lots of confusion among the hostel residents who were present on time. Also, due to the absence of the sports secretary, the Hostel Council members and the Hostel residents couldn't discuss the Budget of the Hostel. SECC, through its investigations, found out that the whole case revolves around the idea of miscommunication and lack of communication between the hostel council members and hostel residents through official channels, and the unavailability of the Sports Secretary was due to some commitment/emergency.

Thus, SECC passed a ruling stating that the Saraswathi Hostel Sports Secretary and Other Saraswathi Hostel Council members should be more proactive in informing the hostel residents about the actions and their availability.

Date of Ruling:- 7th October 2023

Case Duration:- 26 Days

Votes:- For = 3

Commissioners:- Mr. Sushant Jaswal, Ms. Tejaswini Jagtap, Ms. Meenakshi Anoop

Case /07

One of the SLC Secretariat members of 2022-23 has been accused of financial misappropriation by the 2022-23 SLC Speaker for not disbursing the train and flight ticket reimbursements to the students for the Parliament Trip that was conducted by SLC 2022-23.

The former SLC Speaker (2022-23) filed a complaint stating that he has not received the reimbursement of worth ₹26,000 (approx.) that he was entitled to receive within this month from one of the current SLC Secretariat members (2023-24) who was responsible for disbursing the reimbursement money among the students. A total of ₹45,000 (approx.) had to be reimbursed to the students for the flight or train tickets that they had booked during the Parliament Trip from their own pockets. On investigating, SECC got to know that around 12 students have not received their reimbursement from the SLC Secretariat till date. The student who was responsible for disbursing the reimbursement money had some confusion and misunderstanding with the SLC Speaker (2022-23) due to which the member did not disburse any money to any GSB member. Further, the SLC Secretariat member could not do the required transactions for the past one month because of non-functioning of her bank account and UPI Id.

Finally, SECC checked all the proofs from the STACT Office and issued its verdict where SECC asked the SLC Secretariat member to pay a specific amount of reimbursements to 12 different students within the period of 2 weeks from the date of issue of the verdict.

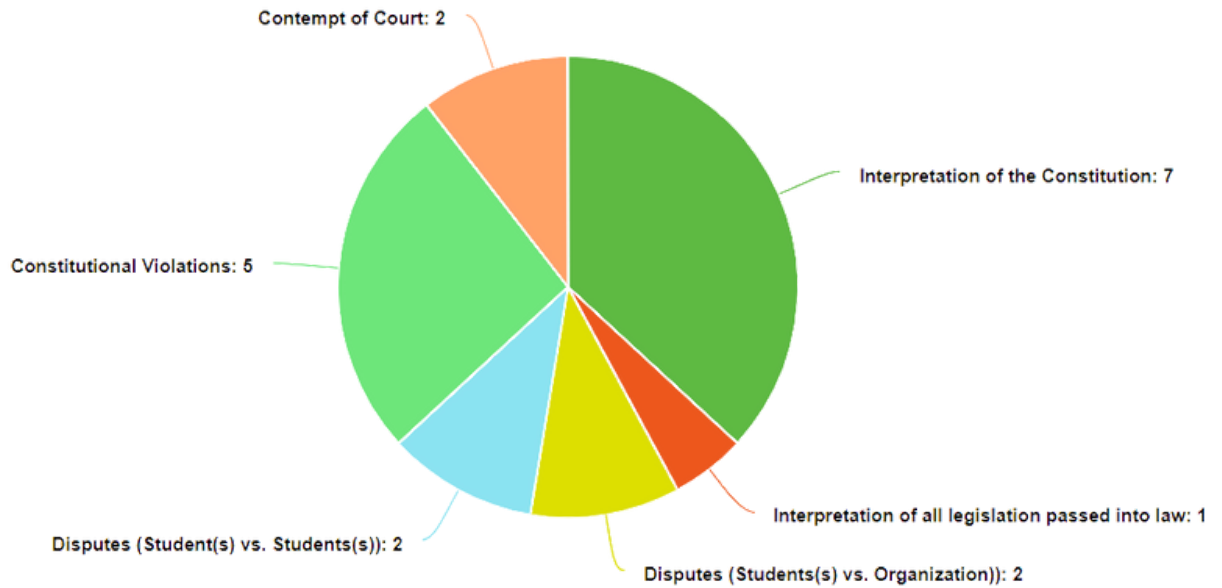
Date of Ruling:- 24th October 2023

Case Duration:- 30 days

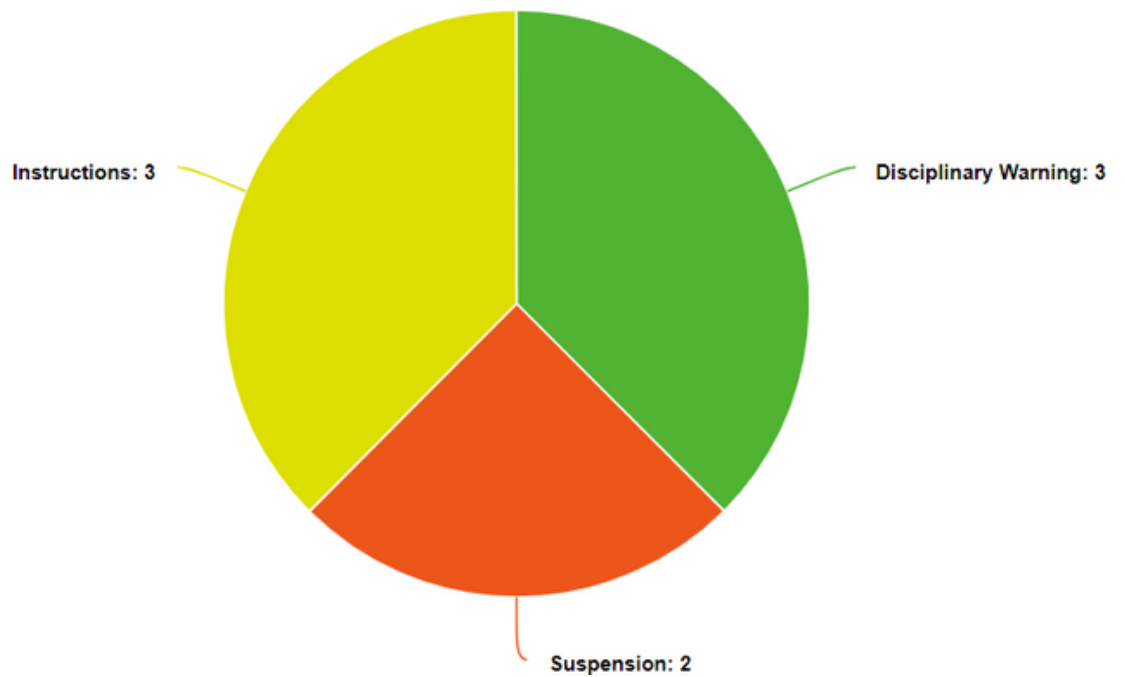
Votes:- For = 3

Commissioners:- Mr. Sushant Jaswal, Ms. Tejaswini Jagtap, Ms. Meenakshi Anoop

Statistics



Cases



Sanctions

Statistics

Types of Cases that SECC dealt with

- A. Interpretation of the Constitution. - 7 (All Cases)
- B. Interpretation of constitutional amendments.
- C. Interpretation of all legislation passed into law. - 1 (Case - 4)
- D. Disputes and controversies involving:
 - 1. Student(s) against an organization or vice versa - 2 (Case - 1 & 6)
 - 2. An organization against an organization.
 - 3. Student(s) against student(s). - 2 (Case - 5 & 7)
 - 4. Student(s) against faculty members and staff in such cases where the
 - 5. Fundamental Rights guaranteed by this Constitution are suspected of
 - 6. having been violated.
- E. Charges of violations of the constitution, constitutional amendments, or other legislation passed by the Student Legislative Council and signed into law. 5 (Case - 1, 2, 3, 5, 6)
- F. Contempt of Court - 2 (Case - 2 & 3)

Sanctions used by SEC

- 1. Disciplinary Warning - 3 (Case 2, 3, 5)
- 2. Suspension from a particular event for a particular time period.
This can be
- 3. awarded to both individuals and organizations. - 2 (Case 2 & 3)
- 4. Restrictions on further participation and/or fines
- 5. Compensation for losses
- 6. Dismissal of elected representative
- 7. Instruct students to act in a certain manner - 3 (Case 1, 5, 6 & 7)



Section /02

EVENTS



India Quiz Event by SECC in collaboration with the Quiz Club

Date: 18 August 2023

Venue: CRC 201



Introduction

This event was organized on the occasion of the 77th Independence Day of India, with the primary objective of promoting political literacy, and encouraging a better understanding of not only India's democratic and electoral processes but also its heritage and culture.

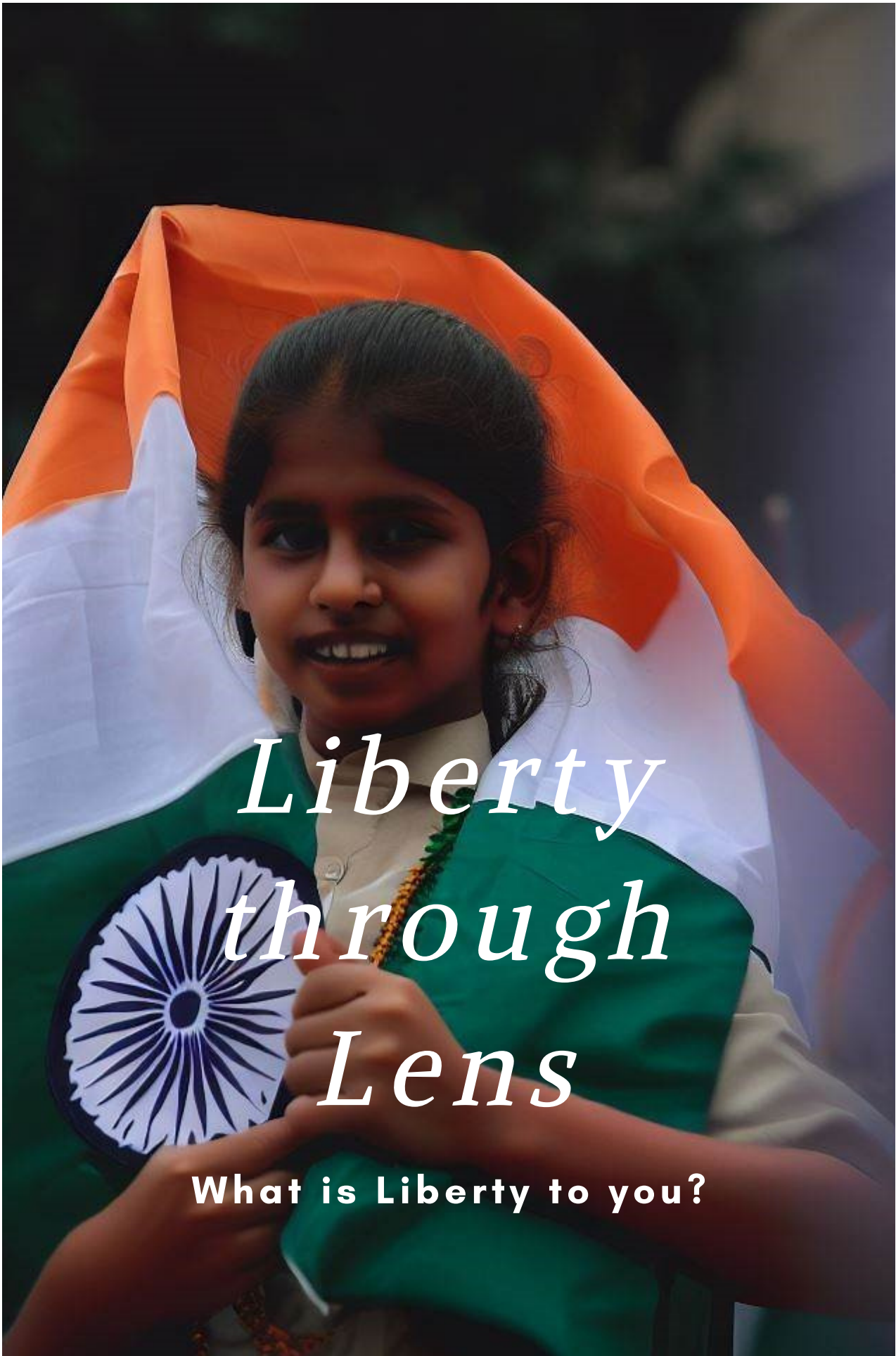
Highlights

Quiz Format: The event adopted a quiz format where there were 25 questions and teams of 3 were allowed to participate. The quiz encompassed a wide range of topics, including Indian politics, the Constitution, electoral laws, and historical and cultural events of significance to the nation.

Contestant Participation: Candidates from various departments and various years of the degree participated in the quiz. This diversity of participation added to the event's significance, fostering a sense of healthy competition and learning among candidates of different backgrounds. In the end, we witnessed a participation of around 60-80 people. Prizes and Recognition: Winners and top performers were awarded prizes and certificates. There were 3 prizes worth rupees 2500, rupees 1500, and rupees 1000 for first place, second place, and the third place respectively.

Conclusion: The "India Quiz Event" conducted by the SECC was a commendable effort to enhance political literacy among election candidates and the general public. The event aimed to foster better-informed political leaders and citizens. Furthermore, the event demonstrated the SECC's commitment to promoting political education and awareness. It is expected that such initiatives will contribute to a more informed and engaged citizenry, ultimately strengthening India's democracy.





*Liberty
through
Lens*

What is Liberty to you?

Introduction

SECC organized a dynamic event on the occasion of the independence day dedicated to getting photos that relate with the notion of liberty for students. This aimed to equip student candidates with the knowledge and skills required to effectively use photography on social media to engage and connect with their fellow students.

Highlights

Hands-On Practice: Participants had the opportunity to show their photography skills as a submission was asked of them directly. They learned to capture photographs that conveyed the desired themes and values, as we made it a must for them to formulate

Photo Contest and Prizes: For the photographs submitted through the form circulated on email and social media, the top 3 photographs were judged by the Media Club, and prizes were awarded to those with the most compelling and thematically sound visual content. There were 3 prizes worth rupees 1500, rupees 1000, and rupees 500, for first place, second place, and the third place respectively.

Social Media Strategy: In addition to photography, this allowed us to engage with students online and we were able to integrate high-quality visuals into our feed by featuring the top 3 photographs as a post (this was also an incentive for students to submit their photos). This enables SECC to maintain consistency in its online presence.

Student Engagement: The event was open to all students. Moreover, being an online event, it stimulated those who wouldn't have otherwise participated to send entries due to the ease of access. 35-40 entries were received by us in the end.

Conclusion: The "Candidates' Social Media Photography Event" conducted by the SECC was a commendable initiative that empowered enabled leveraging the power of visual communication in our campaign for a memorable IITM independence day. This initiative was one of the initiatives to make us visible in the digital sphere, ultimately contributing to a more engaged and informed student body.





Bridging Divides

***A Social Campaign
event in collaboration
with Enactus and IVil***

Date: 7 November 2023

Venue: Himalaya Foyer Area

In a collaborative effort, SECC organized a comprehensive Social Campaign Event on Bridging the Income Divide. This event was designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills required for effective visualisation of the problem of the widening income disparities. Numerous stalls and fun events were on display to make the students' experience better.



Collaboration Among College Bodies: The event was made possible through collaboration with IVil and Enactus. This collaborative approach ensured a wide range of expertise and resources to support the event, and allowed for attracting a more broad-based audience.

Strategic Performance: The Comedy Contingent was roped in to perform at the event to catch and eyes and attract more audience. However, the people were in constant movement and the comedy contingent was also unable to reel in the hordes of passer-bys, who to be fair were a bit hostile.

SECC Stall: The stall was mainly focused on conducting a quiz which tested the knowledge of people about the nitty gritty of our country which also helps put in perspective the various social problems that are being faced. For every correct answer, a slice bottle was provided. The SECC also organised for sticky notes and a sticky notes board where students could pen down their thoughts regarding the problems and what they've become aware about.

Other Stalls: IVil and Enactus also had stalls with fun games which included Jenga, match the following for indigenous materials, and throw the hoop, which had locally made goodies as the prizes.

Public Engagement: The event was open to the public, and the majority of college students dine at the Himalaya Mess or Food court. This coupled with the timing encouraged broader participation, promoted transparency, and provided a platform for students to engage with the stalls.

Conclusion: "Bridging Divides" conducted by the enabled students to gain knowledge about ethical, local and transparent local production through the goodies provided and the knowledge imparted



A MESSAGE

FROM THE SECC CHIEF COMMISSIONER

It fascinates me to communicate my exhilaration and joy of SECC taking up ground breaking initiatives which were often mapped on a piece of paper but were never realized anytime soon. In my 3 years journey, first as the Constitutional Monitoring & Operations Head, then as the SECC Commissioner and finally as SECC Chief Commissioner. I have seen the organization growing from the infant stage to the stage where every student at IIT Madras, even in the farthest form of communication, would have heard, read, or thought about SECC, if not in its original form but at least as the Student Election Commission (SEC).

Today, when SECC has been visible enough either through smail, InstiSpace App, social media websites (or going to be by the upcoming SECC website), it is because of the efforts of each and every member in the organization who has been putting since the conception of the team. Demystifying the glass boundaries between SECC and GSB has never been easy but has not been impossible either because of the constitutional limitations that often expect SECC to be the most formal organization at IIT Madras. In my opinion, GSB holds a special pedestal in the heart of SECC because of the legitimacy, trust and the challenges that they have posed to us; everytime providing SECC the opportunity to hone ourselves for the betterment of the students' community.

The Great Indian Monk - Swami Vivekananda once said, "Arise, Awake and stop not till the goal is reached". The only goal that SECC strives for is 'Bonum Commune Communitatis' (for the common good of the community) which is a far reaching goal but is not impossible to achieve though. As SECC 2023-24 with its myriad initiatives has arisen, awakened and taken a leap in the direction of achieving the aforementioned long term goal, short steps with concerted efforts would always be preferred for the greater good of IIT Madras. For which, you as a GSB member can always reach out to us in any capacity to map more such initiatives that are to be realized in the near future.

Sushant Jaswal

SECC/SEC Chief Commissioner

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