

Breaking the Silence Behind the Sitcom



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XAP

Our Compass and Our Catalyst

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Womanhood & The World: Xavier's & Beyond

Why it matters to talk about the identity and life that a woman leads.



Nirjara Poptani

Who is a woman? It seems the right question to begin this issue with, considering we talk at length about her struggles and identity across these pages. How and why does this relate to the women at Xavier's? Before I answer that, let me ask you a quick question. How do you 'define' a woman? Is a woman defined by those in her life, whom she serves, loves and protects? If so, does this definition really suffice? And, how does it concern you, reader? Or any of the women you see in the picture here? Each of these women you see here are different, and yet united by their common struggles of identity and existence.

FIND THE ANSWERS ON PAGE 3

The Women of Xavier's: (Left to right) First row: Dr. Pinky Desai, Dr. Profaina Christian, Dr. Mallika Sanyal, Dr. Suhani Parikh, Dr. Shital Doshi; Second row: Dr. Anna Sacha, Dr. Nandita Christie, Dr. Uma U, Dr. Praveeda Raja; Third row: Ms. Jipsy Jojo, Dr. Sudeshna Menon, Dr. Kinjal Mistry, Dr. Nithya Nadar, Ms. Anita Patel; Fourth row: Dr. Rashmi Yadav, Dr. Mitali Konnur, Ms. Cinny Denny
Students: NCC: Lcdt Karuna Singh Rajput, CDT Gahena Lodha, NSS: Vrisha Shah, Jagrat Cell: Dhruvi Chaudhri, CWDC: Shreem Shah
Sports: Volleyball-Cynthia Fernandes, Basketball-Diya Patel, Table Tennis- Siddhi Patel, Badminton -Ayushi Modi, Cricket- Saloni Tanna, Football- Bhavana Purohit (Pooja)
Cleaning Staff: Rekha Ben, Lakshmi Ben and Jyotsna Ben

Father David on student life at Xavier's & building a Future

Interviewed by Nirjara Poptani & Niki Raval

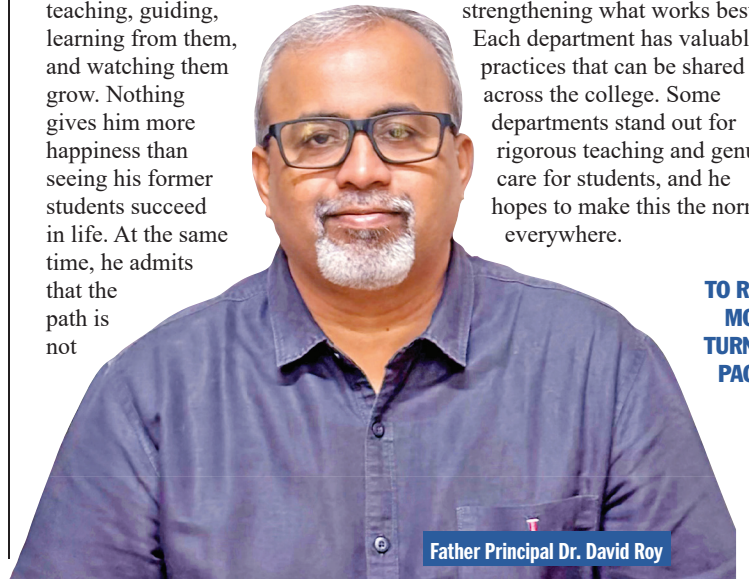
Father Principal Dr. David Roy says, "Nothing gives me more happiness than seeing my former students succeed in life." He talks about his journey to becoming the principal and his future vision of Xavier's. He highlights the importance of extracurricular activities, while also sharing his views on gender equality.

Fr. David recalls that the most rewarding part of his journey has always been working with hundreds of students every year; teaching, guiding, learning from them, and watching them grow. Nothing gives him more happiness than seeing his former students succeed in life. At the same time, he admits that the path is not

without challenges. Balancing teaching with administrative work, correcting students with kindness, and understanding the mindset of a younger generation can be demanding, but these challenges are also opportunities to learn.

Speaking about his vision for the future of Xavier's, he explained that in the Jesuit tradition, leaders do not rush to change everything at once. Instead, they begin by listening and understanding. Xavier's, he believes, is already strong in many areas, and the focus now is on strengthening what works best.

Each department has valuable practices that can be shared across the college. Some departments stand out for rigorous teaching and genuine care for students, and he hopes to make this the norm everywhere.



Father Principal Dr. David Roy

TO READ MORE, TURN TO PAGE 2

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Student life, a future and a society built on trust: in conversation with Fr. Dr. David

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Fr. Dr. David highlights how cultural and extracurricular activities add depth to student life. Last year, about 40% of students participated in youth festivals, sports events, or cultural fests, while 25% attended seminars and conferences. These numbers are promising, but he believes every student should step beyond the classroom. One proposal he shared with the XAP team was to encourage

all first-year students to join at least one activity, be it sports, NCC, NSS, cultural programmes, or community service to enrich the college experience and shape students in ways academics alone cannot.

On gender equality, he expressed confidence that women feel safe and respected on campus, with any concerns addressed swiftly. Programmes such as PGOP teach students to respect women and treat everyone with dignity. At the same time, he reminded



Respecting each other as equals is essential, and this value must be nurtured from childhood. Listening to differing opinions even when we disagree, and accepting that others may see the world differently is not just a lesson for students, but for life."

us that society must keep working to break stereotypes and create space for equality. Xavier's is already playing its part, more than half of the HODs and staff are women, and female students regularly take on important leadership responsibilities. The college, he believes, is actively preparing young women for leadership roles in society.

He closed with a piece of advice that felt especially relevant for young people today.

What has Xavier's Been Up To?

A quick rundown of all the achievements of our talented Xavierites!

Niki Raval, Naiara Bhatia, Winifred Harry, Prapti Shah

ARTS

Economics

A guest lecture on 'Career Planning' was organised on July 14, 2025. The session was organized in association with IMS-Ahmedabad with the resource person Mr. Ujjwal Nagar, Director of IMS Gujarat. The lecture focused on guiding students regarding post-graduation career options, emphasizing preparation for the MBA, UPSC, and CUET. The main aim of the session was to guide the Third-Year, Economics students in making constructive plans for their future.

English

Students of TYBA launched their edited books. In December 2023, the current TY batch began their internship with Esteem Publication UK as part of their minor course. The internship gave students the chance to edit public domain novels. This involved typesetting, formatting, proofreading, amongst other tasks. Eight students secured the opportunity to have their books published as a direct outcome of the internship, culminating in a book launch that took place on the 14th of August.

Gujarati

World Gujarati Language Day on the 26th of August 2025 to mark the 193rd birth anniversary of poet Veer Narmad was celebrated. The event began with a prayer by student Vishwa Meheriya. Dr. Puran Makwana shared his thoughts on Narmad's Mari Hakikat, while Mr. Mayur Shinde and Prof. Manubhai Rabari reflected on his poetry and



persona. Ramesh Wala performed "Jai Jai Garvi Gujarat." Hosted by Hani Ramani.

Psychology

An International Symposium on "Empowering Vulnerable Children Through Psychological Support", was organised on July 23. It was conducted by Dr. Priti Desai, Associate professor in the Human Development and Family Science Department at East Carolina University (ECU), North Carolina, USA. To support children facing a wide range of challenges, the symposium was centered on evidence-based psychological strategies—like fostering resilience, nurturing emotional intelligence, and addressing trauma.

Sanskrit

A Research Methodology Awareness Programme was conducted with the primary objective of introducing and strengthening the foundational understanding of research among college students. The programme

aimed to enhance the knowledge of participants regarding the meaning, significance, and structured approach to research. Dr. Ishwar Mehra, Dr. Rajavi Oza and Dr. Vandana Solanki's diverse expertise provided the participants with a broad and practical understanding of research principles and methodology.

Sociology

A Guest Lecture on 'Social Justice: Past and Future' was organised on July 16, 2025. The Guest of Honour, Dr. Rajan Priyadarshree has an illustrious career as an IPS officer, and is now an Advocate at Gujarat High Court. Topics like violence in civil society, positive discrimination, the social issues faced by women and lower castes, superstitious practices were covered.

Theatre

The department participated in Youthfest 2025 competitions and brought home several awards. Check page 7 for the highlights of Youthfest 2025.

SCIENCE



Mathematics

On the 16th of September 2025, a field trip to Science City was held for FY, SY, and MSc students on the occasion of National Engineer's Day, guided by Dr. Savan Patel and Dr. Kinjal Shah. Earlier, on 31st August, the State-level Prof. A.R. Rao Mathematics Competition, organized by Gujarat Ganit Mandal, was conducted at our college as the sole Ahmedabad center, hosting 75 students. Adding to the achievements, on 20th September, SYBSc Mathematics students Dhvanit, Manas, and Aastha secured second rank at the State-level Mathematics Quiz.

Chemistry

The Department hosted a three-day Instrumental Analysis Workshop 1.0 from the 21st to the 23rd of August, giving M.Sc. Organic and Analytical (Sem III) students a rare opportunity to work with high-end instruments. The sessions featured hands-on training on HPLC, UV-IR, and spectrofluorophotometer. Mr. Saroj Kumar Katara, Product Manager, explained the advanced features of HPLC, while Dr. Pranav Trivedi and Dr. Angel Mary Joseph guided students through practical exercises. With 39 participants, the workshop was a success under the leadership of the Head of the Department Dr. Francis Christy.

Physics

On the 28th of August 2025, a workshop on Indian Space: Past, Present and Future was organized by PRL, with 42 students participating. Earlier, students visited PRL Thalje on 19th August for research exposure. Under the MOU with IPR, 13 UG/PG students were selected for various projects. Vacation programs included a 30-day residential school and internships. Additionally, two talks enriched learning, featuring experts from Taiwan and Central University of Gujarat.

Statistics

An Alumni Interaction was organised

on 23rd August in the HD Hall, where Alumni from Germany, Canada, and London participated virtually, while three attended in person, to share their professional experiences. Their insights into career opportunities and global perspectives offered students a deeper understanding of the field. The session was organised under the guidance of Dr Nandita Christy.

Zoology

Viha Rawal explored canine bone cancer through surveys with veterinarians, literature reviews, and an international conference presentation, emphasizing its link to human cancer studies. Her work, inspired by the loss of her own dog, aims to raise awareness and improve treatments. Meanwhile, Twisha and Pryankshu Roy conducted a bird diversity survey at St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad, from September 2024 to May 2025, documenting species across varied habitats, from kingfishers to kites, enriching campus biodiversity records.

Botany

B.Sc. and M.Sc. students attended a session on urban horticulture development on the 8th of July. On the 14th of July, Semester III students gave an orientation to M.Sc. students in Semester I. Soilless cultivation techniques were introduced to students on the 19th of August during a workshop on hydroponic farming. Students traveled to Pachmarhi from the 1st of September till the 4th of September to examine floristic variety and gather specimens for laboratory and herbarium records.

Biochemistry & Biotechnology

The β Club helped launch the department's Instagram, making it easier for alumni to keep in touch. Faculty took on new projects with Xavier Minor Research Funding; Dr. Shital Doshi gave a seminar on her findings. Biocalyx 2025, themed "Interwoven Earth," was hosted. The department won the "Best Research Department 2024-25", and thanks Yashvi and Dr. Kinjal Bhatt.

COMMERCE

Euphoria 3.0 set the tone with three days of quizzing, group discussions, interviews, and corporate walks. On the 4th of September, the SY B.Com and FY BBA students represented the college at GLS University's Connect: Converse to Conserve, presenting a short film on environmental issues. From the 5th to the 7th of September, the first-year students won two events with cash prizes at GLS Explorer 4.0. Students also showcased their talent for debate and diplomacy at HLCC MUN 2025.



Purva Balani

Entering her office, one can feel the dedication with which Dr. Sanyal works. It is the same perseverance with which she has led our institution to its top accreditation. The walls echo her achievements, a testament to what a determined woman can accomplish.

In conversation with XAP, she shares how her journey began with a resolve to be fiercely independent. Her greatest strength, she recalls, was always her perseverance. Having grown up as the daughter of two officers in the Indian Army Medical Corps, the concept that your gender could be a limitation was foreign to her. *"I thought of myself as a human being first," she states. "I didn't even know being a woman could be a handicap."*

This self-belief became her shield in a world quick to label STEM as a man's field—a stigma she acknowledges is still persistent. She notes, *"Society has 101 reasons. It will either venerate you or be stacked against you. What society can't do is treat you as equal, which is what we all want. To be treated with respect."* Here, Dr. Sanyal not only highlights her challenges but also underscores every woman's wish to be treated as an equal; neither revered nor inferiorised. She declares with a quiet power, sharing her mantra to cope with the disparity, *"I am the lion that walks, not caring who speaks around me."* For her, the only imperative is to do justice to the position she has been given to the best of her ability.

This is the focal point where all the threads of her multifaceted career meet. One might know her as Vice Principal of Science, their

PHOTO: PURVA

Dr Mallika Sanyal



Our Compass & Our Catalyst

In conversation with our vice principal, scientist and teacher: Dr Mallika Sanyal

“

I am the lion that walks, not caring who speaks around me.

– Dr Mallika Sanyal

chemistry teacher, or a research scientist, but at her core, she is the same person. These identities are not compartmentalised; they build upon each other. *"Being a good researcher helps me be a better teacher. Being a good teacher helps me do better research,"* she explains. This philosophy extends to her life: *"Being good at both will help me to be a better mom to my son."* For Dr. Sanyal, every angle of life must contribute to all others. Happiness in every aspect of life is what keeps you motivated.

We asked her for a moment where she felt the true weight and importance of her role, which she humbly deflected, saying, *"I think that question is for my students to answer."* Her own sense of fulfilment shines through when she speaks of a monumental achievement for the institution. In 2021, she led the gruelling, marathon effort for the college's NAAC accreditation. After a year of intense work by her IQAC team, their efforts were crowned with an A+ grade. In that moment of triumph, Dr. Sanyal felt she had partly paid her debt to her alma mater—a fit reward for a journey driven by purpose, perseverance, and an unwavering belief in her own capabilities.

Oh Woman, Where Do You Come From?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

It is a common misconception that the word 'woman' comes from the word 'womb-man'. However, the word traces back to Old English wif-mann (female-person; mann=gender neutral). Over time, the word changed to mean a female servant, and eventually to the modern 'woman'. This brings us back to the definition of a woman we discussed. In contemporary times, is it not that a woman can achieve heights of success, break glass ceilings, outperform men, lead teams, make decisions for national matters, and do so much more? We see this ideal set up for us everyday, on the very campus of Xavier's. Women make up approximately 50% of the working population of our college. Xavierites are students both taught by and represented by women in various fields.

Xavier's presents a world composed of women who come from all walks of life. They are unafraid of expressing themselves; they are humans who succeed at various ventures, learn from their failures, and most importantly- dream. Us women at Xavier's have a contagious habit of dreaming and making those dreams come true - one step at a time. The fear we have reduces as we aspire to be 'that girl' who has it all



Women at Xavier's excelling in various fields.



PHOTOS: ROHAN GOKHALE

she ever dreamt of. But, is the path all sunshine and roses? How often do we wish for the "phool" and how often do we actually receive "kaatein"? We talk about the issues of women everyday - on our instagram feeds almost every other reel seems to share such a news and perspective.

Yet, we bring to you a perspective often ignored. The everyday drama, insults, and comedy. It is time we ask

the world why it fails to safeguard us, and why we need protection in the first place. Across these pages, you will see what it means to be a woman - at Xavier's, represented in media, and throughout time. As you go through these pages, I urge you to stop and think about the implications of life in a world constructed to work against half, and at times the entire, population of its inhabitants.

SPORT'S COLUMN

Sports @ Xavier's: Scoring & Soaring

St. Xavier's College's women's football team participated in the Inter-College Tournament for the very first time. This momentous event took place on the college's very own football field on October 5. The first match was a one-sided affair that the women in red won by a whopping 8-0 margin. This blowout was one of their most victorious matches of the season, considering this was the first time the team had played competitively. The final against HK Arts College was a 7-2 loss for our team. An expert spectator stated, *"We lost mainly due to the lack of experience"*, and that, *"It was the beginning for our women's team and they gave it their best"*. The team secured 2nd place in the tournament with a noble effort.

In other reports, a new volleyball court has been built on our grounds, specifically for the women's team, so that their hard work and dedication can remain unsullied. The seemingly simple layout of the volleyball court was a carefully designed canvas for high-level strategy and athleticism. Every line, zone, and dimension specification exists to ensure fair play, structure rotations, and create a dynamic space where our team can execute their skills to perfection.



St. Xavier's College's invincible football team.

Performance Index 2025

Winner

Women's Table Tennis
Women's Swimming
Men's Chess
Women's Basketball
Men's Basketball
Men's Football
Men's Volleyball

Runner Up

Women's Badminton
Women's Football
Women's Cricket

2nd Runner Up

Women's Chess

Misogyny... Naam Toh Suna Hoga!

Janviba Jadeja

Bollywood cult classics are the comfort food of cinema. The timeless songs, characters, and unforgettable dialogues make them the perfect blend of warmth and nostalgia. But beneath the sparkle are gender roles that feel less timeless and more outdated. These movies undoubtedly shaped an entire generation, but they also carried stereotypes that deserve a rewatch with 2025 glasses on.

In *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*, Rahul casually remarks,

“Dekho, ladki to wo hoti hai jise ghar me apni Maa ke paas le jaya ja sake.”

Anjali is only seen as desirable after changing from a tomboy into a saree-wearing, soft-spoken figure. The film reinforces traditional ideas of femininity under the guise of romance.

The pattern continues in *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*, with the infamous

“Keh diya na, bas keh diya.”

The patriarch lectures about “parampara” and “kayde-kanoon”, while dancing flirtatiously with other women, exposing double standards. This contradiction lays bare the hypocrisy that men can indulge freely, yet women must remain bound by rules.

In *Hum Saath-Saath Hain*, domesticity is glorified through the line,

“Jaha ghar ki ladies aur bachiyon hume apne haathon se khana khilaye, wahi ghar ghar hai”.

We also see the three leading ladies, educated and career-driven, willingly abandon their ambitions to become perfect wives, reducing professional success to background noise against domestic duty.

Even in the iconic *Dilwale Dul-*

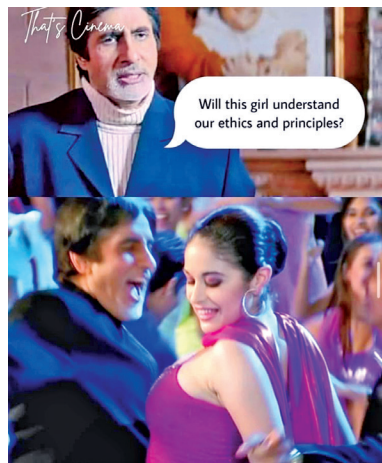
When Entertainment Holds Us Back

Shivangji Shah

There has always been a lot of deliberation around Indian TV Soap Operas. One might want to associate it with leisure and entertainment; however, Indian serials stand tall in propagating regressive tropes and disrespectful plots. Television serials today perpetuate misogynistic and patriarchal themes to an unarguable extent.

The longest running Indian television show, *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai*, explores married women managing their lives. Running for over a decade now, this show normalises problematic behaviour on every level. Men and the elderly get through with anything be it yelling, dominating or resorting to violence; the women, on the other hand, sob, forgive and pretend nothing has happened. Humiliation, thus, gets normalised for entertainment.

Another serial under the same production house, *Anupama*, also portrays the life of a middle-aged Anupama fighting the societal norms and building her dream life. It shows women in black and white roles. The portrayal of the struggles of an Indian housewife was replaced with family politics, abuse and self-sacrificing plots, undermining the real struggles



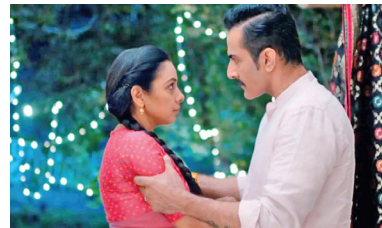
Hypocrisy- mard ka gehna?

hania *Le Jayenge*, where we cheer Simran's liberation with

“Jaa Simran jaa, jee le apni zindagi”, her freedom ultimately comes from her father's approval. Independence is granted, not taken.

And in *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!*, Nisha quietly slips into her late sister's place as the bride and the caregiver. The implication? That women are interchangeable within family roles and are valued more for service than individuality.

We still love these films—they're comfort, nostalgia and the soundtracks of our childhood, but they also shaped ideas about harmful gender roles. To truly appreciate them, we must stop romanticizing their messages and start holding them accountable for the stereotypes they cemented.



of a woman. The most baffling narrative is the representation of the “ideal” woman. Women who manage both house and work, leaving no scope for error. The men, meanwhile, watch in silence. Strangely, everyday life skills are often treated as women's duties, then praised as if they are something special. This reveals how deeply patriarchy is accepted, often without people even noticing.

The media is synonymous to the voice of the nation. Children cannot watch shows like *Tarak Mehta*, that perpetuate disrespecting people under the garb of humour. This can never be funny. Casual racism, sexism and body shaming can never be funny. If such content becomes a child's daily companion during leisure, it subtly teaches them to laugh at disrespectful mockery, to see stereotypes as truth, and to accept discrimination as normal. Therefore, media must act responsibly, as what we watch shapes who we are.

Breaking the Silence Behind the Sitcom

A single complaint opens the door for many untold storie

Winifred Harry

For years, *Tarak Mehta ka Ulta Chashma* has been a source of joy for Indian families. It is one of India's longest running and most popular sitcom. Its humour and values made it one of the most loved shows on television. But behind the laughter, disturbing allegations now tell a very different story. These claims have left everybody in shock and have sparked conversations about what goes on behind the scenes. It is a reminder that behind all the fun and jokes on screen, things behind the screen can be more complicated than they seem.

A former actor has accused producer Asit Kumar Modi of sexual harassment. She says he made unwanted advances, passed inappropriate remarks, and pressured her to give in. When she refused, her payments were delayed, insults became routine, and threats of losing her job followed. She has also named two senior staff members, accusing them of verbal abuse and creating a toxic work environment. Complaints have been filed with the police and the Women's Commission. The accused deny everything, calling the claims false.

This is not just one woman's fight. It highlights the wider problem of how women are treated in workplaces where power lies with men. In film and television, producers and directors control careers. For women,

saying “no” often means risking their livelihood. The result? Many stay silent, carrying their pain in private.

At the root of this issue is patriarchy. It teaches women to adjust, to remain quiet, to protect their dignity by enduring harassment, discrimination, and disrespect often at the cost of their own mental and emotional well being. Misogyny appears in many forms: unwanted comments, abusive language, denial of work, or withholding pay. Each act reinforces the message that women must remain in their “place.”

The irony is striking. A show that claims to bring happiness into people's homes may have been running on the hidden suffering of women behind the scenes. The values celebrated on-screen seem hollow if women working there cannot feel

safe. Yet, this complaint is also an act of courage. By speaking out, the actor has given voice to many who may never step forward. She forces us to confront the difference between the laughter we see and the silences we ignore.

But courage alone is not enough. Real change requires strong systems. Production houses must ensure safe, independent complaint channels. Legal investigations must be quicker and just. Society must change how it reacts. Instead of doubting women, we must ask why such behaviour continues unchecked.

Behind every smile on screen, there may be a story of struggle. Until we choose to listen and act—the laughter we celebrate will never be complete.



Comedy at the Cost of Women

How many characters without soul to make you laugh?

Dhruvi Prajapati

Fifteen years, over four thousand episodes and still counting—*Tarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah* is more than just a sitcom; it's a ritual in Indian households. It's our evening chai partner, our laughter therapy, our comfort watch. The makers call it “family entertainment,” critics call it “wholesome comedy”, and fans call it “legendary”. But here's the catch: in Gokuldham, the biggest joke isn't Jethalal's blunders or Popatlal's shaadi struggles—it's the women.

The most glaring example is Jethalal's obsession with Babita ji. In countless festival tracks, Jethalal flirts with Babita openly—sometimes even saying “I love you” or “*Ami tumake bhalo bhashi*”. His wife Daya is pushed aside, turned into a loud comic relief, while Babita is

objectified as the “modern beauty” of Gokuldham. Her role in the society is less about her life and more about Jethalal's endless admiration and Iyer's defensive jealousy. She exists as a spectacle, not as a person. Viewers know her wardrobe changes more than her character growth. Daya exists only for the dances; she serves food, she squeaks “*Hey maa, mataji!*”—but try giving an opinion? Cut short by Jethalal's insult and laugh track rolling. Years of this routine have turned her from a character into a caricature: a wife who must never be taken seriously.

Even Jethalal's everyday lines add to this bias. He casually throws insults like “*Sarvi fail*”, “*dobi*”, or calls Daya “*pagal aurat*”. It normalizes a culture where mocking a woman's intelligence is harmless “*Masti*”. Calling a wife “*pagal*” is funny, not disrespectful.

Labeling someone “dobi” becomes acceptable in family conversations. For a show watched by millions of children and teenagers, this sets a dangerous precedent—that dismissing women's intelligence is comedy, not sexism.

Men are given a variety of jobs: Jethalal runs a business, Taarak is a writer, Bhide is a teacher, Iyer is a scientist, Popatlal a journalist. But women? Mostly homemakers, gossipers, or “modern wives.” Even the professional women (Anjali as a dietician) are never shown at work; their careers are props, not character arcs. In Gokuldham, all positions of authority are male—society secretary (Bhide), key decision-makers in conflicts (Jethalal, Taarak, Iyer, Popatlal). Women are never shown leading, mediating, or representing the society in serious matters.

The hypocrisy runs deeper. In interviews, the makers proudly claim the show promotes “family eating together.” Yet in multiple episodes, Daya is shown eating last, alone in the kitchen. If she is family, why is she excluded from this “unity”? Similarly, the Mahila Mandal—shown with potential in early years—is now mostly restricted to kitty parties and gossip. Their roles rarely go beyond domestic walls, unlike the men who get diverse, adventurous plots

TMKOC sells itself as a mirror of society, and maybe that is the problem. Because in this mirror, wives are fools, neighbors are ornaments, and women rarely get to be anything more than a setup for men's punchlines. And when the joke always comes at the cost of women—maybe it's time we stop laughing. *TMKOC* prides itself on “social messages”, but when it comes to women, the message is regressive: wives as clowns, neighbors as eye-candy, and homemakers as background noise. Fifteen years later, the show still laughs at women, not with them.

Paper Chains: When Literature Betrays Women

When the ink meant to tell women's stories instead wove the chains that held them.

Mahek Yadav

History shows the power of literature in liberating nations, breaking prejudices and inspiring new ideologies, yet—the mirror of society—has often glorified inequality and patriarchy, turning them into cultural emblems, binding women in fragile yet enduring paper chains. From ancient epics to today's bestsellers, women have often been written as objects or trophies of men, not characters.

The classics we worship reveal deep flaws. For instance, in The Mahabharata, Draupadi is gambled away by one of her husbands, reflecting the ideology where women are possessions of men. The attempted disrobing of Draupadi is perceived as an attack on the Pandavas' honour more than on her dignity, making her body the battleground of male rivalry. While men's duties are war and kingship, those of women are loyalty, service and catering her husband and family.

The paper chains are spread in literature across the world. In A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini, Mariam is married off to Rasheed, a much older man, against



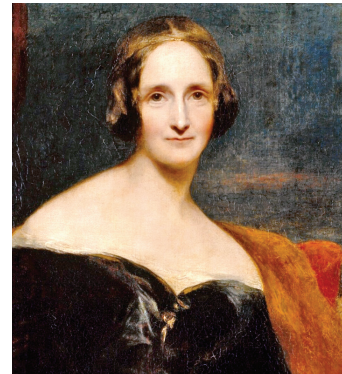
The Disrobing of Draupadi

her will, reflecting how women's choices are dismissed in the name of family reputation. Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* highlights rigid societal constraints on women, while Shakespeare's *King Lear* explores themes like male dominance. These classics have blurred our understanding of gender roles, giving birth to the disastrous modern novels, wherein women have no identity and are written as love interests of men. Timelines changed, but patriarchy did not.

So, the question remains—has literature fulfilled its duty of liberation, or has it bound women in the chains of patriarchy?

Stolen Pens and Borrowed Names

Unveiling the silenced voices and hidden thefts behind literature's celebrated pages.



Mary Shelly and the Brontës: Authors who either had to write anonymously or use a male name

Mahek Yadav

Isn't it infuriating—you working hard on something and somebody else takes up the credit for it? History is full of such stories where women's voices were silenced, overshadowed, or even stolen. In literature, this silencing often took the form of men claiming credit for women's writings.

When Frankenstein—the first novel in the science fiction genre—came out in 1818, it carried no author's name. The preface was written by a male, Percy Bysshe Shelley, which led many into believing that he was the author. It took years for the original author, Mary Shelley, to get proper recognition for her work.

Another such example would be *The Great Gatsby*, written by F. Scott Fitzgerald. While Fitzgerald was credited as the author, major chunks of it were passages taken from his wife Zelda Fitzgerald's journal, for which she was not credited. So, while

Scott rose to fame, his wife became ignored. Critics today argue that it was the words of Zelda that helped fuel his fame.

Even the Brontë sisters felt compelled to publish under male pseudonyms—Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell—because the Victorian society refused to take women writers seriously. Charlotte Brontë's most popular piece of literature—*Jane Eyre*, was first thought to be the work of a man, highlighting how deeply gender bias shaped literary reception. Discussions around J.K. Rowling choosing to publish crime novels under the name Robert Galbraith shows how the literary market still leans on male identity for credibility in certain genres.

These cases highlight more than historical injustice; they reveal how gender biases distort the recognition of creativity. Although progress has been made in recent decades, an unsettling question comes to mind—how many women's voices were stolen or hidden behind the names of men?

• WISE MEN, MISSING THE POINT •

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A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle.
Gloria Steinem

“



Being a woman is a terribly difficult trade, since it consists principally of dealings with men.
George Bernard Shaw

“



Women are nothing but machines for producing children.
Napoleon

“



Women are meant to be loved, not to be understood.
Oscar Wilde

“



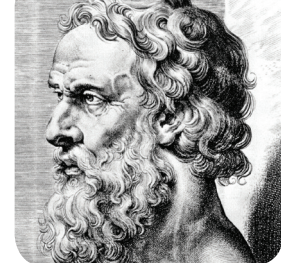
Sapne dekho, zaroor dekho.... Bas unke poore hone ki shart mat rakho.
Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge

“



Tum ek patni ho... Tumhara pati jaisa chahega vaisa hi hoga...Yeh shaadi ka dastoor hai.
Hum Tumhare Hain Sanam

“



Women are men who have failed.
Plato (Timaeus)

Resistance Against Oppression

A timeline of what women have received from civilisations of patriarchy

Naiara Bhatia

Oppression is a situation in which people are governed in an unfair way and prevented from having opportunities and freedom. Women are among those who have faced systemic denial of rights across civilisations. Despite variations across cultures, eras and centuries, women have consistently been subjected to patriarchal control.

There are proofs of Ancient Mesopotamia that show that even then, women were suppressed and deemed 'inferior' to men. Greek, Roman, and Chinese civilizations also restricted women's independence, excluding them from political life and confining them to domestic roles.

During the medieval era, religion was popularized all across Europe and the Church reinforced gender hierarchy and social norms. Eventually, women who refused to cooperate with the unfair practices got labelled as 'witches' and were burned alive. In Asia, rituals like dowry and 'sati', became common. These harmful standards worsened by the Early Modern Era when the subordination of wives to their husbands was legalised and industrialisation exposed women to economic exploitation. By then, the oppression was social, political, legal, religious, and economic.



a portrayal of how women, from ages, have to fight for equality

The 20th century saw progress as reforms emerged with women demanding education and suffrage. Contemporary times saw major wins for women: the right to vote, access to education, and stronger legal protections. Although we still

continue to struggle with gender-based violence, harassment, and systemic inequality, more women now lead in politics, science, and business. Feminist movements and global campaigns amplify their voices and the fight for equality is still ongoing.

Nine Nights, Everyday Women

Celebrating the feminine divine

Winifred Harry

Some festivals pass quietly. Then there's Navratri, a festival that takes over the whole city. The moment it begins, everything starts changing. Streets start to glow with lights, shops stay open late, and the sound of drums fills the night. Evenings invite us to dance, to pray, to meet people, or simply to feel part of something bigger. For nine nights, the city pulses with joy that ordinary days never have.

Beneath this sparkle lies an ancient story. Navratri began in remembrance of Goddess Durga's victory over Mahishasura, a battle where good defeated evil. But it was more than that. It was a reminder that courage and strength are not only masculine traits. At the heart of the story is a goddess, and the festival became a celebration of the feminine divine. Each night honors one form of her as a nurturer, protector, destroyer of injustice, giver of wisdom. Women have always been the heart and soul of these rituals, leading prayers, teaching songs, lighting diyas, leading the dance. In their hands, the presence of the Goddess has always felt real.

Today in cities, Navratri looks



Goddesses on a pedestal or a woman with basic rights?



different. The dance grounds resemble concerts, with loud booming speakers, neon and bright lights. People plan their outfits weeks in advance, social media sometimes feels as important as worship.

For women, this brings freedom; they dance at midnight, laugh openly, and take up space without hesitation. For nine nights, their presence is celebrated. But here lies the irony - once the festival ends, the society often forgets to honor them the same way that they did throughout these nine nights. We bow to Durga, but do

we respect the women beside us - our mothers, sisters, daughters-throughout the year?

Navratri becomes a mirror. At home, we see grandmothers quietly lighting diyas, while my friends whirl and twirl joyfully in Garba circles. The lesson is clear; the Goddess doesn't vanish when the music stops, instead she lives on in women's everyday strength, in their quiet battles and their loud victories.

To truly celebrate Navratri is to honor women- not only for nine nights, but every single day.

Allies for Change: How Male Students Are Challenging Misogyny

Men at Xavier's Pioneering Equality

Purva Balani

Change does not announce itself, it slowly seeps into our daily world through our actions. It does not begin with a slogan, but rather a simple realization of how different the world can be from other perspectives. At Xavier's, we see men stepping up as equal partners to solve what were once labeled as 'women's issues'. They are challenging outdated attitudes and demonstrating that creating a respectful campus is a shared responsibility.

Many men hold the belief that women are inferior to them, but students here think differently. Krishna, a student of FY, 'Girls have the same rights, opinions, and opportunities as guys. In class, during group projects, or in social situations, make sure you listen to them and value their ideas just as you would anyone else's.' Krish, a Collegiate Women Development Cell (CWDC) member says, 'Being a part of CWDC made me more aware of gender dynamics and the importance of being respectful.' He also notes

that there has been a steady growth in the number of male participants in activities led by CWDC.

Almost all women have experienced a creep staring at them when using public transport. Evan shares that if he observes "a creepy man staring at a girl, I try to move in between them. I try not to be brash or intimidating around women. I don't let my other male friends disrespect my female friends." Mlevin talks about how one should listen to their

Being a part of CWDC made me more aware of gender dynamics and the importance of being respectful

female friends' gender-specific concerns without trying to insist on their own view. He also talks about how the simple things matter: walking on the outside, dropping them home when it is late, even checking their location. The ordinary moments are enough to show support. These

gestures make a quiet statement: I see you, and I care about you.

There is a growing culture among friends to encourage each other to become better people. Supporting each other's growth and talking heart-to-heart helps us become better people. Together a world can be created, where women no longer need protection. We still have a long way to go, but small steps in the right direction matter.

The "Man" Myth

Dear Men, Be A Little Feminine

Romeel Andharia

As soon as one hears or reads the word "Patriarchy", the thought of it being a system that completely oppresses women and benefits men comes to mind. While the former is absolutely correct, the latter is just not. While women are completely inferiorised by society, men are trapped in boxes that only allow them to behave in a specific manner. This forceful adherence is the reason behind movie dialogues like "Mard ko kabhi dard nahi hota" and beliefs like "men don't cry".

Patriarchy fails to differentiate between men and masculinity, and women and femininity. According to Psychology Today, every

human being has both masculine and feminine personality aspects. So, why are men so insecure about their manhood? Is it not natural for them to have a feminine side?

Well, the answer is simple: in the patriarchal hierarchy, men are at the top, followed by women, and then the other genders (that is, if they consider them humans). As men are at the pinnacle of

this artificial hierarchy, they find it necessary to adhere to the stereotypes of the system to prove that they are NOT WOMEN. That they are MEN: beings more superior than women.

In actuality, men and women are all humans and are equally special or equally ordinary. The system of patriarchy chains women down from being themselves and puts men on a pedestal so high that they, too, cannot be their true selves.



Let's break out of the stereotypes and be who we truly are.

Youth Fest



Xaverites bagging several wins and shining at the Youthfest



Sahil Harvani

St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Ahmedabad, proudly showcased its talent at the Gujarat University Youth Festival, Yuvaamrut. At the South Zone level, the college

was among the top performers in several categories, having actively participated in 28 of the 29 competitions. Xaverites' strong points were portrayed among debate, quiz, mime, mimicry, installations, folk orchestras, classical dance, one-act plays, folk instrumental solos, classical and western vocal

solos, and group songs (Indian and Western). The college's outstanding performance in Rally, where they won first place, brought great honours. They also received accolades in Non-Percussion.

At the Inter-Zonal level, the college once again shone brightly. In an astounding twelve categories,

the college won awards out of fifteen events. One-Act Play, Debate, Indian Group Song, Western Vocal Solo, and Installation were among the events in which Xavier's won first place.

Along with third place in Classical Dance and Non-Percussion, they also took second place in Western

Group Song, Western Instrumental Solo, Clay Modelling, Mimicry, and Mime. With these outstanding results, Xavier has added yet another noteworthy milestone to its extracurricular accomplishments, highlighting its vibrant cultural spirit, inventiveness, and dedication to excellence.

Research Day 2025:

A showcase of Ideas and Innovation



Research Day at SXCA to encourage research and academic excellence

Winifred Harry

Research Day at St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Ahmedabad, organized by the Department of Research and Development, was held on 30th August 2025 in the HD Auditorium. On this day, undergraduate and postgraduate students showcased their funded and non-funded research projects through poster presentations, with a few selected works presented during the main event. This year, 41 non-funded projects with 57 students and 7 funded projects with 11 students were awarded, while 3 students got the chance to present at the main event. The occasion also featured awards for departments and faculty, fostering a research culture building confidence, communication, and real-world academic skills.

INTERVIEW

Silent Hands, Strong Hearts

In Conversation With Three Women From Xavier's

Interviewed by Dhruvi Prajapati

There are many of us who foster silent dreams and carry hope in our hearts. On our campus, we notice several women who are resilient. They stand strong, with their heads held high and smile fearlessly. Our campus hosts several of such unsung heroes who work tirelessly; they are up before dawn, and, like a lot of us, are engrossed in various responsibilities throughout the day. Their roles extend beyond their households to make our campus nothing less than a home.

In a conversation with XAP, Rekha ben, Jyotshna ben, and Lakshmi ben – the women from our campus's cleaning crew – shared a glimpse into their tireless daily routines. "Our day begins before sunrise," shared Rekha ben, "by 5 a.m. we're already cooking, fetching water, and preparing tiffins for our families." After completing their household chores, they travel several miles by bus to reach the college, where they spend the entire day ensuring that every corner remains spotless and welcoming. Their duties often stretch beyond 6:30 p.m., yet their work does not end there. "Once we return home, there's still cooking, cleaning, and



Jyotshna ben, Lakshmi ben and Rekha ben - the unsung & hardworking members of the Xavier's Parivar.

caring for our families," added Jyotshna ben with a gentle smile. Despite the long hours and relentless responsibilities, their dedication never wavers.

Rekha ben carries burdens with a resilient smile. She spoke of her husband, who once worked as a diamond worker, but has now completely lost his eyesight. "Ghar ni badhi j jawabdari mari upar chhe," she said softly (the entire responsibility of the household rests on my shoulders). Yet, there was no trace of self-pity in her words, only a calm resilience and dignity that left us momentarily silent.

Jyotshna ben and Lakshmi ben, both in their mid-twenties, often find themselves observing the college girls who walk past them – students their own age. "Kash ame pan abhyas karyu hot toh!" they reflected wistfully (If only we

had studied too!). For Jyotshna, the thought carries an even deeper meaning. Thinking of her young daughter, she added softly that she wants to educate her well; so that, when she grows up, she is independent and capable of achieving everything she dreams of. When asked what they would choose to become if given another chance, all three women smiled and answered, "Madam, teacher banva nu." (We would become teachers). Despite the tiring days and unfulfilled dreams, what they cherish most is Xavier's itself. "Aa jagya ghar ni lage chhe... badha saman lage chhe, koi fark nathi," shared Rekha ben (This place feels like home, everyone treats us equally, there is no difference.) For them, Xavier's is not merely a workplace, but a family; a space where they feel valued, respected, and truly at home.

MOVIE REVIEW

"Manspread": A Bold Role Reversal



A bold reversal of stereotypes and norms with Manspread. Available on YouTube

Nupur Vyas

In *Manspread*, filmmaker Tiana Michele imagines a 1950s-style world where women, not men, take up space unapologetically; men must shrink, adjust, and make themselves small.

Manspread offers a deliberately uncomfortable viewing experience, using satire to highlight issues of gender and public space. The concept draws from the everyday phenomenon where men occupy more physical space in public, while women are often expected to make themselves smaller. But what if the roles were reversed? We see magazines with objectifying headlines and posters with disturbing slogans that, in a mirrored context, highlight the pervasive nature of sexism. The most impactful scenes are those of mundane interactions—a woman "womanspreading" on the subway forces a man to shrink into his seat, and a simple bump on the sidewalk becomes an act of dominance. These moments are uncomfortably relatable, stripping away the common rationalizations for such behavior.

What truly elevates the film is its soundtrack. The recurring motif of Lesley Gore's "Sometimes I Wish I Were a Boy" serves as a poignant and ironic backdrop, underscoring the film's central message without needing dialogue. "*MANSPIREAD*" succeeds not just as a provocative reversal but as a powerful conversation starter, encouraging viewers to re-examine their own assumptions and the invisible pressures that shape our daily lives.

Critically, filmmaker Tiana Michele is not suggesting that this reversal would be an improvement or an ideal world. Instead, she uses the discomfort, encouraging men to recognize the absurdity of these double standards and to support women in being more unapologetically themselves. The film is available to watch on YouTube and is well worth a look for its thought-provoking take on everyday gender dynamics.

Onam Celebration at SXCA

Chaitasi Aavrut Bhatt

On 6th September, St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Ahmedabad, celebrated Onam with enthusiasm and inclusivity across the campus. The day began early with the creation of the Pookalam (flower rangoli) at the entrance, along with campus decorations. Students worked together in the morning to complete the rangoli before the program commenced.

The celebration was initially scheduled to be held at the Open Air Theatre (OAT). However, due to heavy rain, the venue had to be



Xaverites keeping traditions alive with a festive Onam celebration

shifted to the Siddharth Assembly Hall (SAH). The change of location did not affect the indomitable spirit of the students, and the celebration continued as planned with the con-

stant support of the staff as well as the volunteers.

Students came dressed in traditional attire—girls in sarees and boys in shirts paired with mundus.

PHOTO: MILAN

The program began with the Chenda Melam: a traditional percussion performance, followed by Thiruvathira, a graceful classical dance by the girls. Hostel students staged lively dance performances, and the postgraduate boys also presented their energetic moves.

The festivities concluded with a flash mob in which boys and girls performed together, marking the finale of the celebration.

The Onam celebration at SXCA was marked by active student participation, traditional performances, and a strong sense of inclusivity, making the event a memorable one for the college community.



Anjali Johny, an Ex-Xavierite and Assistant Professor

On Campus Patriarchy and Feminism

Yashvi Asodiya

I won't buy pads for the women around me," said a person on campus when asked about periods and sanitary pads. There are various misconceptions, stereotypes, and myths about feminism that still exist. To find out about this, I asked people, especially men, about some commonly misinterpreted ideas and myths about feminism, such as the effect of patriarchy on men, paid period leaves, men crying in public, alimony and its requirements, etc. The results were quite a thrill as I got a mix of opinions about the questions asked, highlighting both progressive and regressive mindsets of people on campus.

Women, and a few men, on campus highlighted the progressive ideas of society, agreeing that both men and women are affected by patriarchy; paid period leaves are not an excuse

but a requirement; alimony, though depending on the case, is important for women who earn less or nothing; living with in-laws should be a mutual decision of the couple and not a strict imposition on the new bride to live in a joint family; and, talking about menstruation and men buying pads for women is as normal as buying them a chocolate! "Every person who has some basic empathy and believes in equal rights is a feminist; it only demands women being treated as humans," said a man on campus. Feminism is, thus, about all humans being equal, none superior over the other.

On the other hand, patriarchy, myths and stereotypes continue to be a few of the many problems of society. A man said he is not going to stay with his in-laws as a "ghar jamai" and will bring the bride to his house to stay with his parents, as it is her duty. Many men strongly opposed alimony,

denying giving financial support to women and children who are unable to earn. On sensitive topics like periods and sanitary pads, people chose silence over voice, highlighting the deep-rooted stigma about menstruation. A man refused to answer the questions, saying, "Hum yeh sab mehfil nahi karte," completely ignoring the discussion about patriarchy and feminism, reflecting how some people do not address patriarchy as a problem, but rather glorify it.

All these mixed opinions highlighted the gap between two mindsets: one reflects progression and the other regression. Although times have changed, and people do address patriarchy as a social issue, there is still a long way to go. People still have myths and misconceptions about feminism, which have to be countered to make society a better place.

Xavier's: An Arena Bringing People Together

PHOTOS: ECC



Spreading Smiles and Making Memories @St. Xavier's