



School of Media and Cultural Studies

Teaching | Production | Research | Dissemination



School of Media and Cultural Studies

The School of Media and Cultural Studies, (SMCS), Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai is engaged in media teaching, production, research and dissemination. A unique feature of the School is its focus on creating synergies between theory and practice through its teaching programme, its web archives, field-based initiatives, films and research work, all of which are informed by a keen sense of connection with local subaltern cultures of resistance and invention.

The School has been in existence in various avatars for the past 4 decades. It originated in a project for audio-visual documentation of innovative social initiatives in 1978 and became a permanent resource centre in 1983. After the re-structuring of TISS in 2006, the Unit for Media and Communication became the Centre of Media and Cultural Studies and upscaled its activities, with new teaching and outreach programmes, supported by a decade long grant from the Tata Trusts. In 2012, the Centre became a full-fledged School. The School comprises three centres.

The three images on the cover were painted by the staff and faculty of SMCS in a community art workshop held in January 2008

Centre for Critical Media Praxis (CCMP)

The CCMP consolidates the praxis base of SMCS (including media production and theorising on practice) and has expanded its scope to include new media, community based participatory initiatives and the production of multi-media and web based materials. The CCMP also anchors the production and skill-based courses of the School.

Centre for the Study of Contemporary Culture (CSCC)

Cultural Studies in India today is a diverse cross-disciplinary field that engages in an impassioned way with contemporary social political, historical and economic contexts, reflecting on questions of ideology, identity, power, and discourse. The CSCC also anchors the courses that belong broadly to the area of cultural studies, media studies, critical theory, visual culture, digital cultures, new media and development media.

Media Archive and Resource Centre (MARC)

The MARC consolidates the audio-visual and graphics services currently offered by SMCS. It works in tandem with the CCMP to respond to the needs of other Centres and Schools within TISS, to facilitate the documentation of their work and design of their publicity and teaching materials. It also hosts a Digital Archive, with a searchable database and collection of around 6000 films as well as digitised photographs and footage. These resources are available for viewing within TISS, for students, staff and faculty, as well as to external users, such as educational institutions, researchers, activists and filmmakers.

Vision

The vision of the School of Media and Cultural Studies is to be a centre of excellence that actively promotes critical thinking, education, research, production, dissemination and advocacy in the areas of media and contemporary culture, with a focus on equity, social justice and human rights.

SMCS seeks to develop a critical perspective on media, culture and society, through teaching, production, research, dissemination and extension. It participates actively in the processes of creation and dissemination of community media, thus contributing to struggles for equity and social justice. It also archives and disseminates multimedia resources, thus encouraging research into cultures of resistance, protest and innovation.

Programmes of Study

MA in Media and Cultural Studies

Started in 2007, the MA programme has offered a new model for creating thinking doers and doing thinkers, where critical media education forms the framework for media practice: the idea of media praxis. By orienting students to interrogate their media and social environments, through coursework and field exposure, this forms the horizon within which they produce a range of multi-media outputs. The programme encourages multi and interdisciplinary pedagogies and approaches, with a focus on closely mentored peer and group based learning.

The programme has 70 credits and involves intensive work over a two year period, where in addition to perspective building through media, cultural and social theory, the students produce a range of outputs, including public service announcements, music videos, documentary films, news features, webzines, radio series, websites and dissertations based on research.

This programme is a prototype for a socially responsive, multi-disciplinary media programme that seeks to contribute to both mainstream media and the education and social sector. A total of 194 students have graduated since 2009 and there are currently a total of 54 students, who will graduate in 2019 and 2020.

Post Graduate Diploma in Community Media

The Post Graduate Diploma in Community Media, offered from 2012 to 2018, under the UGC Innovative Grants Scheme, was the first of its kind in the country. It is designed for social workers, community activists and cultural organisers who are engaged in grassroots level activities, with the goal of supplementing their field efforts with the knowledge, perspectives and skills that will enable them to work with communities and facilitate the expression of their concerns through the media. A total of 48 students have completed this programme and most of them are working in the social sector.

Ph.D. in Media and Cultural Studies

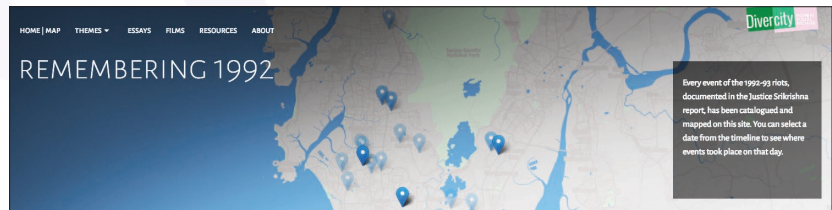
The School offers a direct Ph.D. for scholars with 5 years or more of relevant experience. The School also offers a practice-based Ph.D. where the research product includes a practice/production/artefact and an exegesis and a reflection, both of which are evaluated. So far 9 M.Phil. scholars and 10 Ph.D. scholars have completed their degrees under the supervision of SMCS faculty. The School currently has one M.Phil and 18 Ph.D. scholars who are at various stages of the programme.



Media Production and Dissemination



Production of documentaries has always been an important part of the work of the School. Overall, it has produced over 200 documentaries. The themes include Gender and Sexuality, Music and Syncretic Folk Traditions, the City, Identity and Conflict Resolution, Minority Rights and Environment. SMCS films are archived in the US Library of Congress and have been telecast by YLE Teema (Finnish TV channel), NDTV India and Doordarshan; they have also been screened at film festivals and in several universities across the US, Canada, Europe and Australia.



The School has an active online presence with a very popular Youtube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/SMCSchannel>) that reaches thousands of viewers on a regular basis. It also archives a substantial part of its work around the city of Mumbai in web archives on a web portal entitled DiverCity (<http://divercity.tiss.edu/>). DiverCity brings together work done at the School of Media and Cultural Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences where students and faculty engage with diverse communities and spaces within Mumbai, seeking to celebrate the unrecognised subaltern energies that have made the city. The projects under DiverCity combine documentaries, music, poetry, interviews, transcripts of interviews, news

reports, and related research materials to bring you an experience of the city through intersecting narratives of precarious livelihoods, shrinking public spaces, communal violence, labour struggles, caste politics and the politics and management of waste in the city. Ultimately, the idea is to reach a wider audience and to escape the regimes of control that apply to documentary film in India.

Some of the web archives produced by the School are:

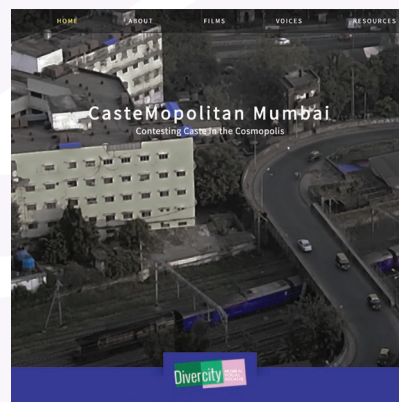
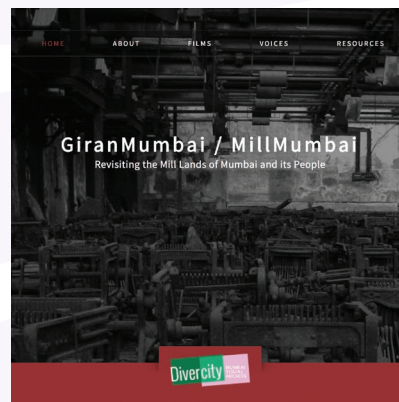
Remembering 1992 www.mumbairiots.tiss.edu that revisits the city 20 years after the communal violence of December 1992 and January 1993, seeking to address erasures and denial of justice and to understand how these events have changed the city.

Giran Mumbai www.millmumbai.tiss.edu that showcases stories from Girangaon (mill village), a part of Central Mumbai that spanned over 600 acres and contained over 100 mills at the dawn of the last century. It highlights the contribution of the mills and millworkers to the city, a history that has also been erased.

CasteMopolitan Mumbai www.castemumbai.tiss.edu looks at the ubiquitous presence of caste in the city, in everyday life, through the lens of food, marriage, livelihoods and work, education, language and religion.

WasteLines Mumbai <http://wastemumbai.tiss.edu> showcases content about the perceptions, politics and management of waste in a city along with arguments on the need to recognise, regulate and dignify the work of waste managers, whose work contributes to the economy and better environment.

Forthcoming web archives include Mumbai Streets and Migrants in Mumbai.





Awards and Fellowships

SMCS has to its credit, more than 80 awards for its documentaries, made by faculty, fellows and students, at national and international film festivals. Important festivals where its documentaries have been awarded include The Royal Anthropological Institute International Ethnographic Film Festival, UK; Mumbai International Film Festival; Signs Film Festival, Kerala; Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival and the National Film Awards, India, among others. In 2017, the book *A Fly in the Curry – Independent Documentary Film in India* (Sage 2016) by K.P. Jayasankar and Anjali Monteiro received a Special Mention in the President's National Awards, best book on cinema category.

Several faculty members of the School have been recipients of international fellowships and professorial chairs, including the Fulbright Visiting Lecturer Fellowship, the Howard Thomas Memorial Fellowship in Media Studies, international visiting professor chairs at universities in the US, and the ICCR visiting Professor chairs in Universities in Europe and Australia.

Research Areas

The SMCS undertakes research in the following broad areas, through the work done by its faculty, M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D. scholars:

Cinema Studies, Art and Independent Cinema, Cinephilia, Film Festivals, Film Production and Distribution, Transnationalism, Cinemas of India, Documentary Film, Cinema and Censorship

Journalism Studies, Gender and Journalism, Popular Visual Culture, Television in India

Folk Art, Participatory Theatre, Community Radio, Community Media, Participatory Cultures

Feminist Media Studies, Feminist Epistemology, Knowledge Mobilities, Pedagogy, Feminist Mothering, Online Feminist Activism

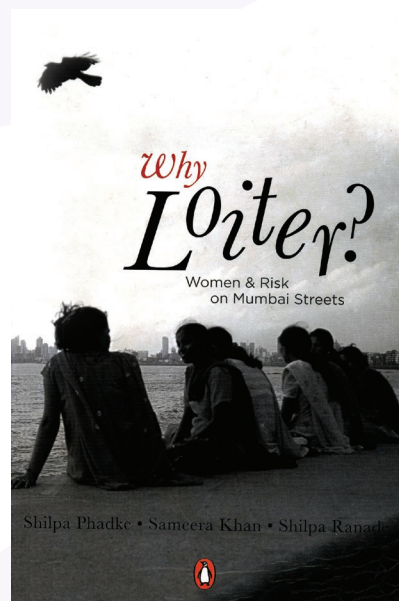
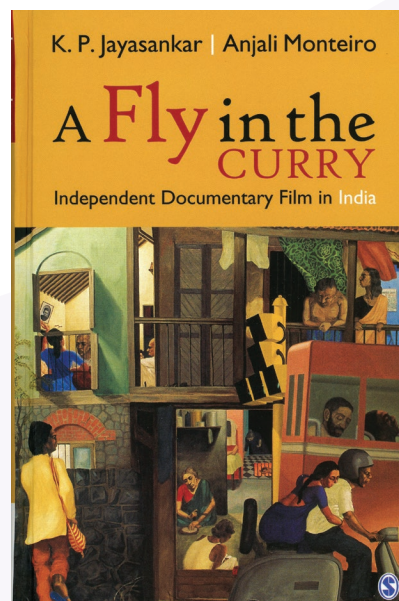
Gender and Cities, Gendered Spaces, Comparative Urbanism

Middle Classes and Sexualities, Sexuality Education, Gender and Health, Men and Masculinities. Gender and Sexuality

Digital Cultures and Technologies, ICTs in Education, Internet and Mobile Technologies, Digital Technologies and Youth Subcultures

Political Economy of Media, Labour Politics, Employment, Public Policies, Social Movements, Critical Legal Studies, Political Culture, Language Politics, Caste and Indigenous Communities

Art and Public Space, Tourism Studies, Sport, Performance Arts



Volume 4. Issue 1. 2016

Bhargavi Narayanan

[Piratical Encounters: The Pirate and Mass Mobilisation in the Popular Tamil Imagination](#)

Shruthi Parthasarathy and Durgesh Solanki

[Jugaad Phone](#)

Shiva Thorat



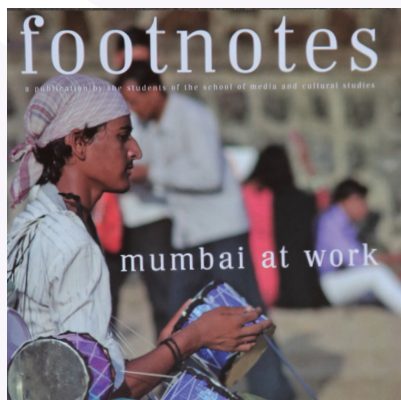
Publications

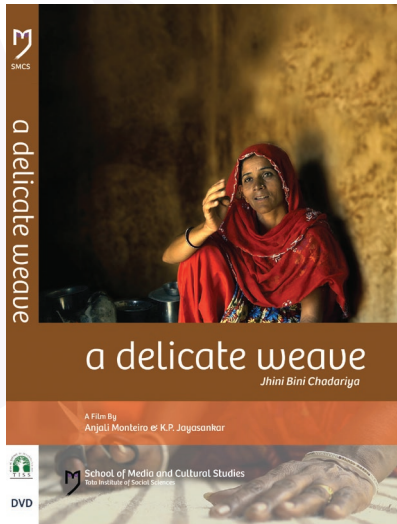
SubVersions: A Journal of Emerging Research in Media and Cultural Studies

SubVersions (subversions.tiss.edu) is the online journal of the School of Media and Cultural Studies (SMCS), Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. The journal focuses on the work of young scholars and draws on the research and writing done by students towards their M.A., M.Phil., and Ph.D. dissertations, as well as papers presented at the SMCS annual student seminar, Frames of Reference.

Footnotes

Footnotes is the web magazine produced by the students of the School. Started in 2011-12 as a print edition, Footnotes moved online in 2013. Over the years the magazine has brought out issues on various aspects of the city of Mumbai – from stories of resistance by individuals, groups and communities, to concerns of housing and work.





Current Research and Production Work

Syncretic Oral Musical Traditions in Kachchh

Anjali Monteiro and KP Jayasankar

Films on Home Based Maternal and Neonatal Care

Anjali Monteiro and KP Jayasankar

GenUrb: Urbanization, Gender, and the Global South

Mumbai City Team Lead: Shilpa Phadke

Social Research Ethics MOOCs Course

Lakshmi Lingam

Enhancing the Preparedness of Health Systems to Addressing Cases of Sexual Assault

Lakshmi Lingam

Film on the Sacred Groves of the Hynniewtrep

K.V. Nagesh Babu

Populism in Digital India: Deliberative Politics of Online Access in Urban India

Faiz Ullah

News of Work and the Work of News: Labour Action and its Media Representations

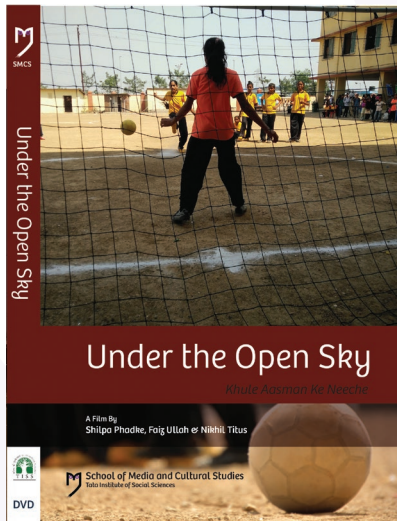
Doctoral work, Faiz Ullah

Travelling Knowledges: An Examination of Academic Feminist Knowledge Production

Doctoral Work, Nithila Kanagasabai

Remoulding the Alternative: 'Independence' in Contemporary Indian Cinema

Doctoral work, Harmanpreet Kaur





Special Programmes

Artist/Scholar in Residence

The Artist/Scholar in Residence Programme brings in eminent practitioners and researchers for a period of one to three weeks to hold a workshop for students. Thus far, workshops have been on themes such as mural making, storytelling, protest music, animation design, film and affect, cinema and censorship, cinema in the digital age, and gender and sexuality. This programme was supported by a grant from the Jamsetji Tata Trust between 2007 and 2017.



Early Career Fellowships

The School offers two fellowships annually for film-makers and media practitioners at an early stage of their career. The fellowships are designed to provide the resources and environment for films, websites, multi-media artefacts and other audio-visual media documentation projects that are innovative, relevant and contribute to the growing body of documentary, audio-visual and new media work in India. The fellowships were supported by a grant from the Jamsetji Tata Trust between 2007 and 2017. Four additional fellowships, for films on innovative community based projects were offered by the MurthyNAYAK Foundation between 2015 and 2017.

Co-curricular Programmes

Cut.In Students' Film Festival

The School organises an annual national level film festival aimed at encouraging talent among students across the country. Cut.In Students' Film Festival, started in 2008 and featuring Documentary and Short Fiction, is the longest running student film festival in India. The festival seeks to address a felt need for a platform where student work can be showcased and discussed. The festival has been supported by Jamsetji Tata Trust and the MurthyNAYAK Foundation.



Frames of Reference

Frames of Reference is an annual student seminar for postgraduate students organised by the students. This seminar has been a regular feature on the SMCS calendar since 2008 and has witnessed the participation of students and scholars across various institutes in the country. Over the years the seminar has been organised around various topical themes such as Neoliberalising Cultures: Media. Markets. Meanings; Mediatized India 2.0; Seeing Through the Screen; and Violence/Erasure/Memory.



Adda Film Club

The weekly film club managed by the students of the School of Media and Cultural Studies screens a range of Indian and international documentaries and feature films, sometimes followed by discussion with the filmmakers.

Culture Café

Hosted by the School of Media and Cultural Studies, Culture Cafe is a space for dialogue on issues concerning media, culture and society. It features talks, panel discussions, performances and other events.



Job Placements and Internships

As part of the course requirements of the MA in Media and Cultural Studies, students intern in an organisation for six weeks, during April and May. The internship gives students an opportunity to explore their professional interests and gain some hands-on experience.

Given that the MA has been conceptualised as a blend of social theory and media practice, students of the programme have proceeded to work in a diverse range of fields such as television production, journalism, documentary filmmaking, publication, advertising, media education, advocacy, and academia.

Some alumni are making their mark in journalism– both in legacy media organisations like The Hindu, The Indian Express, Hindustan Times and also on digital news platforms like Scroll.in, Firstpost, The Quint and The Wire. Our alumni are also independent filmmakers and have made award-winning documentaries, supported by the Public Service Broadcasting Trust, Jamsetji Tata Trust and MurthyNAYAK Foundation. The School has many alumni in non-profit and non-governmental organisations such as Agastya International Foundation, Reliance Foundation, Piramal Foundation, and Pratham Education Foundation.

Many alumni have continued their journey in academia, pursuing doctoral studies in universities across the world. There are alumni in publishing houses like Amar Chitra Katha, event management companies like Only Much Louder, and in organisations such as the Indian Institute of Human Settlements, Film Heritage Foundation, People's Archive of Rural India and Sahapedia. Some alumni have become entrepreneurs in communications and CSR consultancy.

Alumni Speak

The course structure, subjects taught, teaching methods, guest lectures, and intensive practicals, all make one an all-rounder in media theory and practice. That helps a lot if one wants to use the media to promote social justice. It develops one's abilities to contribute to ongoing struggles for social justice.

Archana Kaware, MA MCS Class of 2016-18

The two years matured into a challenging but memorable whirlwind of learning through documentary making, conducting research, trying to make sense of art, and producing music videos to songs I would never have imagined visualising otherwise. Newcomers - MCS provides a unique learning atmosphere, do tailor it to suit your personal, albeit uncertain, aspirations.

Aparna Srivastava, MA MCS Class of 2015-17

In many ways, SMCS is home. The faculty and staff, with their vast experience, ensure that we never feel out of place and that we get to do the kind of work we want to. Anyone who comes to SMCS can only leave with enhanced knowledge, wisdom and memories for life.

Ashwin Nagappa, PG Diploma in Community Media, Class of 2012-13, MA MCS Class of 2013-15

Amidst all the countless frantic hours writing assignments, shooting footage, editing sequences until our eyes rolled over, watching and discussing films and film lore, research paper readings, conferences, if there is one thing my time here has taught me, it is to look at things with a critical eye, whether it is on the page, on screen or in real life.

Bishaldeb Halder, MA MCS Class of 2012-14

For someone who was confused about which media 'line' to pursue at the beginning of the course, I found SMCS a truly formative space. I was able to explore a diverse range of media practices and develop my eventual career interest in documentary film and practice-based research. The supportive faculty, the helpful staff, and an eclectic mix of students built a fun, open space to learn media practice and critical engagement.

Shweta Ghosh, MA MCS Class of 2010-12

The course introduced me to politics of image making and documentary history in India. The curiosity generated in me over the years and guidance received from some of the most humble mentors in the field, encouraged me to take up filmmaking professionally. In fact it also gave me the impetus to research contemporary documentary practice in India for my doctoral study that I am currently pursuing at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi.

Shilpi Gulati, MA MCS Class of 2008-10

People at SMCS

Faculty



Anjali Monteiro

Professor and Dean

M.A. (Pune University), Ph.D. (Goa University)

Anjali Monteiro is a documentary filmmaker, with over 30 films to her credit, which have won 32 awards. A media teacher and researcher, she has written on documentary film, censorship, and television audience reception. Her co-authored book, *A Fly in the Curry – Independent Documentary Film in India*, Sage 2016, won a Special Mention at the President's National Film Awards, 2017.



K.P. Jayasankar

Professor and Chair, Centre for Critical Media Praxis

M.A. (Bombay University), Ph.D. (IIT Bombay)

K.P. Jayasankar is a documentary filmmaker, editor and cinematographer, with over 30 films to his credit, which have won 32 national and international awards. His areas of research interest include critical theory, hermeneutics, documentary film, censorship, and television audience reception. His co-authored book, *A Fly in the Curry – Independent Documentary Film in India*, Sage 2016, won a Special Mention at the President's National Film Awards, 2017.



Nithila Kanagasabai

Asst. Professor, Centre for Critical Media Praxis

M.A., M.Phil. (TISS), PG Diploma in Journalism (Television) (ACJ)

Nithila Kanagasabai is pursuing a PhD in Women's Studies at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. She is an alumna of the School of Media and Cultural Studies, TISS and Asian College of Journalism. Her earlier disciplinary training was in broadcast journalism and she has worked as a reporter at NDTV and TIMES NOW.



Harmanpreet Kaur

Asst. Professor, Centre for Critical Media Praxis

M.A. and M.Phil. (JNU)

Harmanpreet Kaur is pursuing her PhD in Cinema Studies from the School of Arts and Aesthetics (SAA), Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her doctoral research focuses on contemporary alternative and independent fiction cinema in India spanning roughly over the last decade. She has previously worked as a producer of children's short fiction films and a broadcast journalist.



Shilpa Phadke

Associate Professor and Chair, Centre for the Study of Contemporary Culture

M.A. (SNDT), M.Phil. (Cambridge, U.K.), Ph.D. (TISS)

Shilpa Phadke is a sociologist by training. Prior to working at TISS, she has taught at St. Xavier's College Mumbai and been an Associate of the research collective PUKAR. She writes extensively on gender related themes in academic journals and the popular media. She has been nominated for several international visiting chairs and fellowships, including the Madeleine Haas Russell Visiting Professor in South Asian Studies at Brandeis University in 2018.

**Lakshmi Lingam**

Professor, Centre for the Study of Contemporary Culture

M.A. (Andhra), Ph.D. (IIT-B)

Lakshmi Lingam has over three decades of experience in the fields of research, teaching, training and public policy work at the Institute. She is a well known gender specialist and has published extensively and travelled widely. She has several research projects that she is undertaking and guiding.

**K.V. Nagesh Babu**

Assistant Professor, Centre for the Study of Contemporary Culture

M.A. (Hyderabad)

Venkat Nagesh Babu Karri has studied Communication. Prior to working at TISS, he has taught at University of Hyderabad, Osmania University and College of Fine Arts and Architecture, Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad.

**Faiz Ullah**

Assistant Professor, Centre for the Study of Contemporary Culture

M.A. (Jamia Millia Islamia)

Faiz Ullah teaches courses in Media Studies, Community Media, and Journalism. Political economy of media, work and labour, documentary film, participatory cultures, and translation form his main areas of interest and work. He is pursuing his Ph.D. in Media and Cultural Studies from the School.

Staff

Media Archive and Resource Centre

Mr. M.D. Sawant, *Producer*

G.D. Arts (Mumbai)

Mr. B.K. Ahire, *Producer*

M.A. (Bharath University)

Ms. Darshana Gotekar, *Professional Assistant*

M.A. (Indore), M.LISc. (Bhopal)

Mr. Mangesh Gudekar, *Technical Assistant*

Mr. Vijay Kale, *Studio Attendant*

School Secretariat

Ms. Vrushali Menge, *Upper Division Clerk (Admin.)*

B.Com (Mumbai)

Ms. Sonal Gajaria, *Upper Division Clerk*

B.Com. (Mumbai), PGD in Finance (SIMSR)

SMCS School Board

Prof. Shalini Bharat (*Chairperson of the Board, Acting Director TISS*)

Prof. Anjali Monteiro (*Dean*)

Prof. K.P. Jayasankar (*Chairperson, CCMP*)

Dr. Shilpa Phadke (*Chairperson, CCCC*)

Prof. Lakshmi Lingam (*Professor*)

Mr. Faiz Ullah (*Asst. Professor*)

Dr. Ritambhara Hebbar (*Dean, School of Development Studies*)

Prof. Nina Sabnani (*External member, Industrial Design Centre, IIT Bombay*)

Dr. Sunitha Chitrapu (*External member, Dept. of Social Communication Media, Sophia College Polytechnic*)

Student Representative (*Class Representative of the Senior students*)





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