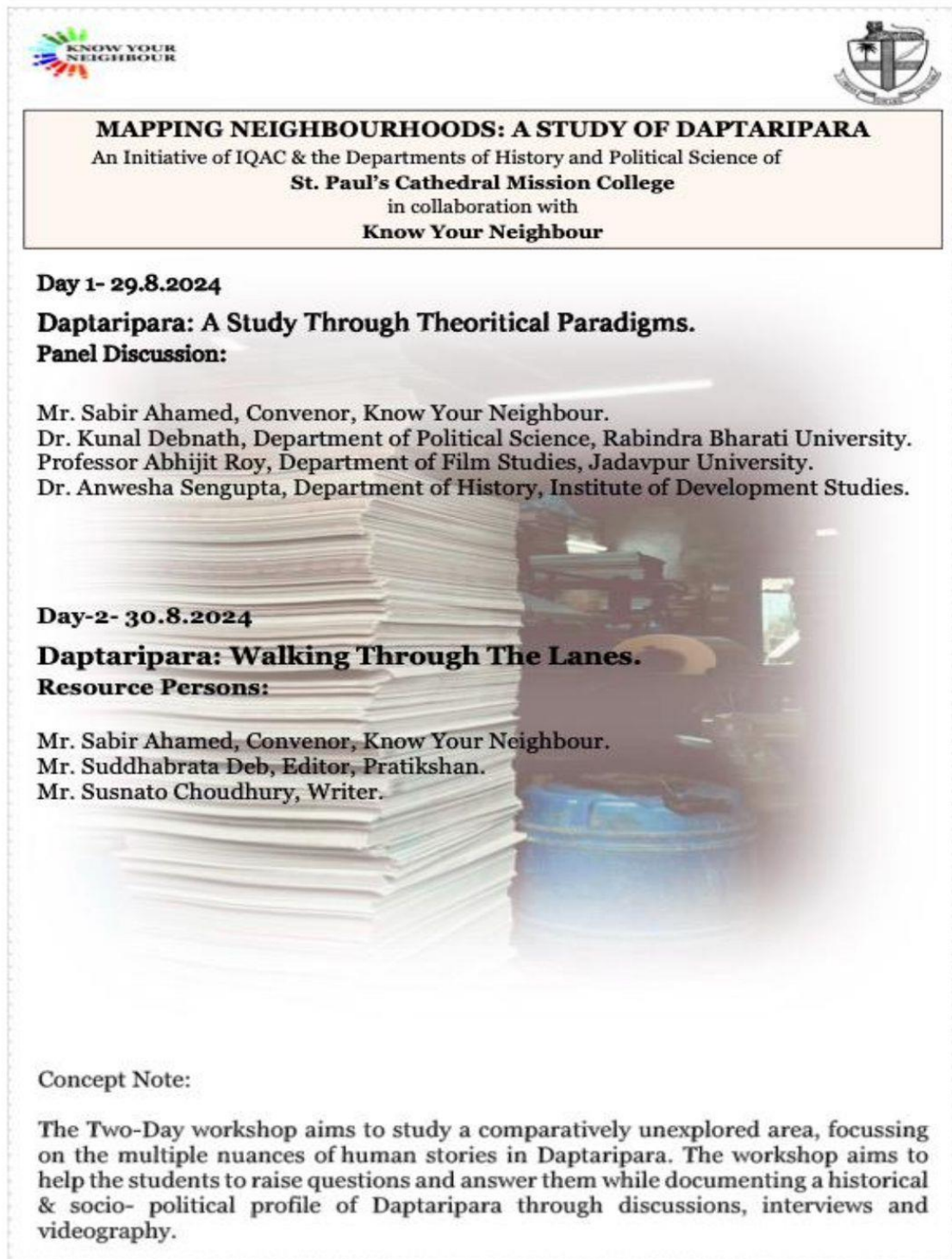



Report on the two-day workshop titled “Mapping Neighbourhoods: A Study of Daptaripara” organised by IQAC, Departments of History and Political Science, St. Paul’s Cathedral Mission College in collaboration with Know Your Neighbour on 29th and 30th August 2024


The Departments of History and Political Science in collaboration with Know Your Neighbour organised a two-day workshop on ‘Mapping Neighbourhoods: A Study of Daptaripara’ on 29th and 30th August 2024. On the first day, lectures were organised to initiate a theoretical understanding of ethnography, orality, oral history and methodologies of field survey, emphasising the necessity of archiving the changing sociological paradigms of life through a close survey of Daptaripara. The Resource Persons who delivered lectures were: Mr. Sabir Ahamed, Convenor, Know Your Neighbour who introduced the project. It was followed by lectures by Dr. Kunal Debnath, Department of Political Science, Rabindra Bharati University, Dr. Anvesha Sengupta, Department of History, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata and Prof. Abhijit Roy, HOD, Department of Film Studies, Jadavpur University who were outstanding. On the second day, a walk was organised in Daptaripara, ward 37, for a real-life experience of an area noted for once being the hub of the binding industry from the pre-partition days. However, only very few old wooden binding machines and the techniques of hand binding survive today, being slowly replaced by the modern binding machines. In fact, Daptaripara, is no longer a book binding centre but rather has turned to paper binding such as calendars, sweet boxes, cards etc. Significantly the ward 37, is an area also noted for being one of the pioneering centres of women education.

The burial ground of Keshab Sen and his family members inside the Victoria Institution stand as testimony to the days when the Brahmos began a crusade for women education. An old Anglo -Arabic school situated in Buddhu Ostagar lane, is one of the earliest institutions where English was taught in the 19th century. Possibly it started as an institution for girls. The Carmichael Hostel built in 1857 continue to provide a roof to the bright Muslim students travelling from distant places in Bengal. The other attractions of the ward 37, we covered during the walk are the lanes- Patwari Bagan Lane, Buddhu Ostagar lane, Musalman para lane or the Pakistan Bangla bajar, which help relive memories of a historical past which unless archived will be lost to posterity. Two mosques from the late 19th century with their unique architectural styles stand in the narrow lanes of the ward 37. Mapping Neighbourhood and archiving has indeed become a complete necessity if we have to preserve the history of an area, people and the heritage they have passed on to us. Thanks to Mr. Sabir Ahamed of Know Your Neighbour for this initiative to introduce us to an area situated so close to St. Paul’s Cathedral Mission College, which itself had begun as a great educational institution, in 1865, under the initiative of the Christian missionaries.

Picture Gallery



 **KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR**



MAPPING NEIGHBOURHOODS: A STUDY OF DAPTARIPARA
An Initiative of IQAC & the Departments of History and Political Science of
St. Paul's Cathedral Mission College
in collaboration with
Know Your Neighbour

Day 1- 29.8.2024
Daptaripara: A Study Through Theoretical Paradigms.
Panel Discussion:

Mr. Sabir Ahamed, Convenor, Know Your Neighbour.
Dr. Kunal Debnath, Department of Political Science, Rabindra Bharati University.
Professor Abhijit Roy, Department of Film Studies, Jadavpur University.
Dr. Anwasha Sengupta, Department of History, Institute of Development Studies.

Day-2- 30.8.2024
Daptaripara: Walking Through The Lanes.
Resource Persons:

Mr. Sabir Ahamed, Convenor, Know Your Neighbour.
Mr. Suddhabrata Deb, Editor, Pratikshan.
Mr. Susnato Choudhury, Writer.

Concept Note:

The Two-Day workshop aims to study a comparatively unexplored area, focussing on the multiple nuances of human stories in Daptaripara. The workshop aims to help the students to raise questions and answer them while documenting a historical & socio- political profile of Daptaripara through discussions, interviews and videography.

The flyer of the workshop

STUDENT-TEACHER GROUP WALKS THROUGH OLD NEIGHBOURHOOD OF BOOK BINDING UNITS

Bound in harmony: Owners and workers of Daftaripara



Book binding units in Daftaripara on Friday. Pictures by Gautam Bose

DEBRAJ MITRA

Calcutta: Unlettered men but expert in making theses. A group of students, researchers and teachers on Friday toured a neighbourhood in north-central Calcutta that happens to be the home and workplace of several such experts.

They walked along roads like Budhu Ostagar Lane, Patwar Bagan Lane and Baithakkhona Road near Sealdah and College Street. The area, collectively called Daftaripara, was once home to hundreds of book bindery units, printing presses and other ancillary units. It was a vital cog in Calcutta's formidable publishing industry.

A few units still remain but in a derelict condition. Digital printing has put many units

out of work. Book binding has also become extensively mechanised. Publishers have shifted a majority of their binding work to more advanced units that have the resources to deliver in bulk at short notice.

Many PhD students come to Daftaripara, part of Ward 37 of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, to get their thesis papers bound. The men who do the work are often unlettered.

The walk was organised by St Paul's Cathedral Mission College and Know Your Neighbour, a campaign that promotes interactions to strengthen social amity.

They passed by several such units, often dimly lit and derelict, where workers were busy stitching, binding and putting hard covers on books. "The owners and workers

in these units cannot be segregated. They get a paltry amount after 12 hours of labour. But they work together and live like a family," Sabir Ahamed, convener of the Know Your Neighbour campaign, told the participants.

Daftar itself is a Persian word for office. Para means neighbourhood in Bengali.

"Many words used in these units every day — like *aarra*, *astar*, *taki*, *tasra* — have Arabic and Persian origins. At one point of time, binderies were dominated by Muslim workers from what was then East Bengal. Post-Partition, many Hindus fleeing what was then East Pakistan also arrived in Daftaripara in search of life and livelihood, more so because of its proximity with Sealdah station. But these words have

stayed," he said. He said this working together of Hindus and Muslims was a prime example of "Yukta Sadhana" that Nobel laureate Amartya Sen often stresses as a way of collaboration that goes beyond mere tolerance and is imperative to resist the present onslaught of religious polarisation.

The walk started from the Victoria Institution (College). Originally named Native Ladies Normal and Adult School, it was founded on February 1, 1871, by Keshub Chandra Sen under the auspices of the Indian Reform Association of which he was the president. Keshub Chandra Sen, a social reformer, was a champion of women's education.

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Report on the two-day workshop titled "Mapping Neighbourhoods: A Study of Daptaripara" on 29th and 30th August 2024 in a local daily newspaper



The Resource Persons on Day 1 along with the Teacher-in-Charge of the College.

From left: Dr. Kunal Debnath (Department of Political Science), Dr. Sudipta Midday (Teacher-in-Charge, SPCMC), Mr. Sabir Ahamed (Convener, Know Your Neighbour) and Dr. Anwesha Sengupta (Department of History, Institute of Development Studies Kolkata)



The staff and students of the Department of History and Political Science along with the Resource Persons on Day 1 of the Workshop



Mr. Sabir Ahamed explaining the importance of Victoria Institution to women's education in pre-independence India



The staff and students of the Departments of History and Political Science with Mr. Sabir Ahamed and Mr. Susnato Choudhury during the walk at Daptaripara on Day 2



A “Daftari” working on a printing press manufacturing “*mishti’r baksho*” (sweet packets)



A group photo on Day 2 of the Workshop