

TISS–ParZor Programme in

Culture & Civilisation: A Zoroastrian Perspective



REPORT 2024-25

Acknowledgement

The TISS-Parzor Certificate Programme owes its existence to the unwavering support of our donors. We sincerely thank them for their trust and generosity, instrumental in making this initiative a reality. Their guidance and goodwill continues to inspire and sustain us.

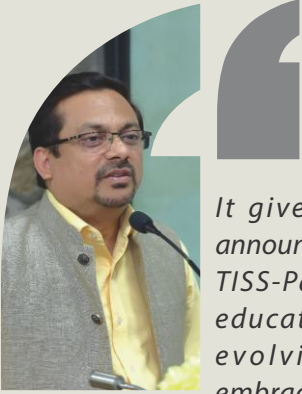
We are deeply grateful to FEZANA, ZAGNY, ZTFE, Mr. Zar Amroliya, Mr. Saroosh Dinshaw and the Cowasji Dinshaw Trust for their generous donations, which made the launch of this course possible. We would like to express our gratitude to Dr. Sanaya Nariman and to Pervin and Jal Shroff for making the first donations to the TISS-Parzor Academic Programme. And we are extremely grateful to Mrs. Rati Farhad Forbes for her belief in the importance of this programme and her generous support for its next iteration.

We would also like to thank Mr. Dinshaw Tamboly, WZO Trust in India, the Empowering Mobeds Trust, the ZTFE and Mr. Malcolm Deboo, the Shirinbai Cama Trust, the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, Captain Percy Master and Mr. Feroze Sethna for sponsoring generous scholarships to enable students from across India and abroad to pursue this pioneering Certificate Programme.

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Statement by TISS Pro Vice-Chancellor Governance



It gives me great pleasure to announce the establishment of the TISS-Parzor Centre. The Indian education sector is constantly evolving into a global hub, embracing new perspectives and challenges. Culture and heritage are fundamental to the ancient civilization of India. Both South Asia and the Persian Gulf share strong commercial, energy, cultural, and people-to-people links. Therefore, a multicultural interpretation of this relationship is what will make the TISS-Parzor Academic Programme, the first-ever Academic Programme on Parsi Zoroastrian Civilisation & Cultural Studies, an exciting journey. I wish all those involved great success.

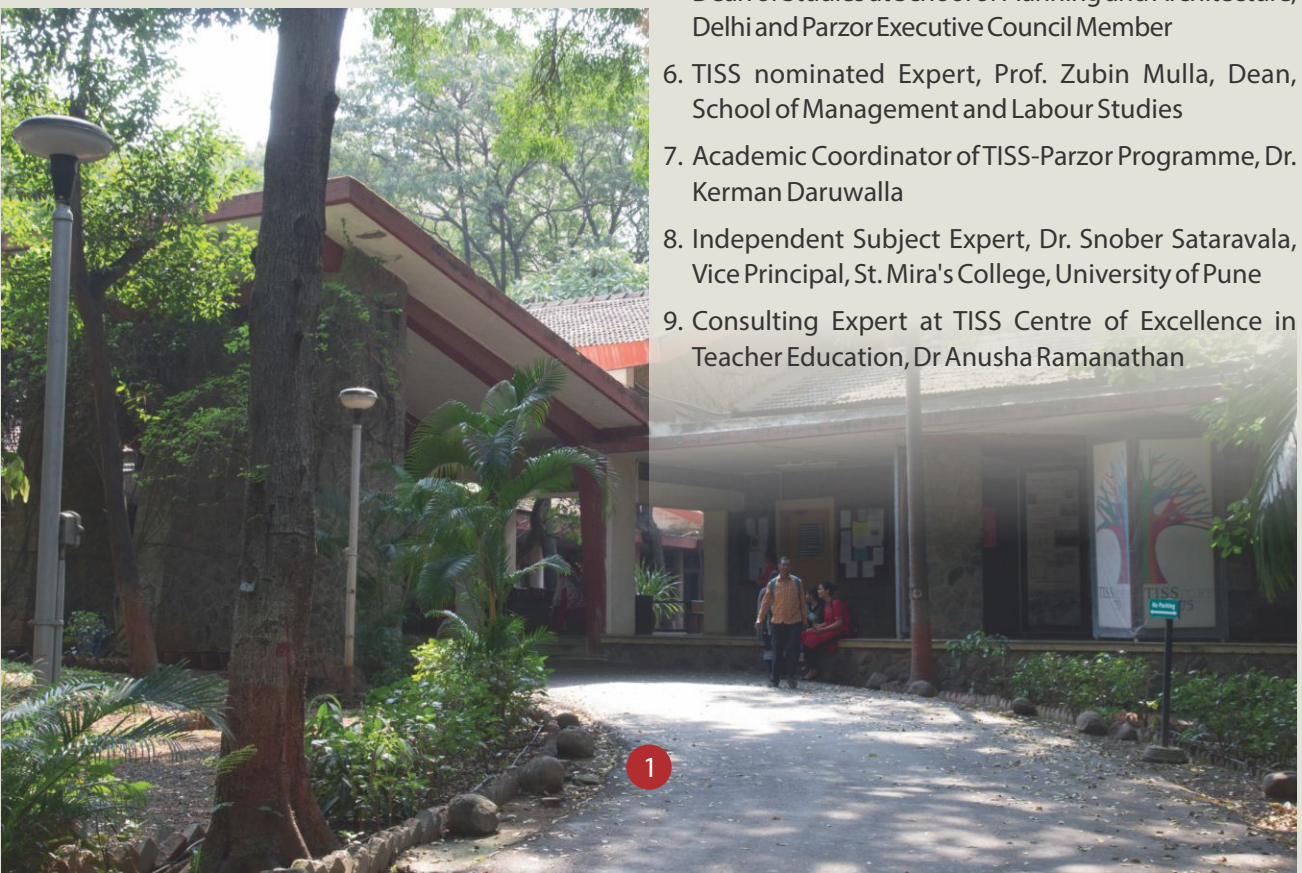


Prof. Shankar Das
Pro Vice-Chancellor, TISS, Mumbai

The Advisory Committee of the TISS-Parzor Academic Programme comprises representatives from both TISS and Parzor. It includes the Pro Vice Chancellor and the Dean of Academic Affairs of TISS, and the Director and Executive Member of Parzor. Since the Programme also caters to foreign students, it is anchored at the Office of International Affairs at TISS. The Advisory Committee offers guidance and support to the Programme and assists in collaborating with other Universities and Institutions of Excellence.

The TISS-Parzor Steering Committee has a larger constitution and is responsible for setting policy guidelines, monitoring and oversight of the courses, and decision-making. It is constituted with members from TISS and Parzor, and independent experts, as follows:

1. TISS Pro Vice Chancellor, Prof. Shankar Das
2. Parzor Director, Prof. Shernaz Cama
3. TISS Dean of Academic Affairs, Prof. Sunil Santha
4. TISS Office of International Affairs – Chairperson, Prof. Madhushree Sekher.
5. Parzor nominated Expert, Prof. Kavas Kapadia, former Dean of Studies at School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi and Parzor Executive Council Member
6. TISS nominated Expert, Prof. Zubin Mulla, Dean, School of Management and Labour Studies
7. Academic Coordinator of TISS-Parzor Programme, Dr. Kerman Daruwala
8. Independent Subject Expert, Dr. Snober Sataravala, Vice Principal, St. Mira's College, University of Pune
9. Consulting Expert at TISS Centre of Excellence in Teacher Education, Dr Anusha Ramanathan



Message from Founder of the Programme



I am delighted to present the Report for the academic year 2024-2025. As the Founder of the Programme, I am deeply grateful to Dr. Sanaya Nariman, Pervin & Jal Shroff, FEZANA, ZAGNY, Mr. Zar Amroliya, Mr.

Dorab Mistry & ZTFE, Mr. Saroosh Dinshaw and the Cowasji Dinshaw Trust for their generous donations, which made the launch of this course possible. I deeply appreciate the donation of Mrs. Rati Forbes, who recognising the value of these studies has contributed generously to their continued iteration.

The Programme cultivates a vibrant and diverse learning community, encompassing undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral students, as well as professionals from various sectors. A dynamic interactive pedagogy fosters an exchange of ideas and perspectives, contributing to the intellectual growth of all involved.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Mr. Yazdi Tantra and Ms. Disha Potdar from On-lyne for efficiently managing the backend operations of our Zoom class sessions.

The invaluable support of the World Zoroastrian Organisation Trust, India, (WZO Trust), Mr. Dinshaw Tamboly, the Zoroastrian Trust Fund Europe, ZTFE, London through Mr. Malcolm Deboo has played a crucial role in enabling deserving students to gain scholarships for Zoroastrian studies and find fresh perspectives on world culture. Through scholarships also from institutions like the Shirinbai Cama Trust and Empowering Mobeds who support practising priests, the Delhi Parsi Anjuman for supporting its members and individuals such as Captain Percy Master and Mr. Feroze Sethna, our programme has been able to provide financial assistance to students in India and abroad.

The Programme successfully hosted a range of activities including arranging for Field Trips to Gujarat and provided participants with meaningful opportunities for interdisciplinary engagement and learning. These activities, along with the newly introduced initiatives, will play a pivotal role in the Programme's continued growth and sustainability."

Through this Report, we present the activities and innovative strategies that have strengthened the Programme's academic foundation. We remain deeply grateful for the unwavering support of our benefactors, students, and the broader TISS Parzor community. Together, we are committed to advancing the study of Zoroastrianism and cultivating a vibrant intellectual environment for future generations.



Prof. Shernaz Cama
Parzor Foundation

Message from Chairperson Office for International Affairs

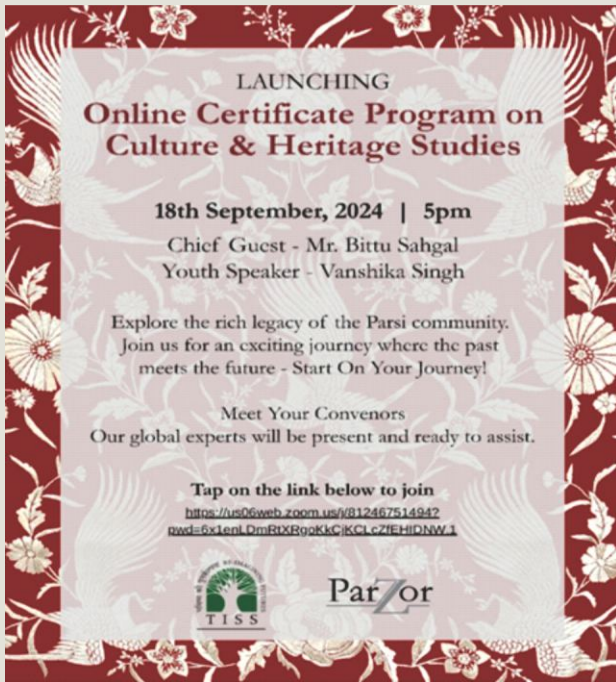


TISS and Parzor Foundation launched a groundbreaking Course on Cultural and Heritage Studies in September 2024 as a 20-credit certificate programme. This Course celebrates micro-minority community heritage, particularly Parsi Zoroastrian culture, and offers access to rare manuscripts, hands-on workshops with global experts, and a blend of traditional knowledge and modern solutions. It is open to researchers, scholars, and change-makers.



Prof. Madhushree Sekher
Office for International Affairs

Programme Overview



Inaugural poster

The **TISS-Parzor Programme in Culture & Civilisation: A Zoroastrian Perspective** marks a pioneering academic initiative, being the first Online programme to reach across countries focusing on the Zoroastrian community as a part of world heritage. This programme provides a structured platform for exploring the community's cultural heritage, historical significance, and contemporary challenges through an interdisciplinary lens.

Drawing on frameworks from history, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, and cultural studies, the programme gives participants an unparalleled opportunity to engage deeply with the nuances of Parsi Zoroastrian traditions and their adaptation to modern realities. Key topics include demographic trends, migration and Diasporic identities, environmental sustainability, and the dynamic interplay between ancient customs and contemporary life.

The Courses are guided by a distinguished faculty, featuring renowned scholars including **Prof. Almut Hintze** and **Dr. Sarah Stewart** from SOAS, **Prof. Siva Raju** from TISS and **Prof. Coomi Vevaina** from Bombay University among others. The Guest Faculty includes renowned leaders in their fields who provide

detailed information from their life and experience. This diverse academic team is supported by emerging researchers and professionals, ensuring a rich blend of traditional scholarship and fresh perspectives. The programme's comprehensive curriculum is designed to attract students from various academic disciplines while also offering Credits applicable toward diploma or degree programmes.

Officially launched on **18th September 2024**, the programme's inaugural event was attended by nearly 100 participants. The launch featured **Mr. Bittu Sahgal**, a prominent environmentalist, as the Chief Guest, and **Ms. Vanshika Singh**, teacher and researcher at the National University of Singapore, as the Youth Speaker. Their thought-provoking insights highlighted the programme's relevance in addressing critical contemporary issues while celebrating the resilience and legacy of the Zoroastrian community.

This unique initiative not only fills a significant academic gap but also aims to foster a new generation of scholars and practitioners committed to preserving and advancing knowledge of Zoroastrianism.



Vanshika Singh



Bittu Sahgal



Programme Coordinator
Dr. Kerman Daruwalla providing
an overview of the Courses

Milestones During (2024-2025)

April-May'24

- Discussion meetings with the TISS Pro-VC, Prof Shankar Das and the newly appointed Dean of Academic Affairs at TISS, Prof Sunil Santha to get clearance from the Nirantar Council, the committee constituted for approving short-term programmes of less than one year.
- Prof Shernaz Cama and Prof Kavas Kapadia of Parzor flew from Delhi to visit TISS on 24th April 2024 to sign the TISS-Parzor MOU Addendum, which enables fundraising for the academic programme to be carried out by both the parties.
- The programme approval note was received from the Registrar, paving the way for the launch of the Online Certificate programme.
- Dr. Kerman Daruwalla and Freny Daruwalla finalised the Academic Calendar for the Online Certificate Programme on Culture and Heritage Studies with the Academic Section of TISS.
- The fee structure of Rs. 60,000 for the full programme and Rs. 7,500 for individual modular option was finalised with Prof Shankar Das and Prof Sunil Santha.
- Meetings with TISS Academic Section and Communications Team to advertise the Programme on the TISS website and create the Admissions Page to accept applications.
- Liaising with Prof Madhushree Sekher and the Office of International Affairs to on-board international students and sort out issues related to their admissions.

June-August'24

- Series of meetings with the TISS Advisory Board were held at TISS to discuss the pre-launch activities of the TISS-Parzor Academic programme.
- TISS-Parzor Advisory Committee and Steering Committee meetings on 5th September 2024 with

September-October'24



Prof. Shankar Das with the TISS and Parzor teams

Prof. Shankar Das, Prof. Madhushree Sekher, Prof. Sunil Santha, Prof. Zubin Mulla, and Prof. Anusha Ramanathan from TISS, along with Prof. Shernaz Cama, Prof. Coomi Vevaina, Dr. Kerman Daruwalla, Dr. Snober Sataravala, Prof. Siva Raju, Dr. Meher Mistry and Freny Daruwalla. Prof. Shankar Das was extremely happy to inaugurate the 'first-of-its-kind' programme and wished good luck to the entire team.

- A pre-launch session for TISS students was held on 9th September 2024 at the Parasuraman Hall at TISS, with talks by Prof. Shernaz Cama, Dr. Kerman Daruwalla, and Prof. Coomi Vevaina to introduce the programme and highlight the importance of Zoroastrian culture. Prof. Shankar Das, Pro Vice Chancellor, TISS also spoke and underscored the value of the Parsi community to the nation and world. During the event, Prof. Shernaz Cama was felicitated by Prof. Shankar Das.
- The TISS Advisory Committee members Prof. Shankar Das, Prof. Sunil Santha, Prof. Madhushree Sekher and Prof. Zubin Mulla have been a source of constant support and guidance throughout the development and execution of this course. Their expertise, guidance, and commitment have been instrumental in facilitating a seamless pioneering experience for participants and Staff.
- On Wednesday, 18th September 2024, the launch event of TISS-Parzor Certificate Programme was conducted online which was attended by close to one hundred participants.
- The Foundation Course on *Philosophy, History, Culture* commenced on Monday, 23rd September 2024, convened by Prof Shernaz Cama, which was taken by over 35 participants.

November-December'24

- The first two elective courses were offered during November-December 2024 – *Introduction to Avestan Language* convened by Prof Almut Hintze of SOAS, London, and *Parsi Literature in English* convened by Prof Coomi Vevaina, former head of the English Department at University of Mumbai.
- On 20th November 2024, there was a meeting held at the Ratan Tata Institute in Mumbai where participants of the TISS-Parzor programme met

some of the faculty members including Prof. Shernaz Cama, Prof. Coomi Vevaina and Prof. Almut Hintze in person.

January-March'25

- The next two elective courses started in January 2025 – *Parsi Demographics* convened by Prof S. Siva Raju of TISS, and *Parsi Theatre & Performing Arts* convened by Dr. Abhimanyu Acharya of Western University in Ontario, Canada.
- The other two elective courses commenced in the last week of February 2025 – *Zoroastrian Oral Tradition, Ecology, Rituals, Customs, Festivals & Songs* convened by Dr. Sarah Stewart of SOAS, London and *Print History & Journalism* convened by Dr. Firdaus Gandavia of Mumbai.
- An in-person Welcome Event was held on Wednesday, 19th February 2025 to welcome the Mumbai students for the first visit to the TISS campus in Chembur. Nine participants of the TISS-Parzor Programme came and met with faculty members Prof. Siva Raju, Prof. Anita Rath, Prof. Zubin Mulla, Prof Madhushree Sekher and the OIA Team, and were treated to a sumptuous lunch at the TISS Guest House.



Curriculum Design, Students, Academic Structure, Tissol & Faculty Expertise

ONLINE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The TISS-Parzor Academic Programme was launched with the 20-Credit Online Certificate in Cultural & Heritage Studies. There are a total of 11 Courses being offered with 1 Compulsory Foundation Course and 10 Elective Courses, each worth 2 credits. A student is required to complete the 20-credits to fulfil the requirements of the Certificate. All courses are eligible for transfer to equivalent International Credits.

COURSE TITLE	CONVENOR AND OTHER FACULTY
C1. COMPULSORY FOUNDATION COURSE Philosophy, History, Culture	Prof. Shernaz Cama, Prof. Almut Hintze and guest faculty
ELECTIVE COURSES	
E1. Zoroastrian Oral Tradition, Ecology, Rituals, Customs, Festivals & Songs	Dr. Sarah Stewart and guest faculty
E2. Avestan language	Prof. Almut Hintze and Dr. Kerman Daruwalla
E3. Parsi Literature in English	Prof. Coomi Vevaina and guest faculty
E4. Persian & Parsi Gujarati Literature	Dr. Kerman Daruwalla and guest faculty
E5. History, Archaeology and Heritage	Dr. Kurush Dalal and guest faculty
E6. Print History & Journalism	Dr. Firdaus Gandavia and guest faculty



7. Parsis and Modern India

Dr. Meher Mistry and guest faculty

8. Parsi Demographics

Prof. S. Siva Raju, Prof. Shalini Bharat and guest faculty

9. Material Culture: Arts, Crafts & Architecture

Prof. Kavas Kapadia, Prof. Shernaz Cama and guest faculty

10. Parsi Theatre & Performing Arts

Dr. Abhimanyu Acharya and guest faculty



Academic Calendar

Sept '24 – Feb '25 – Foundation Course + 4 Electives

Week No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
Month	Sep '24			Oct			Nov				Dec				Jan '25			Feb						
Date	16	23	30	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	
Orientation Week	0																							
C1 Foundation - S Cama		1	2	3	4	5	6																	
E2 Avestan - A Hintze								1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10							
E3 Parsi Lit in Eng - C Vevaina								1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9								
E8 Demographics - S Siva Raju																	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
E10 Parsi Theatre - A Acharya																		1	2	3	4	5	6	

Mar – Jul '25 – 6 Electives

Week No.	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45			
Month	Mar '25					Apr				May				Jun				Jul						
Date	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21			
E10 Parsi Theatre - A Acharya (contd.)			7	8	9	10																		
E1 Oral Tradition, Ecology - S Stewart			2	3	4	5	6	7																
E6 Print History & Journalism - F Gandav			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9													
E9 Material Culture: Arts, Crafts - K Kapadia								1	2	3	4	5	6	7										
E5 History, Archaeology - K Dalal										1	2	3	4	5	6									
E7 Parsis & Modern India - M Mistry														1	2	3	4	5	6	7				
E4 Guj & Persian Literature - Daruwalla																1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

PARTICIPANTS OVERVIEW

The TISS-Parzor Programme has attracted a diverse cohort of participants from around the world, showcasing its widespread international appeal. Students hail from countries such as Iran, Russia, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom, alongside a strong presence from various regions of India, including Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Uttar Pradesh, and Hyderabad. The programme has seen robust engagement, with twenty-seven enrolments for the full course, out of which twenty-four participants are from India and three are international candidates.

In addition to the full Course, several candidates have opted for the modular option, which is designed to offer greater flexibility. These modular Courses, which can be opted for individually, cater to participants who may wish to focus on specific areas of interest or accommodate their schedules, ensuring a personalized and adaptable learning experience. This approach has enabled the programme to reach an even wider audience, catering to the diverse needs of its participants while maintaining a high standard of academic excellence. As of date in the first five offered courses, a total of twenty-four candidates, including six international participants, have opted for the modular option. The number of modular participants is expected to increase as there has been considerable interest in the upcoming electives in response to the print and online advertisements.

OVERVIEW OF THE FOUNDATION COURSE: HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, AND CULTURE

The **Foundation Course: History, Philosophy, and Culture**, the compulsory Course of the **TISS-Parzor Certificate Programme**, ran successfully from 24th September to 2nd November 2024. This inaugural Course attracted 44 participants from diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds, including 8 international candidates and 36 from across India. Four of the participants audited the Course for the love of learning, exemplifying the programme's commitment to lifelong education.

The **Foundation Course** offered students an opportunity to gain wide knowledge of the Zoroastrian community's history and culture. They

explored key areas of Zoroastrian philosophy, history, and contemporary issues, deepening their understanding of the community's heritage. The innovative nature of the Course was met with excitement, as students appreciated the chance to engage with various community projects and audio-visual material not typically available in standard curricula. Guided by Prof. Shernaz Cama, each participant received personalized mentorship, which was crucial in shaping their research and projects. Notable projects included –

- Neelesh Chaurasia's fieldwork in Lucknow, where he explored demographic shifts and challenges facing the Parsi community.
- Gabrielle Carter's and Pouruchisti Dhabar's exploration of the symbolic and practical significance of water in Zoroastrianism, through field work on the ancient Tanka system in Bharuch.
- Pradnya Luktuke teamed up with the co-participant Farzin Yazeshni, an Iranian priest, to work on the novel project of visually rendering each Avestan letter in calligraphic script with the assistance of the renowned calligrapher Ms. Perin Coyaji.

These projects, among others, highlighted the course's success in blending scholarly inquiry with real-world relevance, setting a promising precedent for future work.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COURSE

The Foundation course provided an overview of Zoroastrian Philosophy, History and Culture, while simultaneously giving a preview of the various elective courses that were to follow. The Convenor, Prof Shernaz Cama engaged the participants with audio-video presentations on some of the path-breaking projects undertaken by Parzor such as the *Ava Project* on water conservation, and the *Navroze Festival Google Art & Culture Online Exhibit*. There were a number of notable guest speakers who provided insights into their areas of expertise -

- **Prof. Almut Hintze**, a distinguished scholar, delivered an engaging session on Avestan, emphasizing the significance of the language in Zoroastrian religious and cultural contexts.
- **Arzan Sam Wadia**, Former President of FEZANA (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North

America) along with two dynamic young representatives **Kimiya Shahzadi and Mahtab Dastur** underscored the importance of youth participation in sustaining the diaspora and carrying forward the Parsi legacy.

- **Prof. Shalini Bharat**, former Director, TISS, delivered lectures on demographics, shedding light on critical population trends within the Parsi Zoroastrian community.
- **Dadi Pudumjee**, a renowned puppeteer showcased material art as a powerful tool for storytelling, education, and bridging cultural gaps.
- **Divya Cowasji**, an acclaimed filmmaker, conducted special sessions with her films, offering students another creative lens to explore cultural narratives.
- **Dr. Kerman Daruwalla** provided an in-depth exploration of the Yasna ritual, contextualizing its role within the broader framework of Zoroastrian rites, while highlighting its endangered state due to the declining number of well-trained priests.

A Research Methodology seminar was conducted by **Ms Rijyuta from IIT Bombay** covering effective research techniques and the importance of curiosity, critical thinking, and a systematic approach to exploring new ideas.

This course exemplified the TISS-Parzor Programme's commitment to fostering a nuanced understanding of Parsi Zoroastrian history, philosophy, and culture through the perspectives of both established academicians and emerging scholars.





Anusha Ramanathan teaching Gieve Patel's poems

OVERVIEW OF THE 'PARSI LITERATURE IN ENGLISH' MODULE

The **Parsi Literature in English** course, convened by **Prof. Coomi Vevaina**, was distinguished by exceptional expertise and vision. Her line-up of renowned scholars and researchers ensured each session was an insightful exploration of Parsi literary works.

COURSE OVERVIEW

The course began on **4th November 2024**, with an extended session from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., followed by regular sessions until its conclusion on **4th January 2025**. It provided a comprehensive exploration of Parsi literature, starting with poetry by Gieve Patel, Adil Jussawalla, and Keki Daruwalla. Facilitated by experts like Dr. Anusha Ramanathan, Harish Nambiar, and Arundhati Subramaniam, students examined themes of Parsi identity and cultural heritage.

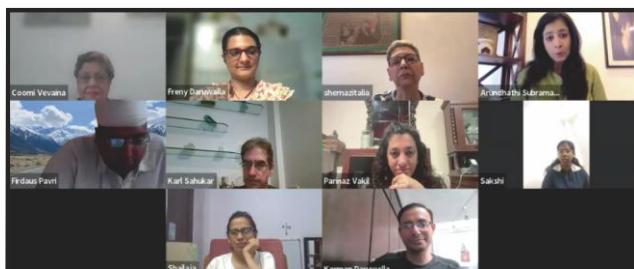
The course then moved to prose and fiction, with a session each on **Rohinton Mistry's** *Such a Long Journey*, **Amitav Ghosh's** *River of Smoke*, and **Anosh Irani's** *Dahanu Road*, convened by Dr. Snober

Sataravala, Dr. Nishevita Jayendran, and the author Anosh Irani himself. Noted film and theatre actor, Rajit Kapur was a guest speaker for one of the sessions.

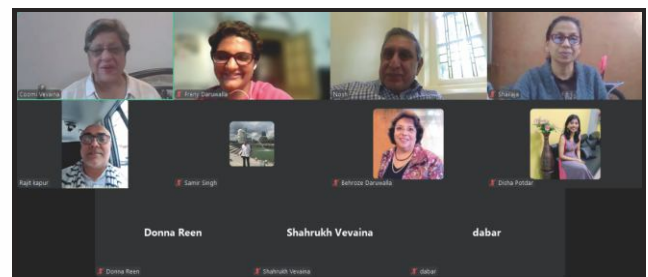
In drama, students engaged with plays like **Gieve Patel's** *Mister Behram*, **Cyrus Mistry's** *Doongaji House*, and **Dina Mehta's** *Brides Are Not for Burning*, facilitated by Dr. Sharlaine Vevaina, Dr. Rupa Deshmukhya, and Huzan Sethna, fostered deep discussions.

The programme concluded with a focus on contemporary works and cinematic masterpieces. Sooni Taraporevala's *Little Zizou*, Rajesh Mapuskar's *Ferrari Ki Sawaari*, and Deepa Mehta's *1947 Earth* were explored with the help of facilitators, including the creators themselves.

The first of its kind course on English Literature by Parsi poets, authors and playwrights, offered the students an insight into a rich literary tradition and inspired curiosity to explore more. Participants interpreted themes and cultural contexts while gaining a newfound appreciation for Parsi contributions to English literature. Inspired by the sessions, some even penned their own poems, adding a creative dimension to their learning experience.



Poet Arundhati Subramaniam teaching Keki Daruwalla's poems



Theatre artist - Noshirwan Jehangir and Bollywood actor Rajit Kapur interacting with students



Prof. Almut Hintze teaching Avestan to her students

OVERVIEW OF 'INTRODUCTION TO AVESTAN' MODULE

Noted Indo-European philologist and expert in Indo-Iranian languages, **Prof. Almut Hintze** convened the *Introduction to Avestan* module, delivering a well-structured and meticulously planned course. With her step-by-step approach, she made the complexities of the Avestan language accessible to students, many of whom were engaging with the language for the first time. Her lucid and interactive teaching style ensured that participants thoroughly enjoyed the learning process.

Prof. Hintze covered foundational aspects of Avestan, including the alphabet, grammar, sentence structure, and translation techniques, providing students with a comprehensive understanding of the language. The curriculum covered in the course is the same as that taught by her in one semester of the 2-semester Avestan Course at SOAS – University of London. The second part of this course is intended to be offered as

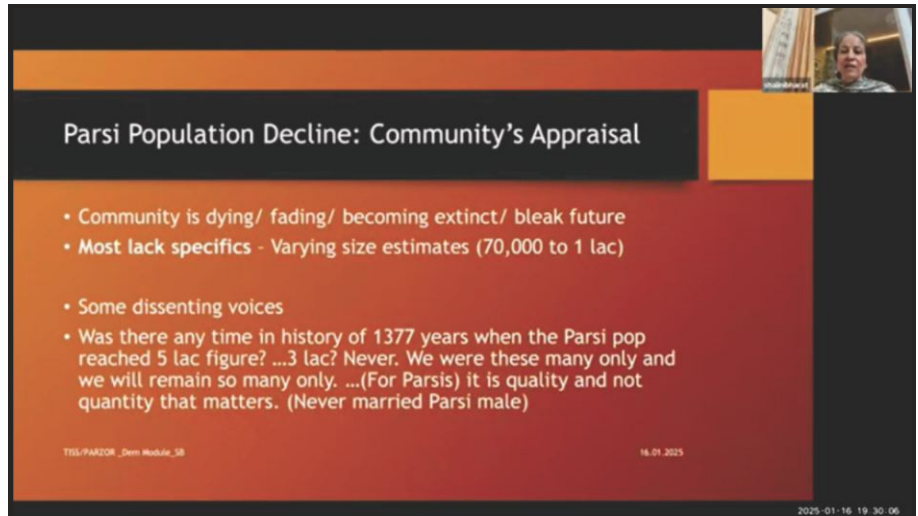
an advanced level Avestan Language course in the next iteration.

The sessions commenced on 6th November 2024, with weekday classes held from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. IST, and additional Saturday sessions from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon IST. This schedule allowed for an immersive learning experience, culminating in the successful conclusion of the course on 21st December 2024. Participants left with a strong foundation in Avestan and an appreciation for its linguistic and cultural significance. The students were so excited by the Avestan course that they eagerly expressed interest in pursuing an advanced level. This demand reflected their growing appreciation for the topic and their desire to continue their learning journey in greater depth.



Prof. Almut Hintze teaching the Avestan script with the aid of a manuscript





Prof Shalini Bharat talking about the Parsi Population Decline

OVERVIEW OF 'PARSI DEMOGRAPHICS' MODULE

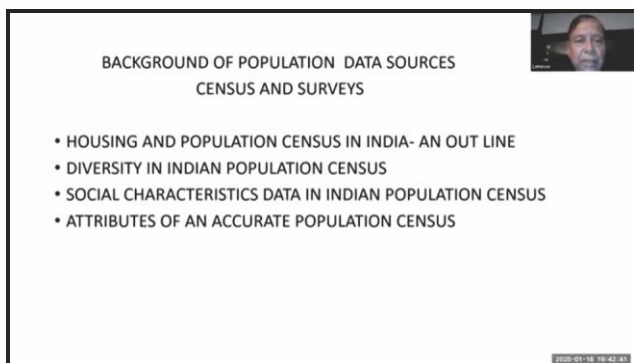
Prof. S. Siva Raju of TISS convened the **Parsi Demographics** module which ran from 9thJan'25 to 20th Feb'25 with classes held every Thursday and Saturday from 6:00 to 8:00 PM IST. The course attracted 30 candidates, including 25 from India and 5 international participants, reflecting its broad appeal.

Prof. Siva Raju was ably supported by other TISS faculty members including Prof. Shalini Bharat (Former TISS Director) Prof. Lata Narayan, Prof. D. P. Singh and Prof. Anita Rath, the Dean of the School of Development Studies at TISS. There were three special guest speakers, viz., former Census Commissioner of India, Prof. J. K. Banthia, noted community historian, Dr. Dinyar Patel, and award-winning documentary filmmaker, Mr. Kaevan Umrigar.

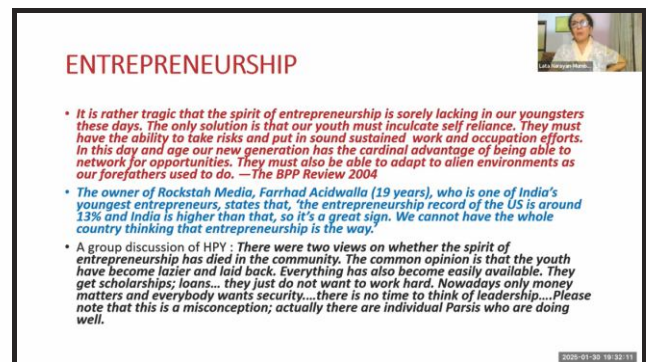
Prof. J.K. Banthia, a renowned demographer from the London School of Economics, conducted a particularly insightful session on his experience as Census

Commissioner. He was responsible for the introduction of detailed technical data on the Parsi community in the 2001 Indian Census. He underscored the community's precarious position as a vital yet minuscule demographic group, providing valuable perspectives on its statistical representation. Dr. Dinyar Patel provided the global estimate of the Parsi population and presented his findings on the reasons for the demographic decline, while dispelling many popular myths prevalent among the participants. Mr. Kaevan Umrigar showed clips from his five documentary films on the Parsis, each highlighting a different issue plaguing the community.

This module sparks significant curiosity among students, leading to numerous thought-provoking discussions. The teachers responded with well-researched, data-driven answers, drawing from their extensive studies and collected demographic data. Their insightful explanations not only clarified key concepts but also deepened the students' understanding of the subject, making the sessions highly interactive and intellectually stimulating.



Prof. J. K. Banthia discussing the Indian census, with a particular focus on Parsi demographics



Prof. Lata Narayan conducting an informative session

The Community, and the reason for theatre


Zoroastrians who fled Persia in 8th to 10th century avoid persecution.

Most of them settled in Gujarat, and later, in Bombay.

Embraced Western education and English language. Acted as colonial compradors.

The cosmopolitan nature of the community enabled it to be patrons of theatre which, in the 19th century, was eclectic and hybrid in nature.

Bombay, growing urban centre in the 19th century, provided the perfect place for theatre to grow.



Dr. Abhimanyu Acharya delivering an insightful session on Parsi Theatre, exploring its history, evolution, and cultural significance

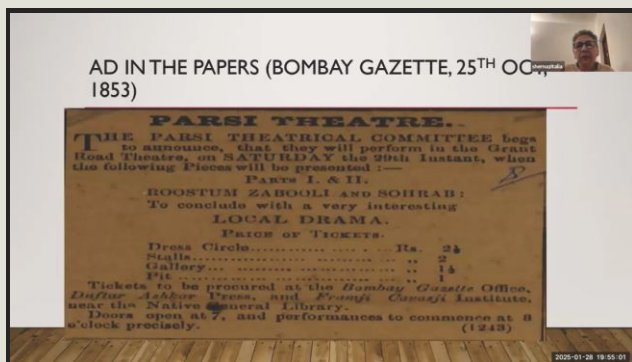
OVERVIEW OF 'PARSI THEATRE & PERFORMING ARTS' MODULE

Dr. Abhimanyu Acharya, a fiction writer, playwright, and teacher based at Western University, Ontario, guides the *Parsi Theatre & Performing Arts* module as its Course Convenor, offering a thoughtfully designed and engaging programme. His modern teaching approach fosters an interactive and stimulating learning environment for all participants.

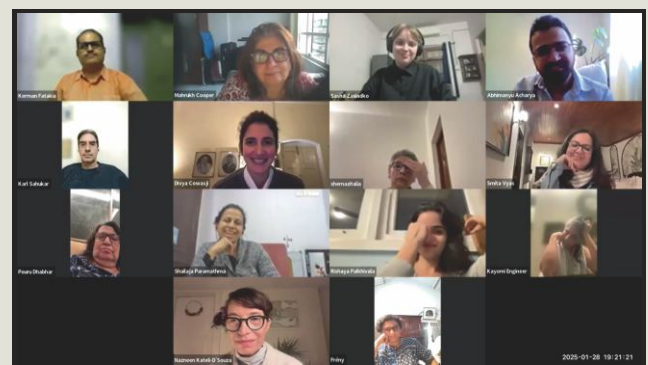
The course has attracted over 25 participants from India and abroad, reflecting its broad appeal. The sessions commenced on **21st January 2025**, with classes held from **6:30 to 8:30 PM IST**, allowing participants to explore the rich legacy and evolution of Parsi Theatre and performing arts. Expert Guest Speakers like Dr. Vikram Singh Thakur and Dr. Harmony Siganporia have presented on topics such as Shakespeare in Parsi Theatre and Female Impersonators in Parsi Theatre.

A key highlight of the course was the screening and analysis of Divya Cowasji's documentary, ***The Show Must Go On***. Participants engaged in an in-depth discussion with the filmmaker, examining the film's themes, artistic choices, and its portrayal of the enduring spirit of Parsi theatre. This interactive session provided valuable insights into the challenges and triumphs of preserving this cultural tradition in contemporary times.

The module successfully combines academic rigor with creative exploration, offering participants a comprehensive understanding of Parsi theatre and performing arts.



Shernaz Italia asking questions about Parsi Theatre



Fun talk with Filmmaker Divya Cowasji

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE UPCOMING MODULES

The completed and ongoing Courses have sparked thought-provoking discussions and enriched the participants' understanding of the subject. The upcoming Courses will similarly promote rich academic exchange and provide opportunities to interact with distinguished scholars and professionals in the field. An overview of the upcoming Courses is given here.

1. Zoroastrian Oral Tradition, Ecology, Rituals, Customs, Festivals & Songs

Course convened by **Dr. Sarah Stewart**

- Course runs on Mondays and Fridays for 7 weeks from 24th Feb'25 to 12th Apr'25.
- The Course will provide participants with a strong theoretical background on Orality, Ecology and Rituals, as well as introduce them to the practical aspects of the living tradition in Iran and India. It delves into the rich oral traditions of the community, shedding light on how Zoroastrian heritage has been preserved through storytelling, music, and ritual practices.
- Impressive line-up of guest faculty including leading academicians like Prof. Philip Kreyenbroek of the University of Göttingen, Prof. Albert de Jong of the University of Leiden and Dr. Jenny Rose of Claremont Graduate University.
- Guest speakers also include prominent community experts such as Dr. Ramiyar Karanjia, Dr. Rashneh Pardiwala and Mrs. Firoza Punthaakey Mistree.

2. Print History & Journalism

Course convened by **Dr. Firdaus Gandavia**

- Course runs on every Thursday for 11 weeks from 27th Feb'25 to 1st May'25.
- The course will give the participants a good understanding of the pioneering role of the Parsis in early print history and journalism, and trace the development up to the present day.
- The course brings together experts in Print History such as Jehangir Patel, Dr. Harmony Sigantoria, and Dr. Venkat Iyer, and renowned journalists such as Bachi Karkaria (*Times of*

India), Coomi Kapoor (*Indian Express*), and Shernaaz Engineer (*Jam-e-Jamshed*).

- The concluding session of the course will be conducted by the eminent jurist and accomplished author, Justice Rohinton Fali Nariman.

3. History, Archaeology & Heritage

Course convened by **Dr. Kurush Dalal**

- The course will run on Mondays and Thursday for 6 weeks from 5th May'25 to 12th June'25.
- The course will focus on the long history of Zoroastrianism starting from the pre-Islamic Zoroastrian Dynasties of Iran, through the migration and settlement of the Parsis in India, up to the Modern day Diaspora community.
- Dr. Kurush Dalal is hugely popular for the short-term courses he conducts online, and many of his past students have expressed an interest to join this module. The course will also expose the participants to the archaeological excavations carried out by the Convenor himself in Sanjan.

4. Material Culture: Arts, Crafts & Architecture

Course convened by **Prof. Kavas Kapadia**

- The Course will run on Wednesdays and Saturdays for 7 weeks from 16th April'25 to 31st May'25.
- This Course covers a range of subjects from Architecture & Conservation to Embroidery & Textiles, Painting, Sculpture and Puppetry.
- The Course will call upon various expert guests such as architect Jamshed Bhiwandiwalla, Art Historian, Dr. Pheroza Godrej, Iranian Landscape expert Mahdieh Khajepiri, Historian, Mrs. Firoza Punthaakey Mistree, Puppeteer Dadi Pudumjee and Parsi Textile Designer, Ashdeen Lilaowala.

5. Parsis and Modern India

Course convened by **Dr. Meher Mistry**

- The course will run during June – July 2025.
- Among the range of topics covered in this course, will be the contribution of the Parsis to

the making of Modern India, the development of Parsi Identity, the emergence of Parsi Enterprise and the involvement in Politics, the Migration patterns and the Role of a minority community in post-Independence India.

- Among the guest experts on the Course will be Prof Zubin Mulla of TISS and Dr. Dinyar Patel of S. P. Jain Institute of Management and Research.

6. Parsi Gujarati & Persian Literature

Course convened by **Dr. Kerman Daruwalla**

- The Course will run during June – July 2025.
- The participants will be introduced to the historical languages of the Parsis starting from the Old Persian inscriptions, through Middle Persian historical texts, epics in New Persian, use of Sanskrit in manuscripts, up to Parsi Gujarati literature. The Course will attempt to give a flavour of some of the important texts in each of these languages.

- There are planned workshops on notable projects underway at various Universities such as the Zoroastrian Middle Persian Corpus and Dictionary Project at Berlin, the Multimedia Yasna Project in London, the Pārsīg Database Project in Iran, and the Parsi Gujarati Dialect Documentation in India.
- Persian experts such as Prof. Akhtar Hussain of JNU and Dr. Arshadul Quadri of Jamia Milia Islamia University, Delhi will be Guest Lecturers.

The ruins of Persepolis in Iran



ONLINE TEACHING WITH TISSOL

The **TISS Online Platform (TISSOL)** is the proprietary Learning Management Software of TISS for all course activities. It provides a single interface to ensure a seamless and interactive online learning experience. The platform facilitates efficient communication, content delivery, and academic submissions and grading for students and instructors.

PLATFORM ACCESS

Each participant receives a unique login ID to access course materials, announcements, and assignments specific to their modules. All resources, including videos, PDFs, and books, are uploaded by instructors, ensuring easy access for students at their convenience.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

To ensure smooth navigation, **Dr. Kerman Daruwalla** and **Freny Daruwalla** provided training sessions covering platform features and optimal use. Technical support is available to assist with any challenges.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSIONS

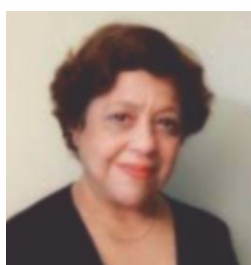
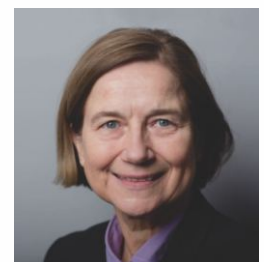
TISSOL streamlines submission by allowing students to upload assignments directly onto the platform. Instructors can review, grade, and provide feedback through the same interface, ensuring an efficient academic workflow.

FACULTY PROFILES



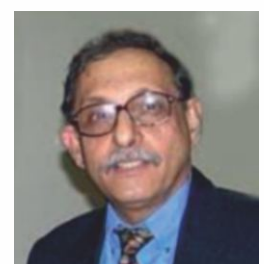
Prof. Shernaz Cama taught at Lady Shri Ram College, Delhi University before her retirement in 2024. She is the Director of Parzor, Advisor, Fulbright Educational Programme, Trustee, Temple of Understanding, and Honorary Research Fellow, College of Humanities, University of Exeter.

Prof. Almut Hintze is a globally renowned scholar in Avestan language. She is the Zartoshty Brothers Professor of Zoroastrianism at SOAS, University of London, and Fellow of the British Academy. Her expertise is in Zoroastrianism and ancient and middle Iranian languages.



Prof. Coomi S. Vevaina is Professor and Former Head, Dept of English, University of Mumbai, Coomi is an Education Futurist, Founder Director of the annual Global Tipping Point Summit, Peace Activist, internationally acclaimed Educator, Literary Critic, Teacher Educator, Writer and Storyteller.

Prof. Kavas Kapadia has been involved in Planning and Architecture education in India while developing his interest in Urban Planning. He has taught related courses in several universities, been on Selection Committees and Juries and served as Head of the Department and the Dean of Studies of the School of Planning & Architecture, SPA, New Delhi.





Prof. Siva Raju retired as Professor for the Centre for Excellence in CSR at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and was the Deputy Director of the TISS Hyderabad Campus.

His broad fields of interest are Corporate Social Responsibility, Demographics - Population and Development, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, Research Methodology, ageing, health and development.

Dr. Sarah Stewart was the first Shapoorji Pallonji Reader in Zoroastrianism at SOAS. She was lead Curator of the exhibition *The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination* in London & New Delhi. Sarah began a Summer School on Zoroastrianism in Contemporary Iran held annually at the Norwegian Institute in Rome in collaboration with the University of Bergen.



Dr. Meher Mistry is the Head, Department of History at Ramniranjan Jhunjhunwala College, Mumbai and has been teaching History to under-graduate students since the past 17 years.

Her research interest includes Parsi community history, maritime history, and business history and contemporary Indian and World history.

Dr. Kerman Daruwalla is the Project Coordinator for the TISS-Parzor Academic Programme. Kerman completed his PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London in 2021. His areas of interest include Zoroastrian ritual texts and Parsi Zoroastrian priestly history and contemporary practice.



Dr. Firdaus Gandavia is a Chartered Accountant. Literature was always his passion, so he did a PhD in English Literature. He has taught at Mumbai University as a Guest Lecturer. He reviews books for Parsiana on a regular basis and also interviews Parsi writers.

Dr. Kurush F Dalal holds a PhD from Pune University. His academic journey concentrated on the Early Medieval Period on the West Coast of India, where he conducted significant excavations at Sanjan, Chandore, and Mandad. Widely published, he has taught at numerous universities, including the University of Mumbai. His The Studying Food Workshop programme focuses on Culinary Anthropology. Dr. Dalal is Director of the INSTUCEN School of Archaeology in Mumbai, a position he has held since August 2020.



Dr. Abhimanyu Acharya is a multilingual fiction writer, playwright, translator, and scholar currently based out of Ontario, Canada where he is a postdoctoral associate at Western University. He has won the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar, the Sahapedia-UNESCO Fellowship, the Sanhita Manch playwriting award, and the Majdi-Bou Matar scholarship.

Fee Structure & Scholarships

FEE STRUCTURE

The Course Fee for the complete programme is Rs. 60,000.

The component-wise breakup is as follows:

Component	Fee Breakup	Amount (₹)
Fee	Tuition Fee	35,000
	Examination Fee	2,000
Charges	Dissertation / Study Supervision	10,000
	IT Charges	2,000
	Library / Online Material Charges	1,000
	Other (ID, Platform Access, Certificate)	2,500
Fund	Development Fund	4,000
	Alumni Fund	500
Deposit	Caution Deposit	3,000
	Complete Programme Fee	60,000

Individual courses can be opted in the **Modular Option** at Rs. 7,500 per course.

International Applicants are required to pay a one-time Application cum Admission Fee of \$70, and there is a fee mark-up depending on the category of their place of residence, as follows:

Country Category	Full Certificate Course	Modular Fee / course
High Income Economies	\$1080	\$120
Upper Middle Income	\$1010	\$110
Lower Middle Income	\$940	\$100
BIMSTEC/Low Income	\$860	\$100

International applicants include those with a foreign passport or OCI card. NRI applicants holding an Indian passport may choose their status.

CERTIFICATION DETAILS

- **Programme Certificate:**

Upon successful completion of the full curriculum, participants are awarded the TISS–Parzor Certificate in Culture & Civilisation, signifying their comprehensive understanding of the subject.

- **Module Certification:**

Participants receive a Completion Certificate for each individual course or module they successfully complete, reflecting their focused learning and expertise in specific areas.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Generous support from donors enabled scholarships to be offered for the TISS Parzor Certificate Programme on Culture & Civilisation, welcoming applicants from diverse fields like history, linguistics, embroidery, literature, and environmental studies.

Scholarships Distributed in 2024-25:

- **Parzor Foundation** awarded ₹40,000 each to 8 candidates, including Sakshi, Parwez Alam, Shailaja, Neelesh Chaurasiya (a former TISS student), and Shahid Akhter.
- **Delhi Parsi Anjuman** supported two recipients with ₹40,000 each.
- **World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO)** contributed ₹60,000 to Er. Hormuz Sidhwa and ₹90,720 to Er. Farzin Yazajne (a priest from Iran).
- **Empowering Mobeds Trust** fully covered fees of ₹60,000 for Er. Kerman Fatakia and Er. Firdaus Pavri.
- **Shirinbai Cama Trust** reimburses fees for Mobeds, returning loan amounts to WZO and Empowering Mobeds Trust.
- **ZTFE** sponsored Aisha Farr with ₹46,200.
- **Individual donors:** Captain Percy Master sponsored Radman from Iran with ₹24,360; Feroz Sethna supported Kayomi Engineer with ₹40,000.

Institutions such as the **World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO)** and **Empowering Mobeds Trust** played a key role by providing financial support to Mobeds pursuing this programme. These initiatives collectively helped equip our religious practitioners with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective community service. Through this programme, Mobeds are enhancing their understanding of Zoroastrian theology, history, and cultural heritage while developing skills in public speaking, community engagement, and pastoral care. This holistic education strengthens their ability to serve as informed and capable spiritual leaders in the evolving needs of the community.

TISS-Parzor Students in Mumbai



Marketing & Outreach Initiatives

Tiss, ParZor launch first-of-its-kind academic course on Parsi Zoroastrian culture, heritage

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS
PUNE, AUGUST 5

TATA INSTITUTE of Social Sciences, Mumbai and ParZor — an international repository of information on the vulnerable culture and heritage of Parsi Zoroastrians — have launched a first-of-its-kind course on culture and heritage studies.

"We have been working with the prestigious Tata Institute of Social Sciences, TISS, Mumbai on the programme structure and the online certificate course will have 20 credits on Parsi Zoroastrian Cultural and Heritage Studies. Admissions have commenced for the course that is structured to provide a holistic understanding

of various aspects of Parsi Zoroastrian culture, heritage, and tradition," Dr Shernaz Cama, director, ParZor foundation told The Indian Express.

ParZor Foundation, set up under the aegis of UNESCO, "The aim of our collaboration with TISS is to share this knowledge with the next generation and keep academic research into Bronze Age traditions still relevant in a post-modern world," Dr Cama said.

As per Census 2011, there were 57,264 Parsis in India and 1.2 lakh around the world, as per the World Population Review.

"Parsis are an excellent example of a migrant, minuscule group succeeding against all odds in a multicultural world," Dr Cama said and pointed out that their story is one of resilience and

can become inspirational in a world, where thousands of people are finding themselves uprooted from their traditional environment.

When contacted, professor Shankar Das, pro-vice chancellor, TISS, told The Indian Express that the Indian education sector was constantly evolving into a global hub, embracing new perspectives and challenges.

"Culture and heritage are fundamental to the ancient civilisation of India, and both South Asia and the Persian Gulf share strong commercial energy, cultural and people-to-people links. A multicultural interpretation of this relationship is what will make the first ever TISS-ParZor Academic Programme on Parsi Cultural and Heritage Studies an

exciting one," he said.

There is no age limit for participants applying for the course, which is about an intercultural community whose geographical spread was large in the Achaemenid empire 500 BC from the Mediterranean to China. The community today is spread out from Canada to New Zealand.

Explaining why the course is unique, Dr Cama said, "Parsi culture is a combination of Persian, Chinese, Indian and European cultures. It is reflected in their clothing, cuisine, history, lifestyle, and literature. They have to adapt. However, despite their prosperity, they are dying demographically. Hence these contrasts make them an interesting study for sociologists and cultural groups."

Nagpur Indian Express 5th August 2024

TISS and Parzor offer 10-month course on Zoroastrian heritage

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Two reputed institutes, TISS and Parzor, have devised an online certificate course on Zoroastrianism to explain Parsi culture. Apart from burnishing the CV of students and researchers and advancing career opportunities, it will impart an understanding of the small, but vibrant, community.

Admissions are under way till Aug 31 to the TISS-Parzor Online Certificate Programme on Culture and Heritage Studies to be conducted online from the TISS campus. The total fee is Rs 60,000 but rises variously for international applicants. At the end of the 10-month course, beginning Sept 16 and ending June-July 2025, students will be conferred a certificate. Candidates who do not wish to take the entire course can opt for specific modules for a reduced fee.

The teachers include resident faculty members and guest lecturers from institutes across the globe who are experts in Zoroastrian studies, apart from



The online classes will be conducted from TISS campus. Admissions are on till Aug 31

researchers.

Shernaz Cama, director of Parzor Foundation, said, "UNESCO had entrusted Parzor with the task of recording and reviving Parsi Zoroastrian culture 25 years ago. This collaboration with TISS is a culmination of that task. We have gathered and created enough information and resources to share with the world through the programme."

She added, "The world considers the

Parsi contribution to the building of modern India a great example of a small group of refugees giving back to their new home. We need to recall that the Cyrus Cylinder was the First Bill of Human Rights — around 500 BC."

Oral historian Freny Daruwalla, coordinator at Parzor, said: "It is a one-of-a-kind well structured course where passion meets learning, and that learning will take you a long way."

Drawing from Persian, Chinese, European and Indian influences, the Zoroastrian tradition of arts, crafts, music, even food, is multicultural. Cama said, "We realise that we can have an amalgamation of diverse traditions... We invite people to discuss the issues of demographics, which we call the problems of progress, and see how Japan, Europe, even China, face similar challenges."

Courses will be conducted through the TISS online platform, TISSOL, with all teaching notes and other course material being uploaded there. Candidates may apply at <https://nirantar.tiss.edu/>.

Times of India 7th August 2024

Synergistic studies

The Tata Institute of Social Sciences and Parzor join hands to offer a course on the unique Parsi-Zoroastrian heritage and culture

Farrokh Jijina

It is an exciting opportunity to study a heritage of humanity in all its aspects... (It will) provide lectures by the best cultural experts in the field as well as proactive practitioners such as (puppeteer) Dadi Pudumjee, (coururier) Ashdeen Lilaowala and we hope even (thespian) Boman Irani... It's the chance to get to understand a community which has never really been studied in such depth," stated Parzor director Dr Shernaz Cama. She was communicating with *Parsiana* on August 7, 2024 about the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS)-Parzor online certificate course in Parsi-Zoroastrian Cultural and Heritage Studies to begin on September 16. Classes will commence with an Introductory Week; the Foundation Course will follow a week later.

"TISS handles administration, guidance for course creation and the online platform. Parzor has invited the faculty. The conveners are responsible for their respective courses... Parzor handles overall academic development with all the rules of TISS being followed. It's a University Grants Commission approved program... It was passed by TISS's academic council as well as their governing board," Cama informed us. There is no age limit for participants. While structured to be completed in 10 weeks, students may take up to two years, completing it at their own pace, as per guidelines in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

TISS and Parzor have had a close relationship for over 20 years. Parzor worked on Parsi demographic studies with their sociologists that resulted in the seminal four-volume set *The Parsis*

of India: Continuing at the Crossroads edited by Profs Armaity Desai and Shalini Bharat, stated Cama (see "Where we are headed," *Parsiana*, May 21, 2017). "It is perhaps for this reason that TISS—its directors and pro vice chancellor (Prof Shankar Das)—has supported (the current) project even though it has taken years to fructify. We are very happy because it's an ideal location for the Parzor course to develop into a full program."

Communicating with *Parsiana* on August 7, Das reiterated that the NEP highlights the need to revitalize and promote indigenous languages. "TISS plays a pivotal role in this by offering courses, conducting research and developing resources for the study and preservation of indigenous languages. Understanding (Zoroastrianism's) doctrines, practices and historical impact enriches the study of ancient civilizations and their interconnectedness... Concepts such as heaven, hell, the final judgment and the dualism of good and evil trace their roots back to Zoroastrian teachings." The pro vice chancellor stated that studying these ideas can offer new insights into contemporary philosophical debates, cultural diversity and ethical frameworks. "By integrating Zoroastrian studies into our university curricula and research agendas we could provide a more comprehensive,

diverse and enriched educational experience."

As states Prof Almut Hintze, Zartoshty Brothers professor of Zoroastrianism at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, on the Parzor website, the course will take a "truly interdisciplinary approach... The program will not only contribute to the study, teaching and learning of Parsi Zoroastrian traditions but also raise awareness on the importance of Zoroastrian heritage."

The TISS website lists the course objectives: Make the Parsi Zoroastrian perspective known to a generation which has not been exposed to this culture; encourage the study of tangible and intangible forms of a heritage; enable students to develop a unique understanding of cultures and communities; explain the core customs and rituals that form



Dr Shernaz Cama (l); Prof Shankar Das



(Prof Shankar Das) — has supported



From l: Dadi Pudumjee, Ashdeen Lilaowala, Prof Almut Hintze

the heart of Zoroastrianism; encourage the study of Central Asian cultures as a sister cultural sphere; provide access to a digital resource platform of rare Zoroastrian texts and artefacts, among others.

The 20-credit certificate program priced at Rs 60,000 offers multiple courses from different tracks, each worth two credits. Students are expected to complete a compulsory foundation course on philosophy, history and culture taught by Cama and Hintze. Elective modules convened by experts in their

continued on page 32



25 *Parsiana* August 21-September 6, 2024

Parsiana article, 21st August 2024

23 **FEATURE**

sunday mid-day
18.08.2024

Mumbai | twitter.com/sundaymidday | facebook.com/middayindia | instagram.com/sundaymidday

'Everyone knows who Parsis are, but how many know about their culture?'

The team of passionate academics helming the TISS-Parzor course on Parsi culture say it's the first of its kind anywhere in India, and critical for a country that has been enriched by the minority

DEBJANI PAUL

THE Parsi community, which gave India many of its firsts—first cotton mill in the country, the first Indian-owned newspaper, airline and bank, to name a few—is now gearing up for another first. The Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) and Parzor, a UNESCO project for preservation of Parsi-Zoroastrian culture, have launched a first-of-its-kind academic course on the community's heritage.

For a group that accounts for a mere 0.06% of India's population, the ethno-religious minority has pioneered many of the country's advancements; a fact that President Droupadi Murmu highlighted last week as she greeted

the community on the occasion of Navroze on August 15. Despite their many contributions as nation builders, not many outside the community know about their traditions and culture. The hope is that this will change with the TISS-Parzor course.

Kerman Daruwalla, academic coordinator for the programme, tells mid-day, "Nothing like this is being done anywhere in India. There are some Western universities that may teach a module on Zoroastrianism, but those focus on the historical aspect or the language. There is no comprehensive course on the culture, especially in the Indian context—after Zoroastrians from Iran came to India—or viewed from a contemporary lens. That is the focus of this course."

A programme like this has been long overdue, he says, but a host of factors have come together to make it possible now. "Perhaps earlier there was apathy for structured academic study of the subject. For example, the



The course will also cover the kusti or sacred thread, which is traditionally woven by women on their verandahs

WHO IS TEACHING?

PROFESSOR ALMUT HINTZE—the only professor of Zoroastrianism in the world at the Shahpoorji Pallonji Centre at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London—along with Kerman Daruwalla, academic coordinator for the programme, will teach the elective on Avestan, the Zoroastrian scriptural language

DR SHERNAZ CAMA, who was invited by UNESCO to initiate a project to preserve and promote Parsi Zoroastrian heritage in 1999, will conduct the introductory Foundation Course, as well as teach the elective on Material Culture: Arts, Crafts and Architecture

DR KURUSH DALAL will teach the History, Archaeology and Heritage course

DR SARAH STEWART, professor emerita at SOAS, who has worked extensively on Iranian and Parsi oral traditions, will lead the Oral Tradition, Ecology and Rituals class

MASTER CLASSES will be held offline by renowned puppeteer, Padma Shri and Sahitya Akademi Award winner Dadi Pudumjee; designer Ashdeen Lilaowala, best known for popularising Parsi Gara embroidery at his atelier; art historian-author-philanthropist Dr Pheroza Godrej; and author-researcher Firoza Punthakey Mistree, who is spearheading a revival of interest in Zoroastrian studies

₹60K
Cost of full certificate programme
₹7,500
Cost of each elective

Continued on page 24

Continued from page 23

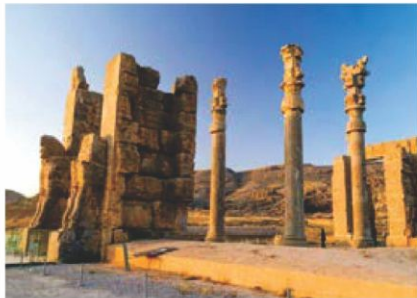
Tata story is studied in business and city-building courses, but not as part of the Parsi community's legacy. Now, the timing is right. Not only is there a revival of interest in the community's heritage, but it's become easier to conduct online courses. This has allowed us to rope in experts in several domains, no matter where in the world. This would not have been possible in an offline programme," adds Daruwala, who will be teaching the Persian and Parsi Gujarati Literature module.

Who should apply for the programme? Parzor director Dr Shernaz Cama, who will teach the introductory Foundation Course for the TISS-Parzor programme, says, "It's meant for anyone who is interested in the Parsi culture and

heritage. And that's not just from a historical perspective—the course is about understanding world culture in order to understand the future; in a way, it's like the past introducing the future."

She thinks theirs is a story of inspiration.

"The Parsis are few in number, but have spread across the world, from India and New Zealand to the depths of Canada. This is an ancient diasporic community that has lived through multiple migrations, seen multiple destructions but rebuilt [itself] each time," says Cama, highlighting it as a trait to emulate at a time when so many are being displaced in the world. It's also a story of resilience. The Zoroastrians of Pars in Persia came to the Western coast of India as refugees after the conquest of Persia by Islam. "We have seen



The ruins of Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenians—the earliest Zoroastrians—in ancient Iran, is a symbol of how the community has lived through multiple destructions but rebuilt itself each time



A playbill for an adaptation of Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice, staged in Mumbai in 1916 by famous Parsi actor-writer Jal Khambata. PICS COURTESY/ PARZOR



Prof Almut Hintze and Dr Kerman Daruwala will teach a course on Avestan, the Zoroastrian scriptural language seen in this book, the Khordeh Avesta or Little Avesta

empire come and go and managed to survive," Dr Cama says, "Paradoxically, though, now that we have seen prosperity, when we are no longer being persecuted and we have a position of respect, we are dying out demographically. In the course, we also look at the Parsi paradigm as a precursor of the predicaments of progress. Developed countries that have seen progress are also facing the same demographic decline, be it China, Japan, or European countries."

The modules will also explore cultural, economic and scientific advancements brought to the nation and the world by Parsis. Homi Bhabha, considered the father of India's nuclear programme, was Zoroastrian. As is Cyrus Poonawala, founder of the Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine manufacturer, which made headlines during the Coronavirus pandemic.

"Parsi thespians are recognised today as pioneers of the performing arts and films not just in India,

but across South Asia. Famous Parsi actor-writer Jal Khambata staged reproductions of Shakespeare's plays in the 1900s. Parsi performers would perform in Gujarati, Marathi, Hindi and Urdu, and eventually began performing across Singapore, Malaysia and other countries in different languages as well," says Dr Cama, who has devoted her life to recording and preserving Parsi heritage that is slowly fading from memory. She brings a lifetime of lived experience, field work and academic research to the TISS-Parzor Centre for Cultural & Heritage Studies, and hopes to pass on the gathered knowledge to the next generation of academics.

Standing at the ready are students such as Sakshi, who has enrolled for the programme. The 22-year-old who is pursuing a Masters degree in English Literature from Gargi College, University of Delhi, and dreams of a career in academics studying multiculturalism. Her particular area of interest is how culture interacts with

changing times, she says.

"In this course, I hope to study a plethora of subjects—Parsi architecture, literature, archaeology and theatre. The professors are all personalities who have worked their entire life to preserve the culture and uplift it. They will all bring their lived experiences to the class and what they teach will be beyond anything I can learn from a book," she says, adding that since it's an online course, she can pursue it simultaneously with her MA in Delhi.

"If you are someone who wants to learn more about the Parsi community and its legacy, this is a good course. Everyone knows who the Parsis are, but very few are aware of their culture. I'm sure that while the whole nation celebrated Independence Day, not many were even aware that August 15 was Navroz or Parsi New Year. In a country like this, where Parsis have given so much, more of us should know about them," Sakshi concludes.

debjani.paul@mid-day.com



SHERNAZ CAMA



KERMAN DARUWALA



SAKSHI

FOR COURSE OVERVIEW log on to www.mid-day.com

Midday, 18th August 2024

THEATRE GUPSHUP

A salute to Parsi theatre

The Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) is starting an online module, The TISS Parzor culture and heritage course, which delves into the history and tradition of Parsi theatre in the city.

Starting today and spread over ten weeks, the course will host artistes like Boman Irani and Divya Cowasji, among others, for interactive sessions with the students. "The module offers an overview of the history of Parsi theatre, which not



only provided the base for modern proscenium but also led to the creation of Indian cinema. From using Urdu, Parsi Gujarati, Marathi and other languages in the plays, to borrowing from epics and

modern stories, Parsi theatre has been pan-Indian in its essence. In that manner, the course will help in understanding the journey of Indian entertainment itself," professor Shernaz Cama (inset), director of the Parzor Foundation, told this diarist.



A scene from the Parsi play Behram ni sasu, which is included in the module

Midday, 21st January 2025

Sunday, September 8, 2024

Exciting Modules in the TISS-ParZor Online Academic Programme



Dr. Meher Mistry



Dr. Almut Hintze



Dr. Kerman Daruwalla



Dr. Sarah Stewart

The remarkable collaboration between TISS, India's premier social sciences institution, and ParZor, a passionate guardian of Parsi Zoroastrian heritage, offers an extraordinary opportunity: the 'TISS ParZor Online Certificate Programme on Culture and Heritage Studies'. Community members are urged to register and avail this opportunity, especially the youth. Some of the featured courses and instructors are as under:

● **Avestan Language Course with Dr. Almut Hintze**

Dr. Almut Hintze, the distinguished Zartoshty Brothers Professor of Zoroastrianism and co-chair of the Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrian Studies at SOAS University of London brings over 35 years of experience teaching Avestan. She ensures an "engaging and enjoyable learning experience, making the course both informative and captivating."

● **Persian & Parsi Gujarati Literature with Dr. Kerman Daruwalla**

Dr. Kerman Daruwalla, Project Convenor of the TISS ParZor Academic Programme, completed his Ph.D. at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). Dr. Daruwalla is passionate about this course, believing it opens doors to enriching and fulfilling career paths.

● **History & Archaeological Studies with Dr. Kurush Dalal**

Dr. Kurush Dalal, distinguished expert in Zoroastrian history and archaeology, has been deeply committed to the development and success of this field since its inception. His dedication to the course reflects his belief in the importance of understanding history through the lens of archaeology.

● **Parsi Literature in English with Dr. Coomi Vevaina**

Dr. Coomi Vevaina is a professor and former

head of the department of English at the University of Mumbai. "This course is an endeavour to preserve heritage and a gateway for Parsi youth to reconnect with their roots," she says.

● **Parsis in Modern India with Dr. Meher Mistry**

Dr. Meher Mistry offers valuable insights into the evolution of Parsis into a prosperous community and explores the question of identity in modern India. She states, "This course uncovers the roots, ethos, rise and growth of the Parsi community, examining aspects of co-existence and consolidation during times of conflict."

● **Oral Traditions, Ecology & Rituals with Sarah Stewart**

Sarah Stewart, Reader Emeritus in Zoroastrianism at SOAS and former Shapoorji Pallonji Reader in Zoroastrianism and co-chair of SOAS Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrianism is thrilled to be part of this programme.

● **Architectural Legacy with Professor Kavas Kapadia**

Professor Kavas Kapadia, seasoned architect and educator, leads the course on the architectural legacy of Zoroastrianism. "This isn't just for religious scholars," he asserts, "its universally important."

● **Print Media and Journalism with Dr. Firdaus Gandevia**

With a vision to captivate and engage learners, Dr. Gandevia envisions this course as a "comprehensive exploration of diverse facets of journalism, poised to pique the curiosity of individuals across the globe."

WHAT WILL YOU GET?

● **Programme Certificate:** Prestigious TISS-ParZor Certificate in Culture & Heritage Studies

● **Module Certification:** Completion Certificate for each course/module.

Apply: unescoparzor.com/academicprogramme
Email at: tiss.parzor@gmail.com
Contact: 8007999490

TISS-ParZor's 'first-of-its-kind' Online Certificate Programme

Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) and ParZor Foundation is launching an online certificate course in Zoroastrian cultural and heritage studies—a dream 20 years in the making by Dr. Shernaz Cama!

This is the very first dedicated academic programme on the micro-minority Parsi community in India. No age bar; the programme offers a blend of history, language, cultural studies, sociology, psychology, demographics, economics, philosophy, arts and crafts.

Access to fellowships and research grants for aspiring candidates pursuing PhD and post-doctoral studies. There will be partnerships with peer universities and institutions to foster academic growth and exchanges.

- **Academic Advancement:** Earn credits that will benefit your future studies.
- **Modern Solutions:** Apply ancient wisdom to contemporary planning and policy-making.
- **Career Opportunities:** Open doors to careers in academia, tourism, cultural preservation and community leadership.
- **Reconnect with Roots:** Rediscover and embrace your forgotten heritage.

CURRICULUM
Language and Tradition

- ▷ Oral Tradition, Ecology, and Rituals
- ▷ Avestan Language

Parsi Literature

- ▷ Parsi Literature in English
- ▷ Persian and Parsi Gujarati Literature

Historical Perspectives

- ▷ History, Archaeology, and Heritage
- ▷ Print History and Journalism

Contemporary Studies

- ▷ Parsis and Modern India
- ▷ Zoroastrian Demographics



Art and Material Culture

- ▷ Material Culture: Arts, Crafts, and Architecture
- ▷ Theatre and Performing Arts

Start Date: September 2024. Total Credits: 20 (approx. ten months). Choose individual modules if you prefer not to complete the entire course. Enrol before each course starts.

FLEXIBLE LEARNING OPTIONS

- **Completely Online:** Participate from anywhere in the world.
- **Support:** Financial support for the course is available.
- **Programme Certificate:** Prestigious TISS-ParZor Certificate in Culture & Heritage Studies.
- **Module Certification:** Completion Certificate for each course/module.

The faculty comprises Dr. Kerman Daruwalla, the dynamic convenor of 'Persian and Parsi Gujarati Literature' and Dr. Coomi Vevaina, the passionate convenor of 'Parsi Literature in English', among others

Apply by logging on to: unescoparzor.com/academicprogramme
Email: tiss.parzor@gmail.com or
contact: 8007999490.

Jam-e-Jamshed on 18-Aug-2024

Student Interaction - Bonding Time

Amid the academic rigor of the Foundation Course, students took time to connect and build lasting bonds. On 11th October 2024, a group of students in Mumbai organized a lunch featuring traditional Parsi dishes, such as *dhansak* and *lagan nu custard*. This shared meal fostered camaraderie, with lively conversations that nurtured friendships and exchanged stories, both academic and personal.

The group then embarked on a Heritage Walk through Dadar Parsi Colony, exploring its history, architecture and significance in preserving Parsi traditions. The walk sparked discussions on urban heritage and the importance of preserving cultural enclaves.

On 20th November, Professors **Shernaz Cama**, **Almut Hintze**, and **Coomi Vevaina** invited students for a lunch at Ratan Tata Institute, RTI, Mumbai where an inter-generational dialogue took place. The professors shared their insights, while students discussed their research, creating an enriching exchange of ideas.

These bonding experiences enhanced the course by fostering a collaborative learning environment and building a network of friends and mentors united by a shared passion for Parsi Zoroastrian heritage.



Students enjoying a delicious lunch



Students bonding over food



Fun day at RTI



TISS-Parzor Students in Delhi



Students with teachers at RTI

Field Trips

EXPLORING HERITAGE: FIELD TRIPS THAT UNVEIL TRADITION

TISS Parzor students, Pouruchisti Dhabhar and Gabrielle Carter, visited Bharuch and Ankleshwar to delve into the rich heritage of the Parsi community. In Bharuch, they explored the traditional *tanka* water conservation system, still preserved in some Parsi homes and within the Fire Temple. Their visit included a warm interaction with the Jambusarwalla, Ginwalla and Mahudawalla families, who generously shared insights into the *tanka* system and its fascinating, yet often forgotten, history. In Ankleshwar, they met Mr. Farokh Ankleshwaria and learned more about the region's cultural heritage. The TISS Parzor Programme ignites a passionate quest to rediscover lost Parsi traditions, bringing lost stories and timeless legacies back to life.



Pouruchisti Dhabhar with the Jambusarwalla family in Bharuch who continue to uphold traditions of the Tanka system

Gabrielle Carter exploring the traditional Tanka system in Bharuch

Our Vision & Mission For The Future

- Provide an open, vibrant, and learning and research environment for students and scholars globally.
- Serve both the Zoroastrian community and the wider public.
- Focus on all aspects of Zoroastrianism across time periods, including:
 - History, religion, philosophy, languages, arts, archaeology
 - Society, food, heritage, entrepreneurship, architecture, culture
- Address global challenges through the study of Zoroastrianism.
- Collaborate with scholars, artists, practitioners from around the world to carry out research projects.
- Collaborate on the long-term digital and material preservation of Zoroastrian heritage for future generations.
- Elevate the programme to a Diploma level, with the eventual goal of developing it into a full-fledged Degree programme.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase student enrolment in the modules.
- Expand global reach and attract a diverse audience.
- Deepen ties with Zoroastrian communities worldwide.
- Lead academic development in Zoroastrian studies, contributing to – Environment, health, demographics, sustainability, migration studies.
- Develop a strategic communication plan with other institutions at the start of each academic year.
- Broaden the programme's scope to include high-demand subjects, such as Parsi entrepreneurship & philanthropy as well as Parsi cuisine.
- Create finally a permanent Centre – **School of Zoroastrian Studies** at TISS, Mumbai.



Financial Summary of TISS-Parzor Academic Programme for FY 2024-25

1. Budget Plan for Year-1

- The budget plan submitted for the first year projected total expenditure of Rs.67.5 lakhs.
- In addition, up to ten scholarships of Rs. 25,000 amounting to Rs. 2.5 lakhs were planned to be offered to eligible candidates.
- Thus, the total planned outlay for year-1 was Rs. 70 lakhs, which was to be funded from two sources, viz., donations and fee collection.
- The tentative plan was to cover the variable costs of Faculty and TISS Administrative charges from the Student Fees component, and all the remaining fixed costs for the development and launch of the programme from donations.

2. Donations to the TISS-Parzor Programme

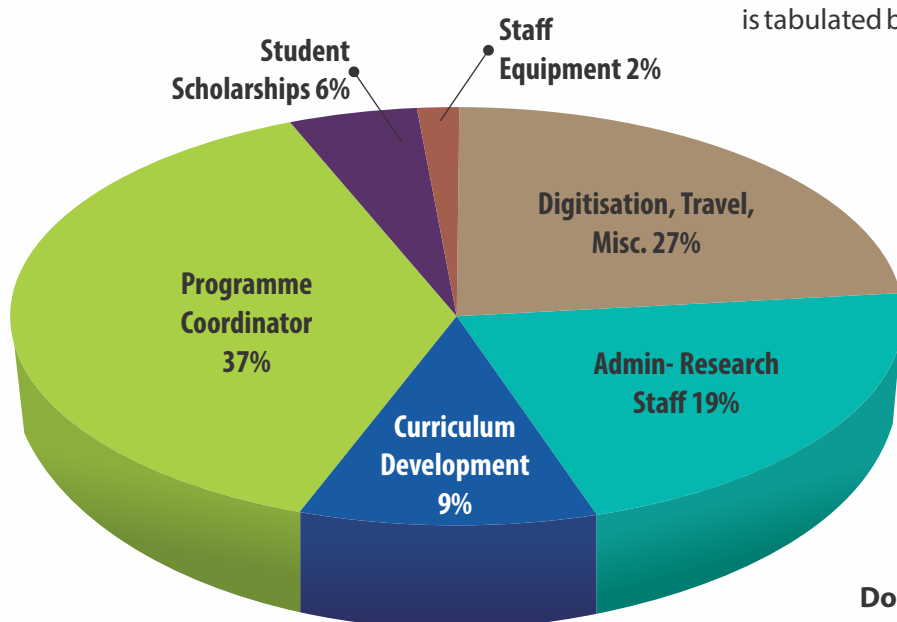
- Thanks to the benevolence of its donors, Parzor raised Rs. 51.69 lakhs during FY 23-24 towards the TISS-Parzor Programme, and received further donations totaling to Rs. 30.40 lakhs in FY 24-25.

3. Utilisation of Funds from the Donation Account

- Out of the Rs. 51.69 lakhs collected during FY23-24, a total of Rs. 47.50 lakhs were utilized towards various programme related expenses, as of 28th Feb 2025.
- The chart below shows the break-up of the expenses as a percentage of the total.

4. Budget Plan for Student Fees collected by TISS

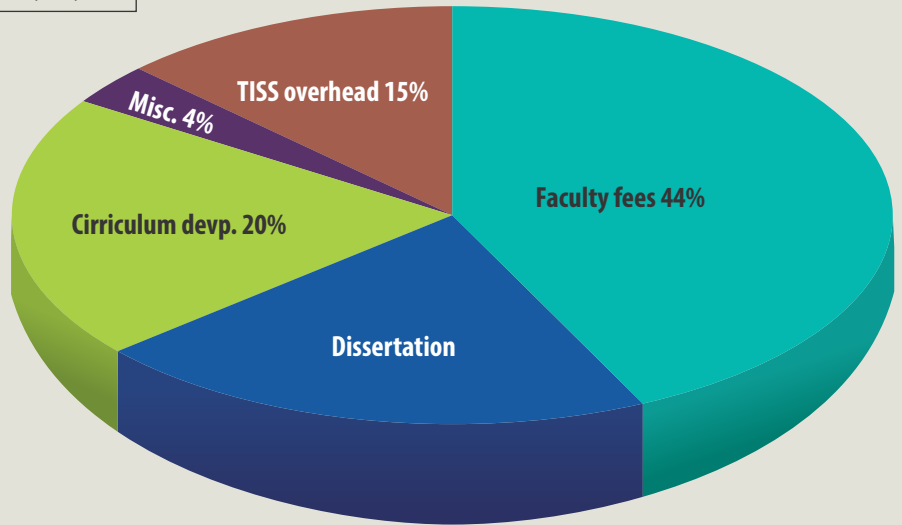
- The course fees for the Full Programme was fixed at Rs. 60,000, and for the Modular option a Rs. 7,500 per course.
- Based on the initial registrations, a budget plan was prepared assuming 26 students for the Full Programme and 60 students for the Modular option. Based on this assumption, the total fee expected to be collected was Rs.20.10 lakhs, out of which Rs. 5.10 lakhs would be transferred to various departmental TISS accounts, and the balance Rs. 15 lakhs would be available towards the TISS-Parzor Programme expenditure.
- The planned utilization of this Rs. 15 lakhs amount is tabulated below.



Estimated Expenditure

Particular	Amount (Rs.)
Programme / Guest Faculty fees	660,000
Dissertation fees (Rs. 10k/student)	260,000
Curriculum development fee	300,000
Misc. / unforeseen expenditure	55,000
TISS Overhead charges @ 15% of Expenditure	225,000
	1,500,000

Planned Expenditure Break-up



5. Actual Fees collected by TISS

A total of 27 students registered for the full Certificate programme, and another 24 students have registered for individual courses using the Modular option for the first five offered courses, as of February 2025. The total fees collected as of 26-Feb-2025 is Rs. 19.05 lakhs.

Out of the total fee collected, Rs. 4.53 lakhs went to TISS towards various departmental expenses and Rs. 1.06 lakhs to the TISS Office of International Affairs (OIA) for handling foreign applications. The net amount of Rs. 13.47 lakhs is available in TISS-Parzor Account Code to utilize for the Certificate Programme expenditure.

So far, an amount of Rs. 51,000 has been paid out from this account to the Course Convenor of the Foundation Course, and faculty payments of roughly Rs. 2 lakhs are under process for the Faculty members whose course is completed.

Going forward, we expect around 20 new Modular applicants to register for the remaining six elective courses which will be offered during the period Feb–July'25.

6. Overall Financial Summary

	Collections (Rs. lakhs)		
	2023-24	2024-25	Total
Donation A/c	51.7	30.4	82.1
TISS Fees A/c	-	20.7	20.7
Total	51.7	51.1	102.8

Expenditure (Rs. lakhs)			Balance (Rs. lakhs)
Until Feb'25	Mar-Aug'25	Total	
47.5	23.7*	71.2	10.8
6.1	14.6	20.7	-
53.6	38.4	92.0	10.8**

* Assuming the same rate of expenditure per month as accrued until Feb'25 for the 6-month period from Mar'25 to Sep'25, after which the next iteration of the Certificate Programme is planned to be launched.

** This estimated balance amount of about Rs. 10 lakhs will be carried forward and utilised for the next iteration of the Programme.



PARZOR FOUNDATION
FOR PRESERVATION OF VULNERABLE HUMAN HERITAGE

CERTIFICATE OF UTILIZATION OF FUNDS BY PARZOR FOUNDATION FOR VULNERABLE HUMAN HERITAGE ON "TISS – PARZOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMME IN CULTURE & CIVILISATION: A ZOROASTRIAN PERSPECTIVE" PROJECT BETWEEN THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL 2023 TO 28TH FEBRUARY 2025.

The management of Parzor Foundation For Vulnerable Human Heritage, New Delhi have spent and utilized a sum of Rs 47,49,665.00 (Rupees Forty Seven Lakh Forty Nine Thousand Six Hundred and Sixty Five Only) on the above subject Project conducted with the joint efforts of Parzor Foundation For Vulnerable Human Heritage, New Delhi and TISS-Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

The total utilization of funds is between the date of start in 1st April to 2023 till 28th February 2025.

The details of expenditure / utilisation is as under:

Particulars	Total
TISS- DIGITISATION , ARCHIVING PUBLICITY OTHER MISC	1273499.00
TISS- ADMIN & RESEARCH STAFF SALARY	904000.00
TISS- CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT COST	417778.00
TISS- PROGRAMME COORDINATOR SALARY	1787000.00
TISS- SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT	280000.00
TISS- STAFF EQUIPMENT ETC.	87388.00
Total (Rupees Forty Seven Laks Forty Nine Thousand Six Hundred Sixty Five Only)	4749665.00

Shernaz H. Cama

Prof. Shernaz Cama
Trustee

Niloufer Noohi Shroff

Dr. Niloufer Shroff
Trustee

PARZOR FOUNDATION
F-17 HAUZ KHAS ENCLAVE
NEW DELHI-110016

CERTIFICATE OF UTILIZATION

We certify that the above is true and correct as per Book of Accounts and other documents produced before us.

For SANJAY JAIN & CO
Chartered Accountants

SANJAY K JAIN, FCA
Proprietor



New Delhi

Dated: 01/03/2025

PATRONS

Dr. Karan Singh, Justice Rohinton F. Nariman
Mr. Tirlochan Singh
Mr. Dinshaw Tamboly, Mr. Wajahat Habibullah
Ms. Aban Marker Kabraji

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Dr. Shernaz Cama, Prof. Armaity S. Desai
Mr. Dadi Pudumjee, Mrs. Ava Khullar
Dr. (Mrs.) Niloufer Shroff, Prof. Kavas Kapadia
Mr. Ashdeen Z. Lilaowala

PARZOR FOUNDATION FOR PRESERVATION V.H.H. *

TISS PROJECT

Group Summary

1-Apr-2023 to 28-Feb-2025

Page 1

Particulars	Closing Balance	
	Debit	Credit
TISS- DIGITISATION , ARCHIVING PUBLICITY OTHER MISC		12,73,499.00
TISS- ADMIN & RESEARCH STAFF SALARY		9,04,000.00
TISS- CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT COST		4,14,778.00
TISS- PROGRAMME COORDINATOR SALARY		17,87,000.00
TISS- SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT		2,80,000.00
TISS- STAFF EQUIPMENT ETC.		87,388.00
Grand Total		47,46,665.00



Shree H. Cama
PARZOR FOUNDATION
F-17 HAUZ KHAS ENCLAVE
NEW DELHI-110016

Student Insights & Testimonials



A Transformative Learning Journey— The course has been an enlightening experience, blending thought-provoking discussions with insights from esteemed professors and guest speakers. It offers a well-rounded understanding of Parsi culture, delving into its socio-cultural, historical, and linguistic dimensions, making the journey both exciting and impactful.



Sakshi

*MA in English Literature
Delhi University*



The TISS-Pazor course on Avestan has been a thoroughly enriching experience, building on my foundational knowledge of the language. The sessions are incredible, introducing the Hoffman system of transliteration and offering valuable insights into Avestan phonology. Dr. Almut Hintze's expertise has been an exceptional guiding force throughout. I highly recommend this course to anyone passionate about Iranian or Zoroastrian studies.



Ravichandar

Banker, Chennai



Joining the TISS-Parzor course on Zoroastrianism has been nothing short of transformative. Prof. Shernaz Cama's captivating lectures and Dr. Almut Hintze's inspiring guidance in learning Avestan have made this journey deeply rewarding. Prof. Dr. Coomi Vevaina's dynamic approach has brought Parsi literature to life, fostering a newfound appreciation for our community's literary heritage. This course has enriched my understanding of Zoroastrianism, equipping me to serve the community with greater knowledge and compassion.



Ervad Firdaus Pavri

Priest & Journalist, Mumbai



The TISS-Parzor Program has been enlightening and enriching in so many ways. As a Parsi, I was unaware of many aspects of our culture and religion. The course has sparked my curiosity, inspiring me to delve deeper into these fascinating facets. It has also introduced me to an array of writers with unique perspectives. I'm thoroughly enjoying the journey so far and look forward to what's yet to come.



Rishaya Palkhivala

Film Studies Student, Mumbai

Student Insights & Testimonials (contd)



For my dissertation, **Return to the River: Parsi Zoroastrianism and Ecological Harmony in the Age of the Anthropocene**, I conducted ethnographic research on the Parsi Zoroastrian community. Guided by

Dr. Shernaz Cama and Dr. Sarah Stewart, I joined the TISS-ParZor Certificate Program's Foundation Course, collaborating with UNESCO-Parzor to explore water's heritage. A visit to Bharuch revealed ancient Tanka rainwater systems and rural Zoroastrian traditions, while tours of Dadar Parsi Colony and the Athornan Institute offered rare insights. This transformative experience has enriched my research and will resonate far beyond my thesis.



Gabrielle Carter
University of Bologna



This course has been a captivating exploration of the glories of the Persian Empire, the ancient Avestan language, and the works of Parsi writers, playwrights, and filmmakers. I'm excited to delve deeper into these

subjects as the program unfolds.



Shailaja
Journalist, Delhi



The Program has opened exciting new doors to explore Zoroastrian heritage and culture. As a priest, I find the course both fascinating and engaging, offering an opportunity to learn and unlearn through fresh

perspectives. The Foundation Course was exceptional, providing a compelling glimpse of the journey ahead over the next ten months. I eagerly anticipate uncovering the treasures this program promises to reveal.



Ervad Kerman Fatakia
Priest, Mumbai

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WhatsApp No: +918007999490
Website: <https://www.unescoparzor.com/academicprogramme>